

History and Myth in German and Italian Romantic Drama (1773-1832)

By

Maria Giulia Carone

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Stefania Buccini, Professor, Italian

Cora Lee Kluge, Professor, German

Ernesto Livorni, Professor, Italian (advisor)

Venkat B. Mani, Associate Professor, German (advisor)

Jelena Todorovic, Assistant Professor, Italian

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To my son Lucas,
his joy and love for learning.

ABSTRACT

This Joint PhD dissertation investigates the works of three German and Italian playwrights (Foscolo and Kleist, Schiller and Pellico, Manzoni and Goethe), and their employment of myth and history as devices of national critique and construction. In my thesis, I argue that the theater – in its quality of space coalescing fiction with physicality, narration with action – allows for the collective memory of a community to be recalled and retold through the enactment of mythical and historical narratives, renewing their temporality on stage and reinforcing national imagination and awareness. Surveyed from the theoretical perspective of contemporary studies on the nature of nation-states, this research presents a new critical reading of Romantic drama in the context of late 18th- and early 19th-century Europe (1773-1832). The first chapter concentrates on Foscolo and Kleist: the theme of death in their dramas as a category of terror as they witness the transition from myth to history. The second chapter compares Schiller with Pellico: the significance allocated to historical tragedies as they envision the unfolding of a cosmopolitan society along the trajectory of a universal history of humanity. The third chapter centers on the literary relationship entertained by Manzoni and Goethe: their reinstatement of biblical and pagan myths within the immanent sphere of history. In my discussion of the kinship that conjoins myth to history, which I trace from Vico's theory of history and his notion of myth as *vera narratio*, I seek to expand upon existing scholarship on nationalism and propose alternative understandings of cultural identity in a time that witnessed the emergence of modern notions of "self", "other" and "nationhood". I elucidate how myth and history represent forms of fictionalization which, in virtue of their intrinsic and inherent rationality, claim a meaning and authority upon reality that is perpetually challenged. I illustrate how these playwrights consequently adopt and adapt the stories of myth and the myths of history as counter-narratives. In restoring and revisiting the scholarly attention hitherto bestowed on German and Italian drama, this study spotlights the contiguity and continuity, still unexplored, of both traditions within a comprehensive, and yet contrastive analysis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

At a time when the geopolitical primacy on the European map was contested and contended by the inveterate Austrian-Hungarian and the newly inaugurated French Empire, the idea of national self-determination in countries subject to their politics of prevarication gained increasingly momentum. Unlike the oldest nation-states of Britain, France and Spain, Germany and Italy endured territorial fragmentation and coercive submission. Rooted in this common historical ground, the solidarity shared by German and Italian intellectuals manifested itself in their effort to resist political domination and strive for national identity and unification.¹ With these geopolitical circumstances as point of departure, my research explores and examines the process of national evolution as witnessed, reflected, and mediated through their literary production.

The scope of my investigation is surveyed from a comparative perspective that will focus on the juxtaposition of the following playwrights: Foscolo and Kleist, Pellico and Schiller, Goethe and Manzoni. My dissertation illustrates and justifies how tragedy reenacts the relationship entertained respectively by history and myth. It is precisely in the dramatic act of violence and violation that myth, in fact, can find its actualization. It is ultimately in tragedy that national *history* is converted into national *myth*. Whereas conspicuous research has been, and is still, conducted with regard to German drama, only exiguous scholarly work is available thus far for the Italian counterpart. If the prolific and persistent body of research, which revolves around the German literary tradition, finds its justification from and within

¹ It is A. Wandruszka's (1961) study that highlights the German-Italian political and ideological relations throughout the 19th century: their solidarity in withstanding the Austrian dominator, and their common striving for independence.

the history's nation and its programmatic nationalistic ambitions in the 20th century, the Italian authors enjoyed a less sustained attention, and a clearly more circumscribed scope of investigation. A cursory survey shall suffice to provide a preliminary and indicative overview. If Foscolo's theater results only sporadically studied, and Pellico's most notorious play, *Francesca da Rimini*, has endured oblivion only through Dante's immortalization of Pellico's heroine in the *Inferno*, Manzoni's tragedies deserve attention in view of his aesthetic theories and in relation to the historical novel as well as its later development as literary genre. Most significantly, any systematic comparative investigation that would take into account both dramatic traditions has been less explored.²

What may account for this lacuna in academic research could be, on the one hand, the central position occupied and the influence exerted on European Romanticism by German intellectuals, most likely reinforced by the Germanocentric propaganda articulated in these years by Mme de Staël.³ On the other hand, it appears evident that the relevance in aesthetic thought attributed to Foscolo, Pellico and Manzoni had been associated in the history of Italian literature to other major works, thus overshadowing their theatrical production. My research intends to locate itself precisely within this interstice in which scholarly activity has lain idle, severing the two literary traditions as autonomous developments, or prioritizing the one over the other. I will attempt to fill this gap by identifying the intersections rather than

² Exceptions can be made for isolated cases such as those by the Italian literary critic B. Zumbini, whose study on Goethe's *Egmont* and Manzoni's *Count of Carmagnola* has been retrieved in a recent collection of articles, or the works by German scholar E. Kostka also published in the late Nineteens . As with regard to the bibliography enclosed at the end of this proposal, I have limited myself to the most relevant scholarly discussions available thus far.

³ Cfr. in particular R. M. Dainotto's study on Europe and its history: "Already with the publication of *De la littérature* [...] Staël's move against Francocentrism – if not blunt anti-Gallicism – and in the direction of a German Europe quickly aroused the anger of the Directorate of the Revolution [...]" (2007: 144).

isolating the peculiarities that distinguish German and Italian Romantic drama. This study does so in a fashion that shall both restore and revive the scholarly attention hitherto bestowed on the Italian theater, and articulate a contiguity to the German drama that does not aim at diffusing their respective distinctiveness, but rather highlight their peculiarities within a more comprehensive, and yet contrastive analysis. To obviate conflicting models of literary periodization undertaken respectively by German and Italian historians on the basis of their disparate temporal boundaries, the time frame herewith adopted will encompass all works composed between the earliest and the latest dramatic production available. It will thus extend from Goethe's *Götz*, which dates back to 1773, to the posthumous publication of his *Faust II* in 1832.

Next to a philological and textual investigation of the dramatic works, my study pursues an eminently theoretical and philosophical approach. This perspective will display a pattern of progressive transition of myth into history and, conversely, of history into myth that will be significant in understanding the characteristic interchange and interdependence of history and myth alike as they were enacted on the German and Italian Romantic stage.⁴ Within the scope of this research, my argument will proceed along three major routes of analysis. I shall (1) illuminate the dynamics of the development that history and myth undergo in relationship to each other, (2) illustrate the assimilation and adaptations of history and myth within and in function of a project of national unification, (3) indicate the

⁴ The legitimate distinction that separates drama from theatre does not imply by any means an inconsistency or incompatibility between printed text and actual production. In contrast to a novel, in fact, a play is not primarily intended for a reading audience, but to be staged, in other words to be *seen* – for this is the original meaning of the Greek verb "theáomai" (θεάομαι) from which the word "theater" morphologically derives. It is ultimately and only within the *phenomenon* of the theater that the text of the play can turn into an actual event.

concomitant and yet contradistinctive literary attitudes and practices discernible within the literary history of Germany's and Italy's pursuit of autonomy.

As for the *historical* discourse of national formation, I shall resort to the contemporary theories by Homi Bhabha and Etienne Balibar. If the application of Bhabha's and Balibar's post-colonial disquisitions to a time in history that witnessed instead the highpoint of Spanish and British colonialism may appear to constitute a limit of their theories on nation and nationalism, my argument shall not rely on a mere projection of 20th-century theories onto the 18th century. It aims instead, more pointedly, to an analysis of the 18th century from a selected set of theoretical questions that will shed new light on a distorted understanding of the nation. Preeminent attention will be attributed to what they define within the process of nation formation as the moment of *fictionalization*. To borrow from Bhabha's coinage of nation as "narration" (1990: 1), or as "collective narrative" to employ a term used by Balibar (1991: 93), my investigation identifies, isolates and interrogates the rhetorical and ideological devices involved in the practice of nation building.

As Bhabha points out:

Nations, like narratives, lose *their origins in the myths of time* and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the *nation* - or *narration* - might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those *traditions of political thought and literary language* that the nation emerges as a *powerful historical idea* in the west. (1990: 1, *emph. added*)

The process of cultural production from which the idea of the nation takes its origin results rooted in a past that is being reappropriated in the name of political and social values that are deemed to be peculiar of one's nation, and are thus supposed to *legitimize* its foundation. As it will become evident on the following pages, in the 19th century both German and Italian playwrights contributed to the formation of a narrative of their nation

through the reinstatement of heroic figures that had been immortalized by history and rendered, in turn, mythical by their stories.

If Bhabha and Balibar are relevant within the specific historical context of 19th century nation-building, Hans Blumenberg becomes fundamental for the *mythological* discourse of my investigation. A distinction shall be made at this point of the dual purpose, the foundational and the contrastive action, served by myth in its twofold relationship to the past and the present.⁵ If Bhabha's and Balibar's critique is directed against the use of myth as foundational narrative to a nation's genesis, Blumenberg denies the etiological function of myths to attribute them instead a value that is intrinsically human. Creation myths fulfill a function that is common to all myths in their quality of stories: they provide an explanation, though not exclusively directed to how the world originated, but more comprehensively to how it operates. These "stories", argues Blumenberg, "weren't told in order to answer questions, but rather in order to dispel uneasiness and discontent, which have to be present in the beginning to be able to form themselves" (1990: 184).

Hence myths, i.e. *stories*, represent for Blumenberg an eminently *anthropological* constituent. They derive their historical value from being "renewable" in time:

Myths are stories that are distinguished by a high degree of *constancy* in their *narrative core* and by an equally pronounced capacity for *marginal variation*. These two characteristics make myths transmissible by tradition: Their constancy reproduces the attraction of recognizing them in artistic or ritual representation as well [as in recital], and their *variability* produces the attraction of trying out *new and personal means of presenting* them. [...] So myths are not like 'holy texts', which cannot be altered by one iota. (1990: 34, *emph. added*)

The relativism inferred from this practice of reinterpretation and reformulation performed in the course of history ultimately corroborates Bhabha's and Balibar's criticism

⁵ Cfr. J. Assmann's comprehensive study *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (1999: 76-80).

aimed at challenging the hegemony of cultural constructs. As such, myths are both stories *and* historical phenomena. In their function of providing meaning, they both found identity and deliver the tools to handle reality: they assign the indefinable a face and a name. Their revolutionary potential does not reside in validating the "absolutism" of reality, but on the contrary, in questioning and criticizing it through the evocation and conjuration of an immemorial past.

The retrospective recourse made by German and Italian playwrights to heroic times views the past in the role of counteracting the deficiency and fear experienced in the present. In this role, the past is thus able to transcend historical contingency (anchored in medieval times), and is consequently charged with an exemplary meaning. In his work on myth, Blumenberg does not rehabilitate classical mythological figures, but recurs instead to historically mythical personages such as Christ or Napoleon that acquire paradigmatic value. Subject to a process of mythicization, this historical material was converted into myth, and becomes eventually meta-historical.⁶ On the following pages, I will highlight how the newly emerged national awareness in 19th-century Europe is fostered within a narrative that results conceived, construed and contended by history and myth. In each of the subsequent sections, my examination shall proceed in a twofold manner. First, I will elucidate the writers' respective attitudes toward an application of history and myth in their aesthetic discourse and practice. Second, I will highlight how the reassessment of their understanding of history and myth becomes significant in terms of cultural production, consequently affecting the constitution of national identity.

⁶ I borrow the term "mythicization" from M. Eliade who employs it to indicate the process whereby historical characters are transformed into heroes, and historical episodes into mythical events (1959: 39-46).

The fact that in the second half of the 18th century history was undertaking a direction hitherto unthought of, had a considerable impact on the understanding and appraisal of myth. Gradually diverting from its original function of serving as didactic genre to the demands of science, history began to undertake an agonistic, if not at times antagonistic, relationship to myth.⁷

The reinforcement of myth that Foscolo and Kleist undertook in their tragedies is indicative of this radical change in perspective. As contemporaries, Foscolo and Kleist witnessed and experienced a similar historical trauma rooted in the upheavals that the Napoleonic politics of expansion and tyranny had instigated. It is on the theatrical stage that what Bhabha describes as the “double narrative movement” (1994: 145) of the nation, identified in the two-tracked trajectory of the so-called "pedagogical" and "performative", found its realization. It was on stage that the nation's heroes were both *represented* as “historical objects of a national pedagogy” that molded their imaginary, and *presented* themselves as subjects of the same "process of signification” (1994: 145) contributing to the acquisition of a collective awareness of national belonging.

Inspired by a historical pessimism that permeates their dramatic works, in this study I illustrate how Foscolo and Kleist, though departing from a similar employment of myth, arrive at alternative solutions. If myth serves both authors as narrative tool to overcome the historical *impasse* in which they lived, it results evident how the two playwrights progressed

⁷ Situated between the end of the Enlightenment and the emergence of Romanticism, the conception of history intended as eminently human, inaugurates a cultural revolution that had witnessed its earliest systematic postulation in Italy. Republished in 1754, Vico's seminal work of the *New Science* found in Germany its follower in Herder who akin to his Italian predecessor had stressed the relevance of a scientific treatment of historical thought and its category of culture. As H. Adler points out in the introduction to his anthology on the German thinker: "Rather than tracing events in *narrative form*, another mode of world history approaches them by emphasis on their *effects, causation and driving forces*" (1997: 10, my emphases).

in different directions. The reason of this discrepancy may be seen to lie in an experience of crisis that manifested itself far more acutely in Kleist (up to the point that it turned to an individual existential dilemma) than in Foscolo, for whom it remained more deeply anchored to the political disillusion and distress from which it originated. Foscolo's retrospective contemplation, as a consequence of his abjection towards the present, was directed to a time in history (i.e. Greek antiquity) that stood out as exemplary heroic past. Devoid of a Christian credo that could have endowed him with the faithful prospect denied by history, Foscolo attributed to myth, in other words to poetry, an eternalizing function. As such myth constituted the narrative device able to counteract the ephemeral and transient nature of human history. By locating his plays in the mythical realm of ancient Hellas, Foscolo performs a renewal of Greek mythology into historical myths of foundation.⁸ In ancient Greece he finds the archetype which distinguishes the genuine myth. His exhortation to reinstate the "national histories" (*storie nazionali*), to prevent them from falling into oblivion, aimed precisely at the reexhumation of a mythological past. Modelled on Seneca's *Thyestes*, the originality of Foscolo's homonymous tragedy resides in an active process of *inventio* that underlines the individual act of reinterpretation and reappropriation within the poet's historical contingency. Atreus' deceitful despotism becomes thus strongly allusive of Napoleon's imperialistic politics. In Foscolo's last neo-classic tragedy *Ajace*, the French tyrant finds its *pendant* instead in the Greek king Agamemnon. However, rather than merely identifying in myth a contingent historical reality, as it may erroneously be inferred, Foscolo *inverts* the terms of their relation. For the Italian poet, in fact, it is not history that justifies

⁸ Foscolo's reinstatement of Greek rather than Latin, let alone Christian myths, goes back to the fact that Greece, his actual place of birth, had represented to the poet his motherland bearer of values whose loss he was mourning within the political circumstances with which his Italian fatherland had to cope.

myth, but vice versa myth that predicates history and turns into its founding constituent. As a consequence thereof, myth acquires universal value. Foscolo does not intend to merely recover the memory of antiquity. Rather, by assimilating figures such as Ajace and Tieste to the modern man, he actualizes the heroic past in an atemporal and thus ahistorical present, which allows myth to acquire, next to its etiological role, hieratic meaning.

The prevailing motifs of suicide and death, so dear to Kleist, permeate the mythological tragedy of *Penthesilea*. Akin to Foscolo's dramas, *Penthesilea* is the result of a revisionary rereading and rewriting of the original myth eventually endowing the heroine with the brave task of defeating the otherwise invulnerable Greek warrior. Two are the main aspects that distinguish Kleist's readaptation of myths from Foscolo's. Myth for Kleist, rather than representing a mere source of ancient divine and heroic stories, serves primarily to frame a tragic action in a meaningful plot. The conflicting feelings of adoration and hatred that instigate Penthesilea's homicidal and suicidal drives, become representative in Kleist of a drama rooted primarily in human existence. Rather than accomplishing an etiological function, Kleist employs drama as device to unmask the incongruities and inconsistencies of reality. By doing so, he contradicts and criticizes the alleged rationality predicated by the secularization of thought accomplished through the triumph of logos over myth.

In my study, I posit that Kleist's practice is comparable to Blumenberg's understanding of myth as a category of "terror". In this quality, myth is able to countervail through its symbolic mediation the void of meaning that dominates a reality regulated by the analytical force of reason.⁹ The ambiguity that permeates all of Kleist's works is indicative of the very

⁹ H. Blumenberg defines the category of "terror" in terms of a "demonic spell" (*dämonischer Gebanntheit*) (1971: 13).

inadequacy and indeterminacy of meaning in human history, which ultimately relates back to the substantial lack of rationality. Kleist's theater displays, in this respect, through the ambivalence inherent to his plays, an even closer affinity with classic tragedy. For the ancient world, in fact, the question about the truth of myth was one that eventually allowed a *plurality* of truths to coexist.

The same mythical experience that resides in the conjuration of archane forces can be found in the historical dramas of Kleist and Foscolo – governed, as they are, by the same law of fierce violence and inhuman ferocity that acts as *movens* of action in their classic tragedies. Whether in the medieval setting of Foscolo's *Ricciarda*, or in Kleist's *Hermannsschlacht* and *Prince of Homburg*, what is prefigured and prevails a disillusioned political realism that appears deeply rooted in a social and historical pessimism, where the ultimate solution, and dramatic resolution, resides in death. In the historical dramas, the spectator witnesses a mythization of history which ultimately reevaluates and readjusts those meanings constitutive of the social and cultural inventory in which national identity is grounded. Whether by positing a new mythology of the nation as Foscolo urges the spectator to do, or through Kleist's use of myth as symbolic devices that serve to unveil the irrationality of reality, it is ultimately within the space of the theater that mythological narratives are rehabilitated in the collective memory, eventually evincing, exhibiting, and enacting that same narrative of the nation from which they originate.

Unlike Foscolo and Kleist, Pellico was well familiar with and fond of Schiller's works.¹⁰ In a letter addressed to his brother in 1815, the Italian writer recalls with a hint of nostalgia how, in his youth readings, Schiller had “inflamed their hearts”. More significantly, Schiller's impact on Pellico is attested by a review he wrote on Schiller's *Mary Stuart* published in July 1819 in the Italian journal *Conciliatore* that he coedited. The relevance of this article resides in the aesthetic theories that Pellico presents to his audience. The Italian reviewer addresses Schiller's tragedy, in fact, to exemplify the importance of basing current dramas on historical themes, and to instruct the contemporary intellectuals on two main practices of writing. The first of which refers to the modes in which the poet should deal with the past, whereas the second criterion regards the appropriate usage of foreign literature. It is not surprising that the high esteem in which Pellico held foreign literature did not prevent him from advocating individual originality against passive emulation at a time when the aspirations for autonomous national formation were becoming increasingly compelling. With national borders yet porous, if not yet merely imagined or altogether imaginary, the intellectual exchange was conducted in the spirit of reciprocal dialogue. In both cases, Pellico urged the writer to rely on critical distance. Accordingly, tradition did not ought to be blindly inherited, and the assimilation of foreign works should have refrained from being merely epigonal. It is clear that Pellico advocated next to the intellectuals' emancipation from old-fashioned aesthetic prescriptions, the distinctiveness of each nation's cultural production of knowledge. This attitude was in line with the *cosmopolitisme littéraire* proclaimed by Mme de Staël (whose intellectual gatherings were regularly attended by Pellico), and the

¹⁰ Both Pellico's epistolary and his reviews published in the *Conciliatore* attest his intellectual acquaintance with Schiller's dramas.

conception of *Weltliteratur* postulated by Goethe in the 19th century. Despite de Staël's and Goethe's overt appeal to entertain international literary relations, and be receptive toward a mutual exchange of thought, they still remained cognizant of national differences, and encouraged writers not to desist from their national spirit for the sake of thinking alike. It is within the wider frame of this "frontierless" and "multi-national" European asset that Pellico's attention toward and admiration for Schiller can be adequately assessed. His role as "conciliator" did not exhaust itself in the intercession of Italian, British and German literature, but resulted equally significant in relation to the intermediate position he occupied between neoclassical decorum and romantic fervor. It is from this liminal standpoint, both in relation to European and Italian literature, that it is possible to appropriately evaluate his notion of nation, and the changes it underwent in the course of his subsequent reconceptualization.

In this study, I consider the resemantization that Pellico undertook of his idea of nation, from the individualistic "fatherland" (*patria*) to the overarching denotation of "people" (*popolo*), in relation to Schiller's claim of "world-citizenship". Schiller's and Pellico's aesthetic practices will appear, however, to unfold in opposite directions. By taking into account their relationship to myth and history, I shall seek to demonstrate how Pellico moves away from classic mythology, and draws himself nearer to history, whereas Schiller's interest in history is, if not abdicated, enhanced through the contemplation of ancient mythology. Moreover, if Pellico's former antigallicism turned into an unconditioned support for France, Schiller revises his original adhesion to the French Revolution into an overt aversion. Yet, I argue, that their inverted trajectories describe a chasm that ultimately detects a crucial point of intersection which I identify respectively in Schiller's cosmopolitanism and Pellico's pan-

europeanism. The following examination of their tragedies shall serve to evince, emphasize, and elucidate the different rationale behind the playwrights' common sense of belonging.

Pellico's former allegiance to Alfieri's theater, and his adherence to a neoclassicism reminiscent of Foscolo's dramas, is attested by only two tragedies, *Laodamia* and *Turno*. Their action unfolds against the backdrop of a mythical narrative that displays its inheritance from Foscolo's predilection for antiquity, whereas their antityrannic fervor is clearly inherited from Alfieri. Pellico, however, soon abandons myth and shifts his attention to historical subjects. The cult of ancient Rome from which Italians had traditionally claimed the origin of their lineage, gradually associated with the Napoleonic imperialistic era, acquired a rather retrograde neoclassical taste. It was thus replaced with a historical time that displayed a closer affinity with a contemporary Italy afflicted by foreign domination. The political picture provided by the Middle Ages, at a time when Italy was weakened by internal discords and dominated by the figure of Dante as the epitome of political exile, offered enough epic material for Pellico to exemplify contemporary history. His later plays, *Francesca da Rimini* and *Eufemio da Messina*, were charged with a strong national afflatus. If the latter, in fact, was subject to severe censorship and ultimately never staged, *Francesca da Rimini* enjoyed a widespread and lasting fame. Pellico's contacts in these years with other Romantic European intellectuals, brought about an opening of perspective instantiated primarily by the sudden awareness of Italy's backwardness, and the subsequent need to remodernize its cultural repertoire. Italy remained for Pellico in the first stance a cultural, prepolitical nation, integrated in the later years of his life into the spirit of a "European patriotism".

Schiller's cosmopolitan stance, instead, was derivative of his conception of universal history grounded in a sustainedly optimistic idea of human progress.¹¹ Like Pellico, Schiller's tragedies were charged with a political connotation and critique. Even during his nostalgic contemplation of ancient myths, which followed the cataclysmic effect derived from the French Revolution and *Terreur*, classic mythology never really constituted a locus of evasion, but rather an amplifier of his cultural critique. Departing from the conviction of political history as vicious, his theater is to be understood as a "political aesthetics" aimed at achieving primarily political change. Though none of Schiller's plays is located in a classic ancient setting, the recurrent motives of suffering and sacrifice, disconcert and disorientation, predicament and peripeteia, remain evocative of the Attic theater to which Schiller demonstrated, after all, a strong attachment. A final aspect worth mentioning is the importance attributed by Pellico and Schiller to female agency at a time when history was yet made by men: a perspective that would underscore an eminently gendered mythical discourse.¹² The overtly religious connotation, for instance, with which Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* and her love for the country is charged in the fulfillment of a divine mission cannot go unnoticed, and will become significant in the later development of nationalistic

¹¹ Needless to say, however, that the term patriotism had in a yet non-national Europe a profoundly different meaning. It must be beared in mind that the enlightened idea of "cosmopolitismus", as it was formulated in the Kantian dictum of a "*weltbürgerliche Gesellschaft*" (1907: 331), constituted both a „pedagogical and a political project“ (Pollock *et al.*, 2002: 5). It was, as V. Mani specifies, an "*imagination of world citizenry*" (2007: 27, my emphasis) that in its oxymoric juxtaposition served the enlightened eudaemonian pursuit.

¹² Uerlings remarks how the idea of the nation had been traditionally connotated in female terms as "mütterliche[r] Ursprung" (2001: 36). Weichlein observes how an analogous, but inverted rhetoric was employed in the differentiation between the king and its kingdom in which the gradual personalizing of the 'fatherland' appeared to be directly proportional to the simultaneous depersonalization of the monarch (2006: 82). In Bhabha's opinion the "metaphor of landscape" ("Vaterland") served to "*naturalize the rhetoric of national affiliation*" (1994: 143, my emphasis).

prospects.¹³ The experience of gradual distancing and departure from the classical world of antiquity is concomitant with the reevaluation of myth in opposition to history. Just as in the history of ancient thought, *mythos* and *logos* were interchangeably used by storytellers, tragedians and historians until in the fifth century the rise of Sophistic thought had brought about, with its dialectics, a new understanding for language and rhetoric, the enlightened secularization had instantiated a paradigmatic turn. The quality of truth and the function of cultural knowledge-production were accordingly no longer attributed to myth, henceforth assimilated to the idea of falsehood, but to history. Myth and history had become mutually exclusive.

Manzoni argued that if the existence of humanity was grounded in history, then the stories and images handed down from antiquity had become superfluous, and mythology was to be dismissed as a form of idolatry. Foscolo's pagan myths could thus have hardly encountered Manzoni's favor whose profound Catholic belief made him instead more receptive of Christian myths. By condemning the neoclassical ideals of Graeco-Roman antiquity, the Italian writer dismissed *tout court* ancient mythology as fantastic, and insisted instead on the report of actual storical events. What distingues Manzoni's theater, for instance, from others is not as much his reiterated reference to actual historical events, then the extensive investigations conducted by the author on a chosen set of historical facts. If with Schiller's historical dramas and Pellico's abandonment of ancient mythology, history seemed to have definitely imposed its supremacy over myth, in this section I illustrate how

¹³ E. Balibar explains how the analogy of patriotism with religion has proven historically to be a successful ideological form of stirring and instrumentalizing feeling of national belonging: "theological discourse has provided models of the *idealization of the nation* and the *sacralization of the state* [...]" (1991: 95).

Goethe and Manzoni eventually reinstalled and reelaborated their own myths by anchoring them back into history.

If Goethe voices in historical dramas, such as *Götz of Berlichingen* and *Egmont*, his critique against the contemporary absolutist regime, he does so by emphasizing the same dichotomy and dialectic that orchestrated the individuals' strive for freedom vis-à-vis the repressive politics of a ruthless *raison d'état*. The evidence for the fact that Manzoni had thoroughly read Goethe's plays can be elicited from numerous similarities that subsist between the *Count of Carmagnola* and Goethe's *Götz* and *Egmont*. The introduction of the chorus, probably modelled on Schiller's example whose tragedies equally echo in Manzoni's theatre, represented next to the abolition of the Aristotelian units one of the most pervasive innovations performed by the author in the tradition of Italian theater. I shall refrain, in this context, from articulating the critique that both Foscolo and other classicist intellectuals voiced against Manzoni's subversive practice. It may suffice to add that Manzoni eventually replaced pagan mythology with a doctrine of morality grounded in the concept of Christian *pietas*. Both in the *Count of Carmagnola* and *Adelchi*, this moral consciousness is accentuated through an introspective practice of faith that superintends the characters' vicissitudes and their historical pessimism. If Christian values can, in fact, triumph only upon an act of self-sacrifice and submission to fate, it is precisely through the characters' martyrdom that Manzoni's tragic heroes can restore, rehabilitate, and reanact the Christian myth of passion on earth.

It is equally *in interiore hominis*, rather than in the institutionalized and dogmatic creed proclaimed by the official Church, that individual faith resided for Goethe. A main aspect, however, distinguishes Goethe's belief from Manzoni's. His credo, in fact, as *Faust* asserts,

though able to hear the biblical teaching, was deprived of the ability to rationally grasp the idea of redemption. For Goethe, the Gospels witnessed and reported human history, and not the history of salvation. As a consequence thereof, his understanding of biblical stories becomes mythological, and his notion of Christ turns into myth. In his readaptation of classical mythology, the figure of Prometheus experiences in Goethe's eponymous dramatic fragment a radical reinterpretation. Goethe's Prometheus epitomizes the triumph of human reason over superstition. It is this enlightened rereading of the classical myth that corroborates the belief according to which universal progress is rooted in the history of human civilization. Through the analogy eventually instated between Prometheus and the figure of Napoleon, incontestably praised by the German author, the myth of Prometheus turns into an allegory of history itself.

Whether through Manzoni's Christian martyrs or Goethe's Promethean heroes, myth acts for both authors as *modus significandi*. To borrow on Blumenberg's extensive disquisitions around the work on myth as signifying entity that relocates itself next to *logos*, it results evident that it is precisely in the historical productivity and the constitutive historicity of myth that its mythopoietic function resides. It suffices, therefore, to indicate myths by their names (Ulysses, Prometheus, Faust, Electra, Iphigenie, etc.), whereby the name itself is reduced to an anagraphic trace which, by acting as an analogical model, instantly refers to an entire apparatus of traditional mythical histories inscribed in the memory of mankind.

II. FROM MYTH TO HISTORY: THE FICTION OF THE NATION IN FOSCOLO'S AND KLEIST'S DRAMAS.

The distinctive juxtaposition of Foscolo and Kleist, two authors who did not share in life a reciprocal acquaintance of their intellectual and ideological affinity, deserves some preliminary elucidations. What appears to defy evidence of their spiritual kinship, and thus justifies less manifestly their aesthetic affiliation, coincides first and foremost with the expression of a *Zeitgeist* rooted in history, and manifesting itself as universal "spirit" of the time shared in by both authors to equal extent and importance. Literary history avers, in this respect, proof of the commonalities in thought, experience, belief and literary practice that drew the two writers near as some indicative parallels captioned below shall illustrate.

To begin with, in spite of the restless and aimless peregrinations throughout Europe that featured Foscolo's deliberate exile and Kleist's banishment from the literary scene, both their prestige today remains limited and stays confined to a locally circumscribed cultural context.¹⁴ The idea of suicide, which exerted an equal attraction on Foscolo and Kleist, and to which the latter eventually succumbed, constitutes another significant agreement between the two authors.¹⁵ It reflects, on the one hand, the secularized mindframe of two enlightened

¹⁴ In contrast to the patriotic cult that emerged around Foscolo in the fervid years of the Italian "Risorgimento" (Mazzini counts him among the fatherland's "Martiri del Pensiero e dell'Azione" [1967: 876]), German literates did not acknowledge Kleist until long after his death. Kleist laments the recognition denied to his person in a letter to his beloved half-sister Ulrike in October of 1803 upon burning the manuscript of his play *Robert Guiscard*: "Ich habe in Paris mein Werk, so weit es fertig war, durchlesen, verworfen, und verbrannt: und nun ist es aus. Der Himmel versagt mir den Ruhm, das größte aller Güter der Erde; ich werfe ihm, wie ein eigensinniges Kind, alle übrigen hin." (1978: 317, no. 77); all further references to Kleist's letters are cited in the text as "B" followed by their standard numeration in parentheses. Only in the second half of the 1800s, did the insistent critiques directed against his work, over which hovered the stigma of a social and suicide outcast, concede ground to a gradual reevaluation of his literary production (Gerrekens 2009: 412).

¹⁵ The conspicuous correspondence with Ulrike displays several instances in which Kleist addresses the existential fatigue and torpor that followed his "Kant crisis" from 1801 onwards. His intention to join in 1803 the army of his fiercely despised enemy, Napoleon, in his campaign against England and "den schönen Tod der Schlachten [zu] sterben" (B/ 77), was just as ironic as its failed outcome that saw him charged and detained as

literati who were sceptically inclined towards the Christian *credo*.¹⁶ On the other hand, and most eminently in this context, it represents a recurrent motif of their literary corpus. It is, in this respect, in particular the overarching theme of death which constitutes the poetic device pervading their tragedies, and which shall thus serve as *principium unitatis* in my forthcoming investigation of their plays. As leading motif, it will contribute to assess the literary meaning and ideological message that informs these works as well as answer the questions as to the modes and manners in which the representation and performance of death

Prussian spy. Despite the fact that, albeit the dominant theme of suicide in Foscolo's prose (*Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*) and poems (*In morte del padre*, *In morte del fratello Giovanni*), there seems to be no proof of attempted self-murder, one can find in Foscolo's biographies sporadic though consistent references to suicidal inclinations. They encompass a time frame as early as 1797 when the poet decided to leave Venice after the Treaty of Campformio and Parini in Milan: "e cercava nell'alta compagnia del Precettore uno scampo all'ossessione del suicidio" (Saponaro 1953: 42), until into the later years of his life after his compatriot Giuseppe Pecchio, whom he knew particularly between 1806 and 1815, reports in his less benevolent biography to the author after meeting him in England: "In quelle breve eruzioni ei diveniva mutolo, accigliato, cupo, guardando con pupille sbarrate, immote come quelle d'un frenetico; e se rompeva quella terribile taciturnità non era che per brontolare alcune sentenze sul suicidio, o per ripetere le cento volte a guisa d'un rosario alcuni versi allusivi al suo stato." (1833: 60); see also Nicoletti (1974: 42-44). Incipient and more incisive – though literally transfigured – hints of Foscolo's self-destructive disposition can be detected already in the strongly autobiographical letters of *Ortis* in which private and public motifs, passionate and political reasons are conjoined. The novel translates Foscolo's patriotism into his unfulfilled love for Teresa Pichler (married to the eminent Italian poet Vincenzo Monti) who had instilled in him the first sentiments and thoughts of suicide: "Oh sì, mia Teresa; dovevano pure una volta finir le mie pene; e la mia mano non trema nell'armarsi del ferro liberatore, poichè abbandono la vita mentre tu m'ami, mentre sono ancora degno di te, e degno del tuo pianto, ed io posso sacrificarmi a me solo, ed alla tua virtù." *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, p. 190; additional references in the text will be quoted as "O" followed by the page number.

¹⁶ In his letter to Ulrike from November 12, 1799, Kleist speaks of "*meiner Religion*" deliberately emphasizing its individualistic nature (B/ 6). And one year later, on September 5, 1800, he writes to his fiancée Wilhelmine von Zenge: "wer weiß ob Christus am Kreuze gethan haben würde, was er that, wenn nicht aus dem Kreise wüthender Verfolger seine Mutter und seine Jünger feuchte Blicke des Entzückens auf ihn geworfen hätten." (B/ 19). The personalized creed that he mentions to his half-sister before overtly questioning the Christian myth of salvation, resembles the critique pursued by Enlightenment thinkers against the confessional Church – a distrust that culminated for Kleist in an irreversible agnosticism (Hamacher 2009: 277). Hamacher more specifically relates the poet's religious scepticism to his epistemological dilemma which began to display signs of acute distress in 1801 (2009: 327). During her illuminating study on Foscolo's understanding and use of the Scriptures in his writings, with particular attention to his epistolary novel of *Ortis*, M. A. Terzoli describes the Italian poet as "laico": a laicism inherited from the religion of freedom and the cult of reason professed by the Jacobinians – in her own words: "un travestimento biblico della storia contemporanea" (1988: 37-8). This appeared the more justified after the Catholic Austrians had reasserted, albeit only for short, their power over Italy in 1799, and emperor Francis II had assured the Papacy his protection from French persecutions during their intransigent politics of secularization; cf. N. Aston (1988: 252-7).

translates and transposes on stage a drama that originates in reality. In what follows, I shall delineate the historical premises of the political and poetological background against which both playwrights acted and contemporary events unfolded.

Kleist and Foscolo, born respectively in October 1777 and February 1778, were close contemporaries who witnessed an historical trauma that was dramatically unfolding on the European scenario under the shoves of the Napoleonic campaign of conquest. The historical pessimism that pervades their works, since 1798 for Foscolo and 1806 for Kleist, is a symptom of the political disillusionments that were wafting over the Italian peninsula and the German city states. It became the more profound the higher the French emperor's figure rose against the backdrop of world history, hypostatized to a nearly supernatural entity.¹⁷ To counteract the *impasse* of their times, Foscolo and Kleist resorted to a narrative device as persuasive in its socio-political impact and as present in the collective memory as history: the stories of classical mythology – only to turn them into an aesthetic device of demystification. This shall become manifest as I approach the analysis of their mythical plays and analyze their treatment of myth as a means of rationalization. As I shall address and render evident in the following section, this secularization of myth will augment the playwrights' interest in history, and eventually affect their subsequent shift from mythical stories to historical myths.

The proximity of myth to history as *modus narrandi* had been already assessed in the first half of the 18th century by Giambattista Vico who attributed to myth the quality of *vera*

¹⁷ The production and propagation of aesthetic artefacts (from literature to painting, from sculpture to architecture) glorifying Napoleon to a historical myth since his successful invasion of Aegypt in 1798, became representative of an influential ideological propaganda in the political agenda of his regime.

narratio (true narration).¹⁸ The close relationship that Vico detects between memory and imagination led him so far as to conclude that "poets must therefore have been the first *historians* of the nations" (NS/ 820 my emphasis).¹⁹ Hans Blumenberg, who grants the Italian philosopher the merit to have ascribed to myth its "own specific exercise of reason" and "conceded that exercise [...] in the great context of a theory of history" (1985: 377), agrees with Vico on the assumption that the "power of imagination translates importance and expression into *stories*" (1985: 377 my emphasis). In its quality of story, myth establishes a fundamental kinship to history. As stories, in fact, myth – like history – results from the need of human consciousness to provide reality with meaning or, as Blumenberg specifies, with a "significance" (*Bedeutsamkeit*) apt to counteract the reality's "indifference" and "absolutism" (1985: 59-112).²⁰

¹⁸ In his *New Science* Vico writes: "The fables in their origin were true and severe narrations, whence *mythos*, fable, was defined as *vera narratio*." (814). All further references to this work are cited in the text as "NS" followed by the paragraph number in parentheses.

¹⁹ Consistent with his etymological practice, Vico provides a philological explanation to substantiate the equation of memory to imagination according to which the Latin term "memorable" was originally employed to indicate what was deemed "imaginable". He subsequently argues that the faculty of memory can be said to consist of three main "aspects": "*memory* when it remembers things, *imagination* when it alters or imitates them, and *invention* when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship." (NS/ 819 my emphases). Vico must have inferred the idea of this duplicity of human memory as guarantor of factual and fictional reality from Cicero whom he had extensively read, "always three times" as he declares in his *Autobiography*, during his sojourn in Vatolla as preceptor at the marquis Rocca's castle from 1686-1695 (1944: 120). In his canonic work *On the Orator* (*De Oratore*), Cicero relates memory to history as well as to eloquence, and by linking history to oratory, history eventually becomes a work of persuasion (2.51-64). In his later dialogue *On the Laws* (*De Legibus*), the alleged distinction presented in book 1 between history and poetry appears eventually challenged by the assertion that "history is a *kind of writing*", rendering it questionable whether history creates rather than corroborates reality: "people [...] behave ignorantly [...] in looking for the truth of a witness when examining a poet" (1999: 106-5 my emphasis). As we shall see, the contestable borderline separating history from poetry will constitute Manzoni's crux in his aesthetic reflections on historical truth ("vero storico") versus poetic truth ("vero poetico"); cf. section 4.1.

²⁰ I will return in more detail to these key concepts of Blumenberg's theory in the subsequent sections of this chapter. It shall suffice at this point to specify that Blumenberg presupposes, like Vico, an intrinsic value of truthfulness to myth that contradicts traditional assumptions. As he explains: "Fictional materials cannot achieve this suggestion of meaning; but the significance of myth is not recognizable as something fictional, because it has no nameable author, because it comes from afar and does not lay claim to a particular

In his study on the "representation of reality" in narrativity, Hayden White points out a contiguity between historical and mythical narratives that reveals to be particularly narrow in historical writings of the 19th century. According to White, history as myth is a "narrativizing discourse" (1987: 3) which aims at "make[ing] the real *desirable*" and give it the "odor of the ideal" (1987: 21 my emphasis).²¹ The tendency towards idealization reflects, as the pursuit for "wholeness and completeness", the narrative "demand for closure" (1987: 21). This "mask of meaning" (1987: 21), as White puts it, represents a feature constitutive of history as well as of myth.

In his introduction to the concept of nation as "narration", Homi Bhabha addresses what he describes as the "*problematic* 'closure' of textuality" to challenge the alleged

chronological position." (1985: 75); for a closer differentiation between "meaning" and "significance" as inferred from Blumenberg, see Bottici (2007: 124).

²¹ In the introduction to his study, White distinguishes between a "discourse that narrates" and thus "openly adopts a perspective that looks out on the world and *reports* it", and a "discourse that narrativizes": in other words "feigns to make the world *speak itself* and speak itself as a *story*." (1987: 2 my emphases). The idea of presenting historical reality as if it "speaks" itself resembles remarkably a key definition that Barthes applies to myth – it is to no surprise that White prefaces his disquisitions with an homage to the French thinker. Barthes describes myth on the basis of the word's etymology as a "type of speech" and, akin to history, as a "mode of signification" (1957: 109). If he stresses, however, over other possible considerations its formal syntax ("we must nevertheless first describe it as a form" [1957: 109]), it is on this same ground legitimate to assimilate myth as a (paraphrasing Barthes) 'form of speech' to language. In his *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, Wittgenstein asserts that "an entire mythology is stored within our language" (1993: 133), though he omits to provide further explanations to his essentially axiomatic statement. Following Wittgenstein further in his conceptualization of language structure and its forms of signification, a meaning is ultimately derived by the *use* of a word (1953: 14e) as the result of games we play with language (1953: 5e): "There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words', 'sentences'." And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. [...] Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life." (1953: 11e). Wittgenstein's correlation between language and its usage adds a second dimension to myth: that of action. Understood in these terms, myth functions as a story both to *work on* and to *promote action*. In contrast to the ritualistic tradition in which the performance of myth through rites serves to validate and preserve the socio-cultural configuration (Friedrich/ Quast 2004: IX), the reenactment of myths realized by Foscolo and Kleist does not intend to legitimize a *status quo*. On the contrary, it aims to question it by acting out what Blumenberg describes as the "work on myth". Under the pen of Foscolo and Kleist, mythical stories handed down from antiquity are reworked in relation to their time and place, and camouflaged as political critique. In the second decade of the 19th century, this ideologically charged criticism will turn into a project of national and political education; cf. section III of this study.

rationality of totalizing narratives and unmask their myths. He displays the discursive strategies involved in the imagination of cohesively conceived communities, and discloses the "Janus-faced ambivalence of language" which conceptualizes the idea of collective identities:²²

where meanings may be partial because they are in medias res; and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of *cultural authority* may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of 'composing' its powerful image (1990a: 3 my emphasis).

It is precisely in this process of (re)invention that resides the creative potential or, etymologically phrased, the *poietic* nature of narrativity. On this same line of argument and thus akin to Bhabha, White points out the ability of narrativity to construe a reality upon *contesting* its authority in the first place. This "theme of authority", White explains, becomes evident in the "truth claims of the narrative" and the "right to narrate", both implying a "relationship to authority per se" (1987: 19).²³

Insofar as it resides in the nature of narratives to pose a "problem of authority" (1987: 19), I argue that Foscolo's and Kleist's mythical and historical dramas shall be understood as a literary device self-reflectively undermining their own discourse of legitimacy. Bhabha dismantles, for instance, Balibar's concept of a nation's "prehistory" (1991: 88) as the oversimplification – elaborated originally through the "will [to nationhood]

²² Bhabha conceptualizes the linguistic and, more broadly, narrative techniques employed in modulating the "Janus-faced discourse of the nation" (1990a: 3). By decentralizing the discourse of empire to its territorial peripheries and marginal "sub-texts", Bhabha points out, in an eponymous article, the "dissemination" (1900b) inherent to the narrative forms that construe the ideological basis of collective entities.

²³ White focuses more precisely on historical accounts. Though he does so by investigating them specifically as forms of narrative with which the "mythic narrative" (1987: 3), addressed by White in the incipient pages of his article, can be put on a par. For both historians and myth-makers are equally concerned with the question of authority (1987: 19): in terms of legitimation as much as of critique.

that *unifies* historical memory" (1990a: 310 my emphasis) – of what must be perceived instead as a plurality of histories. In both cases, myth and history are representative of a type of narrative that imposes meaning on reality to the extent that it claims its authority.²⁴ In what follows, I shall exemplify how these playwrights adopt the stories of myth as well as the myths of history to demythisize and demistify the hegemony claimed by official national narratives and how, by acting out their ambivalences, they articulate in turn, as Bhabha would put it, a "*counter-narrative*" (1990b: 300 my emphasis).²⁵

As their readaptation of ancient myths and reassessment of monumental history serves their criticism against imperialistic claims and the constitution of a national awareness, I shall articulate my forthcoming analysis within the terms of this specific theoretical framework that conjoins the poetic practices and ideological purposes common to both authors and consolidates their alliance of mindsets and pursuits. This chapter will accordingly unfold in two moments that shall guide my reading of the plays in displaying and demonstrating Foscolo's as much as Kleist's progressive transition from myth towards history. Upon setting in with their mythical plays, the study will cede space to the chronologically subsequent historical tragedies exemplifying a trajectory that crosses and correlates two types of narratives, that of fictional myth and factual history, apparently

²⁴ Marcel Detienne points out the subversive function originally exerted by myths in ancient Greece as oral tradition entering in an antagonistic relationship to the written practice of the philosophical discourse: "stories that come from nowhere; anonymous tales that owe their existence to interchangeable narrators; stories emerging from obscurity, to which well-read Greeks paid no attention, whereas they sought wisdom in proverbs and in philosophy" (1986: 86); see also Mali (1992: 156-7). Detienne further identifies the mythological tales of antiquity as a "discourse of tradition" that is meant to act reassuringly in times of crisis (1986: 85). Both practices and objectives will acquire relevance in Foscolo's and Kleist's employment of and work on myth.

²⁵ I use the term of "demythisation" in Jesi's meaning of the word. In his study on *Letteratura e mito*, Furio Jesi describes the process of "demitizzazione" (1968: 49) when he argues against the replacement of genuine myths with false ideological ones.

contrastive, and yet mutually complementary in their objectives and origins as the introduction to the very next section shall set out and forth in more depth and detail.

2.1. Mythical Plays

In the "age of heroes" Vico identified both the *locus* and the language of myth as it expressed itself in the poetic forms of "metaphors, images, similitudes or comparisons" (NS/ 438).²⁶

Myths constituted the means to grasp the complexities of reality by rendering what was conceptually ineffable symbolically apprehensible.²⁷ In the early stage of the development of humankind when men were not able yet to "*reflect* with a clear mind", but could merely "*perceive* with a troubled and agitated spirit" (NS/ 218 my emphases), this type of language "composed of divine and heroic characters", specifies Vico, "was born entirely of poverty of language and *need of expression* [*necessità di spiegarsi*]" (NS/ 456 my emphases). This need to "express" or rather *explain* (as the Italian verb "*spiegare*" overtly suggests) is informed by

²⁶ It was already referred to the relevance that Vico's mythological theory assumes in its close relationship to history, more precisely, and in Vico's own terms, as "civil histories of the first people" (NS/ 352). Though Bottici warns against an erroneous conceptualization of myth as restricted exclusively to the idea of "heroism" when viewed outside of Vico's "teleological scheme" (2007: 111), I argue that both Foscolo, as previous studies have widely proven, and Kleist display in many points a kinship to Vico in their understanding of history. Certainly Vico's merit of postulating *ante litteram* a philosophy of history that would be systematically elaborated by the Romantics remains uncontested, and Isaiah Berlin does not neglect to mention Vico as precursor, though unread or even fallen into oblivion, of Hamann and Herder whom he names as the "true fathers of Romanticism" (1999: 49-60). In the course of my investigations, I shall point to the closeness exhibited in Foscolo's and Kleist's works and aesthetic disquisitions to Vico's thought. It may suffice in this context to clarify that the pessimism voiced by both authors must be viewed as alien to the enlightened idea of historical progress, and more in line instead with the cyclical development of history postulated by Vico. This is particularly true for Kleist's reflections on the original sin and the irreversible loss of paradise which plays a strategic role in Vico's distinction between sacred and profane history. Furthermore, the "age of heroes", in which Vico locates the birth of mythologies, coincides with an *a-logic* time in history from which Foscolo desumed the exaltation of human imagination against the deceiving faculty of reason. For Kleist, however, this lack of rationality turns into a more radical scepticism and culminates in an epistemological dilemma which will eventually undermine the narrative logic itself – we shall see how *Prince Homburg* represents in this direction a blatant example.

²⁷ The term "symbol" shall not be confused with the abstract linguistic sign, but rather corresponds to concrete images, figurative or "mute" signs, if one agrees to follow Vico's etymological reasoning: "In Greek the fable was also called *mythos*, myth, whence comes the Latin *mutus*, mute. For speech was born in mute times as mental [or sign] language [...]. Thus the first language in the first mute times of the nations must have begun with signs, whether gestures or physical objects, which had natural relations to the ideas [to be expressed]" (NS/ 401). On the value attributed by Vico to myths as early modes of imagination and signification, see Berlin (2000: 73-7).

the original etymology that the Italian philosopher infers from the term "mythology".²⁸

Through the combination of *logos* (word) and *mythos* (iconic sign) (NS/ 401), mytho-logies literally provide words (*logoi*) to "mute" images (*mythoi*).²⁹ As Blumenberg would phrase it: they *name* what is "nameless" to make sense of reality for "[a]ll trust in the world begins with names, in connection with which stories can be told" (1985: 35).³⁰ Myth hence demands its own rationality: a "logos" constitutive of mythology itself.

"Myth itself" then "is a piece of high-carat 'work of logos'" (Blumenberg 1985: 12).

Keeping Blumenberg's premise in mind for whom Vico represents ultimately the departure point of his disquisitions, in my forthcoming investigation I propose to consider Foscolo's and Kleist's mythical dramas as a device of *rationalization*. This rationalizing process is

²⁸ More precisely, the Italian verb "spiegare", as derived from "di-spiegare", corresponds more closely to the English translation "to un-fold" which – according to its Latin etymology "ex-planare" – means "to lay/ even out", in other words "to ex-plain" and thus "to signify".

²⁹ Continuing along his philological reasoning, Vico eventually equates mythologies to allegories: "the fables being imaginative class concepts, as we have shown, the mythologies must have been the allegories corresponding to them" (NS/ 403). It is necessary to specify, however, that the term "allegory" indicates for Vico, in the literal sense of the word, a "diversiloquium". It is understood as such not as a process of signification *mediated* through reflection (not "analogical" as "vulgar languages"), but genuinely "univocal" (NS/ 403). In other words, it implies a direct and intuitive relationship between image and word. What may appear to be a captious explanation, aims instead to prevent the intrinsic rationality of myth, or else its autonomy, from being compromised. This was after all Vico's original concern when formulating a theory of myth that would be able to contend the supremacy imposed by the Cartesian *ratio*. Cassirer, whose philosophy is profoundly indebted to Vico, recovers and reiterates the emotional quality of myth and sets it up from any intellectual implications. He moves, however, from a new perspective, less concerned with the Enlightenment than with Medieval hermeneutics. Contrary to Vico, he will discern the disparity rather than the congruity of myth to allegory (1964: 256). I shall return to Cassirer's argumentation when addressing the type of mythological renewal that Manzoni and Goethe perform, and most eminently with regard to Manzoni's religious allegoresis; cf. sections IV and 4.1.

³⁰ Though Blumenberg and Vico agree on the equal value ascribed to logos and myth as comparable, rather than competing, modes of thought (Mali 1992: 150), Vico's course of history is clearly one that moves from the divine to the human nature, in other words, one that asserts the evolution of logos out of mythos: "The first nature, by a powerful deceit of imagination, which is most robust in the weakest at reasoning, was a poetic or creative nature [...]. The second was heroic nature, believed by the heroes themselves to be of divine origin [...]. The third was human nature, intelligent and hence modest, benign, and reasonable, recognizing for laws conscience, reason, and duty" (NS/ 916-8).

performed both *by* myth and *on* myth. Through the extrapolation of mythical stories from their immemorial past and their transposition into a contemporary historical present, Kleist and Foscolo avail themselves of ancient myths to unravel the profane myths of their times which constitute the "mythical romance" that Nietzsche deems indiscernible from "monumental history".³¹ In this manner, the false myths hypostasized by history are secularized: they are divested of their alleged sacrality, and consequently demythicized.³² The theme of death and destruction, which underscores as running motif Kleist's as well as Foscolo's dramas, advocates and anticipates through the display of historical violence *and* the violation perpetrated by history against individuality, upheld in defense of objective reconstruction, the efforts to demonumentalize the legacy claimed by historical writing and records.

As chief component of the tragic genre, the dramatization of death functions as catalyser of a rationalization process meant to dismantle the "mythical" (or else false) fiction

³¹ *The Use and Abuse of History [for Life]*, p. 21; all further references are cited in the text as "HL" followed by the page number in parentheses. In his later work, *The Dawn of Day*, Nietzsche overtly mentions Napoleon as "he who inspired the soul of his century with that *romantic prostration* in the presence of the 'genius' and the 'hero', which was so foreign to the spirit of rationalism of the nineteenth century", no. 298, p. 264, my emphasis; all further references in the text are noted as "D" followed by the paragraph number in parentheses. In his polemic against the "hero-worship", Nietzsche points out: "The idealist of a person imagines this person to be so far from him that he can no longer see him distinctly, and then he travesties that which he can just *perceive* [umdeuten] into something beautiful (D/ 298 my emphasis). It is significant that the English translation "to perceive" chosen to convey more closely the meaning of the original German term "umdeuten" (which, despite the intellectual nature of the action verb, clearly indicates in this context a re- or rather mis-interpretation of reality based on a deceitful visual, hence *sensual* perception), is reminiscent of a terminology already used by Vico to denote the quality of mythical transfiguration when referring to myths of the heroic age, long before human reasoning had appeared.

³² In his comprehensive study on myth, Sabbatucci elucidates the rationalizing function originally performed by myths on the Attic stage (1978: 159-163). If one bears this point in mind, it is easy to imagine what a subversive force historical dramas must have exerted. If we follow Blumenberg ("Myth permits one to take a stand *outside* of history" [1985: 61 my emphasis]), the alterity suggested by the atemporal nature of mythical stories must have appeared, in contrast, far less disruptive. This fact may as well account for the reason why historical dramas were unable to encounter in the tradition of Greek theater the desired fortune that mythical tragedies enjoyed.

of history.³³ For tragedy itself, as Nietzsche points out, could not have unfolded within a reality that claims its uncontested rationality.³⁴ The "Greek" in fact, declares Nietzsche, "knew and felt the *terrors* and *horrors* of existence: to be able to live at all, he had to interpose the shining dream-birth of the Olympian world between himself and them" (BT § 3, 34-5 my emphases).

Similarly Blumenberg articulates his theory of myth: "Terror [*Entsetzen*] [...] becomes 'nameless' as the highest level of fright. So the earliest and not the least reliable form of familiarity with the world is to find names for what is undefined. Only then and on the strength of that can a story be told" (1985: 35). Just as the ancient Greeks intended to vanquish through their mythological narratives the frightening forces of their world, in staging their myths Foscolo and Kleist name what in their reality defies conceptualization. They provide *nomina* to the dreadful numinous manifestations which they attempt to rationalize, and thus mitigate the fears perpetrated by their historical circumstances. Foscolo's tragic drama *Tieste* will provide an initial and indicative example of the fundamental forms and functions attended by ancient myths in challenging through their remaking and reenactment the bias of alleged historical truth.

³³ The theme of death that pervades Kleist's works as a form of subversive writing has been studied by Guenther in a contrastive analysis of Kleist's prose with Balzac. For Guenther the theme of death reflects the historical anxieties of his time, and best translates the idea of destructive suppression imposed by Napoleon's dissolute tyranny. Following her argument, however, I suggest to evaluate how this thematic constant acquires a new significance and potential in Kleist's tragedies through Blumenberg's acceptance of myth as a category of terror.

³⁴ Hence his lament for its irreversible decline upon the advent of Socrates's philosophy; cf. *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 113 ff.; additional references in the text will be cited as "BT" followed by the page number.

2.1.1. *Tieste* (1797)

Not only does *Tieste* represent Foscolo's first tragedy and his official debut as writer, more importantly, it derives its literary value from occupying a position that I deem to be critical for the subsequent development of his political thought. Staged for the first time in Venice on January 4, 1797 (only a few months before Napoleon signed the "Treatise of Campoformio" with which he ceded the Venetian Republic to Austria), Foscolo eventually rejected his play in 1803, and omitted to revise it in 1808 for a restaging that was intended to take place at the Milan *Carcano* theater.³⁵

Assessing through a closer analysis of the tragedy this gradual, yet radical change of perspective may contribute to better understand the controversial appraisal with which Foscolo's *Tieste* was received on the front of contemporary literates as well as the poet's ultimate rejection of a play that had been greeted with acclaimed enthusiasm at its premiere in the Venetian *Sant'Angelo* theater. It had been, as Terzoli succinctly describes it in her biography to the author, an indeed "ambivalent relationship" (2000: 20) that Foscolo entertained with his tragedy. To a significant extent this ambivalence can be largely detected in the ambiguities that the myth of Thyestes raises in Foscolo's rereading and rewriting of Seneca's original drama.

Hence my objective in this section will be double-tracked. A contrastive analysis between the Italian and Latin tragedy shall primarily illustrate how the mythological subject

³⁵ When publishing in Pisa, in 1803, the 2nd edition of his volume of *Poesie*, Foscolo explicitly dismisses any of his writings preceding the Congress of Lyons in 1802 which sanctioned the end of Italy's illusion to obtain national unity. In the forward to his collection of poems the author writes: "Ugo Foscolo pubblica queste poche Poesie per rifiutare tutte le altre fino ad oggi stampate, e segnatamente una lunga *Ode* a Bonaparte ormai troppo divulgata, e il *Tieste* [...]; cose tutte e troppo giovanili, e non sempre pubblicate di consentimento dell'Autore", cf. *Edizione Nazionale*, vol. I, p. 13; additional references in the text will be cited as "EN" followed by the volume and page number within parentheses.

acts as camouflage of a political subtext for, to say it with Blumenberg: "Only work *on* myth – even if it is the work of finally reducing it – makes the work *of* myth manifest" (1985: 118 my emphases). Additionally, the investigation of the "work of myth" performed by Foscolo shall be pursued against the background of other writings (such as poetry, prose and letters) by the same author which significantly intersect and thus attest the main stages of his ideological conversion. By describing *Tieste* as his "critical" work, I intend to situate this play, in the etymological sense of the word, in a *discriminating* position that marks the turning point between two moments respectively animated by postrevolutionary and patriotic feelings, by Jacobinian and anti-Bonapartist fervor. It is to be understood as well as "critical" for locating itself in a period of eminent *crisis*.³⁶ For Italian intellectuals, whose republican aspirations had found in Napoleon a source of emulation, were to be eventually disappointed by his role shift from liberator into dictator.³⁷ In 1816, from his "esilio spontaneo" in London, in an epistle that reads like a deposition made to the Swiss police director in Zurich, Foscolo sketches a condensed picture of his early literary experience as a politically engaged writer:

³⁶ In his study on the *Myth of the State*, Cassirer assesses the extent to which already primitive myths were largely employed in critical situations (1946: 278), i.e. whenever the individuals fell short of reason, the "power of the miraculous and mysterious" intervened in the role of "ultima ratio" (279). On the various theories, meanings and uses of political myths see Chiara Bottici (2007). Bottici rightly observes how Cassirer's study of myth as a propagandistic tool underlines its perils rather than its profits, and is thus to be understood as a critique against myth as a regressive instrument of power and demagoguery (2007: 154). Cassirer himself makes this stance clear by distinguishing his contemporary standpoint from precedent Romantic ones (1946: 281). In his earlier comprehensive *opus* on the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1925), Cassirer had already specified how "mythical thinking" would "presuppose[] a *spiritual crisis*" (1964: 70). This idea of myth as resulting from a crisis, from a "division" that "occurs in consciousness" (1964: 70) will become more evident in Kleist's poetics and his use of myth as a narrative device employed to overcome the *impasse* of a no longer exclusively political, but more radically epistemological dilemma.

³⁷ The two writings by Foscolo that mark the antipodes of this inversion are respectively the ode to "Bonaparte liberator" (*Bonaparte liberatore*) from 1797 and the "Oration to Bonaparte" (*Orazione a Bonaparte pel Congresso di Lione*) written in 1802 as the ultimate appeal that the author directs to Napoleon urging him to grant the Italians the right to redeem his pledge for freedom.

La mia professione letteraria e politica, né io ho mai disgiunto l'una dall'altra, comincia dall'anno 1796, quand'io, uscito appena di fanciullo (nacqui nel 78) scrissi il *Tieste* tragedia; e fu rappresentata in Venezia [...]. E in quell'anno io scrissi un'*Ode per Bonaparte*, lodandolo. Ma, allorch'ei tornato d'Egitto s'insignorì delle cose di Francia, la ristampai con una Lettera in fronte per correttivo, ove (né bisognava essere grande profeta) gli predissi che l'universale viltà l'avrebbe fatto tiranno, e la tirannide fatto potente ed infame. [...] Nel 1802 pubblicai le *Lettere d'Ortis*, unico libro che non abbia il mio nome; ma perch'io mi mostrava apertamente avverso a' Francesi che erano in Milano, e a' Tedeschi che teneano lo Stato Veneto, ci misi in fronte, senza nome, il mio ritratto, affinché nessuno fosse accusato: altri l'ascrisse a vanità.³⁸

Whereas the entire excerpt results inspired by the striking *Leitmotiv* of foreign (Austrian and French) domination, the referenced works mark the caesura that in 1802 divides Foscolo's perception of history into a pre- and post-Napoleonic legend. Both the encomiastic *Ode to Napoleon* and the admonitory *Letters of Ortis* will be subject to revisionary amendments. Foscolo's *Tieste*, to which the author will never set his pen again, will represent the only exception. Hence the diverse fate which the play eventually underwent: acclaimed on the Venetian stage in 1797, but censured in Milan in 1808 by Eugène de Beauharnais, French viceroy of the new Italian Kingdom. On the following pages I shall investigate, within this specific constellation of writings arranged by the author, the manner in which one and the same myth can alter its meanings and convey such disparate messages throughout time. For it is precisely "in its *procedure* and its '*form*'" that myth derives its "*historical power*" (Blumenberg 1985: 16 my emphases).

As Seneca, for instance, exemplifies – by reviving the ancient myth of Thyeste during a time in Roman history that witnessed the oppressive regime of Nero's empire – it is through the political component that the classical model is reactualized and thus modernized on the

³⁸ "Al Signor Consigliere di Stato direttore della polizia generale del Cantone di Zurigo", *Opere edite e postume*, p. 269-70.

Italian stage.³⁹ Answering the questions as to what may have led Foscolo to select from the vast mythological repertoire this particular story, and why he may have opted – among the numerous reelaborations available of the original myth – for no other than Seneca's version, shall highlight constants and variables that structure the play and strengthen its ambiguities for a potential renewal of its interpretation at various intervals of time.⁴⁰ As it will become more evident, the ethical implications addressed throughout the dramatic development and the psychological involvement that animate the characters' decisions and deeds must have exerted a role not indifferent in conditioning Foscolo's choice.

The leading motifs of exile and death which pinpoint the on and offset of the brothers' gruesome rivalry and sanguinary conflict, would explain Foscolo's preference for this Greek myth over others, in particular if one takes into account the frequency with which these themes recur in subsequent plays and thus the value they assume for the author.⁴¹ The

³⁹ The charge of anachronism moved against Foscolo in the *Notizie storico-critiche sul "Tieste"* (EN II, p. 208) for adapting a classical subject to modern politics, fails to assess this "mythization" of contemporary events as consequence of the author's neoclassic predilection which will recur with significant consistency in his works. This inclination is best exemplified by the cycle of hymns dedicated to the Greek *Graces* which Foscolo composed at intervals over several years (1803-1822) only to leave it unfinished. The prolonged itinerary of their genesis proves that it represented a constant of Foscolo's poetics. It will return with insistency in *Ajax*, his next tragedy of mythical content which fell within the same historical period as the hymns to the *Graces*, and suffered from the same political delusion that eventually led Foscolo to interrupt the composition of the *Graces*; cf. section 2.1.3.

⁴⁰ The front of critics is divided in the diversity of possible meanings that can be attributed to the play and its alleged message. Whether it juxtaposes two philosophies of statecraft (cf. Nicoletti [1989]), or it directs its invective against the tyrannic abuse of power (cf. Paratore [1988]), whether it articulates a Machiavellian polity of force (cf. Del Vento [2003]), or it represents a sentimental family drama (cf. Fubini [1988]) – all these divergent viewpoints, to address only a few, speak for the multiple layers of readings that compose the play and contribute to its ideological vigor.

⁴¹ Foscolo, however, less concerned with the genealogical perpetration of crime as it traditionally features in royal Greek myths and with which Seneca begins his own tragedy (cf. the dispute between the Fury and Tantalus' ghost in the *incipit* scene), turns his attention to a political problem of national significance. Another relevant role in his choice may have played the fact that the mythical characters are desumed in this myth from the tangible sphere of human history rather than from the supernatural heights of the Olympus; on the "old dichotomy between divine and heroic myths" (*Göttermythologie* and *Heldensage*), see Kirk (1970: 173).

tragedy's formal features render thus justice as well to the classic model.⁴² It is, however, in particular the moral claim posited by Seneca as well as his stress on the characters' inner drama that distinguishes the Latin tragedian from his Greek predecessors and which must have drawn, as I shall illustrate, Foscolo to Seneca's example.⁴³

"He commenced his career a year before the fall of the Venetian republic, with a tragedy called *Thyestes*" (EN XI/2, p. 468). With these words the author recollects from his exile in London the time that preceded the actual tragedy that history brought about at a time when his hopes in Napoleon were still held up high.⁴⁴ The patriotic zeal that animated the young poet right upon moving to Venice in 1793, the city of origin of his father's family,

⁴² If Seneca's can be said to be for the most part a "two-actor play" (Davis 2003: 77), this is true for Foscolo's *Tieste* as well. Taking into account that the Italian playwright adds two female protagonists that had been otherwise absent in the Latin drama, in three acts out of five the dialogues are articulated by only two characters, and of overall 23 scenes, only seven (in other words, less than one third) feature more than two protagonists on stage. Foscolo himself expresses his intention to emulate the ancient theater in his *Essay on the Present Literature of Italy* from 1818, in which he will write, recollecting his first tragedy more than twenty years later: "he [*sc.* Foscolo] resolved that his drama should have only four personages; and that the simplicity and severity of his whole composition should rival Alfieri and the Greek tragedians" (EN XI/2, p. 468). To the limited number of characters corresponds a reduction of the plot's complexity and a subsequent shift of accent (as Seneca had already performed it) on the characters and their emotional state.

⁴³ In Seneca's tragedies, the Greek ἀνάγκη is substituted by the individuals' consciousness; on the dramaturgical adaptations performed by the Roman theater of former Greek tragedies, see Weber (1959: 489). If Seneca, however, reserves the moral issue exclusively to the male characters, for Foscolo the matter of conscience is voiced primarily by the female figures. According to Mandruzzato, Foscolo's model was inspired by Alfieri's not Seneca's drama, as the considerable amendments from the original Latin tragedy and a dramatic style close to Alfieri attest (1978: 32); on the same line, Paratore asserts that Foscolo saw in Seneca primarily Alfieri's inspiration (1988: 260). I still argue that one shall not juxtapose Foscolo, despite his admiration, too close to his model, especially in view of his radical Republicanism that the older and traditionally minded Alfieri never supported. Against a mere intent of emulating his predecessor, I argue that Foscolo valued the importance that Seneca attributed to the moral message his theater ought to convey on stage. Masiello ascribes Foscolo a "stoic" attitude that would speak for a kinship between the Italian poet and the Latin thinker and may deserve, in another context, closer attention (1984: 22).

⁴⁴ See Schipa (1969: 27-9). The sonnet "A Venezia" that Foscolo composed in 1796 articulates *expressis verbis* his reliance upon the charismatic French general: "O di mille tiranni, a cui rapina/ Riga il soglio di sangue, imbelli terra! [...] Ma verrà il giorno, e *gallico* [*sc.* Napoleon] lo affretta/ *Sublime esempio*, ch'ei de' suoi tiranni/ Farà col loro scettro alta vendetta" (vv. 1-2, 12-4 my emphases), cf. *Le poesie*, p. 352.

found in the Republican ideals that the French Revolution had disseminated the inspirational source for his *Tieste*, concluded already in 1795.⁴⁵

Both the theme of return and of freedom are voiced in the second act through the appearance on stage of the tragic protagonist in the reencounter with his mother:⁴⁶

IPPODAMIA E qual folle pensier pasci ... Tieste?...
Come osasti venir?

TIESTE Erope mia.
A *liberare*, od a *morir*. Or volge
Omai il quint'anno, che *esule m'aggiro* (T I/2, vv. 21-4, my emphases)

Through Tieste's return to a royal palace oppressed by the threats of a despotic brother, Foscolo alludes to his own retreat to Venice which he found under the aegis of a conservative oligarchy.⁴⁷ In April of the same year he will write from Bologna, where he had temporarily

⁴⁵ Foscolo announces the completion of his tragedy in a letter to his paternal tutor figure Melchiorre Cesarotti in late October 1795, only two years after his arrival in Venice. Hence the poet's concern to have written his tragedy in a language which he had not yet been able to learn and master well enough: "Si scrissi il *Tieste*, e con quattro attori soltanto. [...] Signore, voi mi direte il vostro pensiero quando godrò di voi, e de' vostri discorsi; quando vi leggerò col mio rozzo entusiasmo i miei versi, ed udrò da voi i precetti di una lingua che con gran fatica ho studiato, e che al presente *τραυλίζω*", *Epistolario*, vol. 1, no. 10, p. 19-20; further references will be noted as "EP" followed by the volume and letter number within parentheses. For Balduino, Foscolo suffered during his first sojourn in Venice from an uncertain national identity due to his lack of an authentic "mother tongue": "All'inizio, se proprio non è bilingue, parla qualcosa di misto fra il veneto-dalmatico e il neoellenico" (1989: 347). Three days after *Tieste* was first staged in January 1797, the Italian city of Reggio proclaimed the Republic of Venice. Encouraged through this event by the prospect of imminent freedom, Foscolo writes his notorious ode dedicated to *Bonaparte liberatore* which was published in Bologna in May of the same year. To his ode, the poet will attach a dedicatory letter "Alla città di Reggio" in which he declares "l'alto genio di libertà che m'infiamma", and proclaims the "Anno I della Libertà Italiana", cf. *Opere edite e postume. Epistolario I*, no. 4, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Tieste*, act II, scene 1, vv. 1-2, p. 182; additional references in the text will be cited as "T" followed by the act, scene and verse number within parentheses.

⁴⁷ One of the minutes taken at the meetings that were held by the Venetian committee dedicated to instruct and illuminate the masses with Jacobinian fervor, reports Foscolo's intervention through invectives launched against those political demagogues whom he describes as being worse than tyrants for manipulating and enslaving their people: "Esorta a stare in guardia contro di loro e contro alle loro frodi, e li rassomiglia a Catilina che gridava libertà quando meditava in suo cuore la rovina della Patria" (*Discorsi nella «Società d'Istruzione»*, EN VI, p. 19; see also pp. XIX-XXVI). Del Vento finds additional, though more vicariously voiced, traces of Foscolo's critique against the Venetian aristocracy in his early juvenile poems (2003: 37).

found refuge, to Giuseppe Rangoni, one of the most fervent advocate of the revolution:

"Abbandonai *la mia patria per vivere libero*: rinunziai per l'indipendenza, ch'ho sempre adorato, alla gloria, ai commodi ed ai miei genitori. Baciai le terre repubblicane con la divozione del vero democratico, e mi feci *campione della libertà sacrificandole tutto*"

(EP I/25 my emphases). Certainly Tieste's alternative between freedom and death ("A liberare, od a morir") is indicative of the Jacobinian spirit that pervaded the poet in this period and inspired his tragedy.⁴⁸ In his ode to Bonaparte from May 1797, Foscolo addresses Napoleon as "sol Liberator", and at once as hero ("Eroe"), godlike ("Dio") and warrior ("Guerriero").⁴⁹ A few months later, on October 17, 1797, Venice will permanently be lost to the Austrians.

⁴⁸ It is to no surprise that Foscolo dedicated his play to the Italian dramatist Alfieri, "Al Tragico dell'Italia" (EP I/23), as the Italian dramatist whose predilection for Greek mythology and antityrannic motifs had strongly influenced the young poet's revolutionary inclinations. Foscolo's homage to the Italian tragedian, whose works and their highly current themes did no longer find appreciation by the contemporary audience, was meant as well as a critique against the dramaturgical preferences and customs of his time as attested in his later *Essay* from 1818 on contemporary Italian literature: "Being angry at the little attention paid by the Venetians to the tragedies of Alfieri, and at the corrupted taste which made them prefer and applaud those of Marquis Pindemonte [...]" (EN XI/2, p. 468).

⁴⁹ Cf. "Bonaparte Liberatore", 6th and last stanza, *Le poesie*, p. 353-62. Following, however, the imminent and irrevocable disillusionment sanctioned by the Campoformio Treaty in October of 1797, the poet severely deplored "gl'interessi delle grandi nazioni" which enslaved the former Venetian Republic; and while he had turned his original homeland for "un'altra patria più degna dell'uomo libero" (EP I/35), in 1798 from his exile in Bologna he was already disapproving of the poem's 3rd and 8th stanzas. Cf. "Annotazione a 'Bonaparte Liberatore Oda'", Bologna 10 settembre 1798 (EN VI, p. 125). In 1799, Foscolo will add a dedication to the front of his Ode in which his admiration for Napoleon has eventually turned into overt admonition: "[...] Ma poichè la nostra salute sta nelle mani di un conquistatore; ed è vero, pur troppo! che *il fondatore di una repubblica deve essere un despota*; noi [...] siamo in dovere di invocarti, e tu in dovere di soccorrerci, non solo perchè *partecipi del sangue italiano*, e la rivoluzione d'Italia è opera tua, ma per fare che i secoli tacciano di quel *Trattato* che trafficò la mia patria, insospetti le nazioni e scemò dignità al tuo nome", cf. "A Bonaparte. Dedicà dell'Oda" (EN VI, p. 163-4 my emphases). The blameful reference to the infamous Treaty is still framed into a discourse that legitimizes a Machiavellian politics of force; on Foscolo's reading of Machiavelli through Rousseau's thought, see Del Vento (2003: 49). Despite his disappointments, Foscolo will not completely cease to view the French general (at least not until the Emperor of France will crown himself King of Italy in 1805) as the military genius Italians should aspire for their revolutionary purposes; on this point see as well Masiello (1984: 40). In his "Orazione a Bonaparte" from 1802, written in occasion of the congress to be held in Lyons hoping to renew his awareness about Italy's fate and to reform the corrupted constitution of the Cisalpine Republic, Foscolo still describes himself as "infiammato dal patrio amore" (EN VI, p. 209) and invokes (though

In this respect, Tieste's banishment from the Argive kingdom and his fugitive roaming through Greece (T II/2, vv. 41-3) prefigures, in Ippodamia's maternal deploation, the fate of Jacopo Ortis, protagonist of Foscolo's eponymous epistolary novel that significantly coincides with the author's own impending exile which followed the aftermath of the Treaty of Campoformio between 1799 and 1802:⁵⁰

not without a perentory tone) Napoleon as Italy's expected liberator (EN VI, p. 214) who, akin to the Roman genitor, will guide the Italian patriots to their aspired freedom: "Te, Bonaparte, invocheremo nelle battaglie, come i Romani invocarono Romolo deificato [...]" (EN VI, p. 227). Napoleon had raised to the uncontested status of historical myth. In his role of military guide and political leader, Foscolo however urges the French consul to set an example of modesty by reminding him of his own mortality: "Ma vivrai tu eterno?" (EN VI, p. 218). In Seneca's tragedy, it is the tyrant's minister who cautions Atreus to reign as "honorable" king: "Where there is no shame, no concern for law, no righteousness, goodness, loyalty, rule is unstable"; *Thyestes*, vv. 216-8, p. 247. In his treatise *On Mercy*, by involving Nero in a fictitious declaration, Seneca encourages his emperor, "the judge of life and death for nations", to pursue the virtue of clemency and justice so that "no loss is suffered by the state, either by force or by fraud" (Bk. I/1); on the role of the Minister as Seneca's mouthpiece, see Davis (2003: 69-73). It is the same request for forgiveness that Tieste seeks to gain from his vindictive brother: "TIESTE Qual con me se' stato,/ I' nol rammento; la tua *clemenza* tutto/ Cancellà: or odi, io tel confesso; duolo/ Avrò mortale in rammentarla; acerbo/ Tu sembrerai più: ritogli dunque/ Ogni tuo dono: ei m'è più amaro assai/ De' tuoi tormenti; o se lasciar tu il vuoi,/ *Perdonami*" (T V/3, vv. 239-56 my emphases). In Seneca's appeal to a moderate use of power for the interest and benefit of the people, Foscolo conciliates his Machiavellian political theory with Seneca's morality. As Foscolo in his Oration, Nero's tutor is concerned with his ruler's abuse of power: "men's steps pass from great to greater heights, and they embrace the most reckless hopes once they have attained what they did not hope for; yet all your subjects today are to a man forced to admit that they are fortunate and, furthermore, that all that can be added to their blessings is that they may never cease" (Bk. I/1). Seneca's admonishing reminder to Nero to indulge in the illusion of immortal sovereignty echoes the rhetorical question that Foscolo directs to the French emperor, who would leave Lyons as president of the new Italian Republic "and promulgated a constitution which he continued to violate at will [...]"; cf. *Essay on the Present Literature of Italy* (EN XI/2, p. 475). Six years later in 1808, on the Milan stage Foscolo's Atreus will become strongly evocative of the Italian sovereign Napoleon, alias Nero – where the coincidence of both names' initials and the equally ambivalent esteem and hatred, in which both the ruler of Rome and of France were held by the contemporaries, add to the force of their allusive identity.

⁵⁰ As Foscolo confided in a letter to "Wolfango Goethe" in January 1802 – to whom he forwarded "il primo volumetto di una mia operetta a cui forse diè origine il vostro *Werther*" (*Epistolario I*, no. 86, p. 129-30) – in this work "[h]o dipinto me stesso, le mie passioni, e i miei tempi sotto il nome di un mio amico ammazzatosi a Padova" (*Epistolario I*, no. 86, p. 131). The *Letters of Ortis* narrate the protagonist's final life span precisely from the signing of the ignominious Treaty, October 1797, until March 1799. Its long and intricate editorial history that begin in 1798 only to end in 1816 (thus encompassing the poet's politically most engaged literary production), can be said to witness its incipient birth already in 1796 while he was simultaneously working at his tragedy. It is attested by an entry in his *Piano di Studi* that refers to a "Story of Lauretta" which will constitute the embryonal version of his later novel. As to the autobiographical subtext contained in the *Letters*, the protagonist's refuge in the Colli Euganei to escape the Austrians coincides with the author's retreat in the peaceful countryside in 1796, and the exile described in the novel faithfully reproduces Foscolo's own itinerant vicissitudes.

IPPODAMIA Ben alta
 Pena portonne, e portane! Rammingo,
 Abborrito da' suoi, da' rii pensieri
 Ognor seguito, ei mena gli anni; e forse
 Per inospite selve e per dirupi,
 Senza fossa di morte, disperato
 Di sua man li troncò. (T II/4, vv. 147-53)

These are lines that will find their echo in future poems. In particular in a sonnet from 1799 in which the poet moans the absence of his beloved "poichè mi han tratto uomini e Dei/ In lungo esilio fra spergiure genti" (VI, vv. 6-7). Up to those verses composed in 1802 when Foscolo expresses the wish that his remains be returned to his mournful mother: "Questo di tanta speme oggi mi resta!/ Straniere genti, l'ossa mia rendete/ Allora al petto della madre mesta" (X, vv. 12-4).⁵¹

In his "Ode to Bonaparte", Foscolo juxtaposes the image of a corrupted and coercive Rome to Greece as abode of political rectitude, freedom and valor.⁵² Seneca's Atreus, as

⁵¹ For the identification of Foscolo and his Greek mother Diamante Spathys with respectively Tieste and Ippodamia, see Piccoli (1928: 60). The value that Foscolo measured to the request that his corpse be restituted to his mother is expressed in the tragedy's stage direction of the final tableau which displays the protagonist while he dies in his mother's arms (*Spira tra le braccia d'Ippodamia* [T V/5]). This concern will be a recurrent theme in Foscolo's work. As Fubini observes (1963: 35), the Ortis that follows the poet's political disillusion will eventually decide to end his life in the familiar hills of his Colli Euganei to which he will return from his exile: "Io tornerò a voi, o sacre terre, che prime udiste i miei vagiti [...]. Poiché tutto è vestito di tristezza per me, se null'altro posso ancora sperare che il sonno eterno della morte – voi sole, o mie selve, udirete il mio ultimo lamento, e voi sole coprirete con le vostre ombre pacifiche il mio freddo cadavere. Mi piangeranno quegli infelici che sono compagni delle mie disgrazie – e se le passioni vivono dopo il sepolcro, il mio spirito doloroso sarà confortato da' sospiri di quella celeste fanciulla [...]"; "Ventimiglia, 19 e 20 Febbraro" (O 161). Long before the end of the epistolary novel, however, Foscolo's fear to be destined to an "illacrimata sepoltura" (IX, v. 14), reechoes in several of Ortis' previous letters: cf. "12 Novembre" ("Oh illusioni! e chi non ha patria, come può dire lascierò qua o là le mie ceneri?" [O 15]), "25 Maggio" ("Eppur mi conforto nella speranza di essere compianto. [...] ma la mia sepoltura sarà bagnata dalle tue lagrime, dalle lagrime di quella fanciulla celeste" [O 86]), and in "A chi legge" when the protagonist is nearing his death: "Non so se ci rivedremo – ho ben decretato di morire, non foss'altro, vicino alla mia casa paterna" (O 106). Foscolo will return with stronger emphasis to the concept of "compianto" and compassion in his poem *Dei Sepolcri*.

⁵² Cf. the *incipit* of the poem's concluding strophe: "Di Libertà la non mai spenta fiamma/ Rifulse in Grecia sin al dì che il nero/ Vapor non surse di passioni impure;/ E le mura secure/ Stettero, e l'armi del superbo Serse/ Dai liberi disperse/ Di civico valor fur monumento:" (vv. 212-8).

Nero's *alter ego*, represented for Foscolo in his greed for power and his thirst for blood, the closest template to those other Neros ("altri Neroni" [v. 57]), "Di oro ingordi e di sangue" (v. 57), that were raging in contemporary Rome and thus best reproduced his own Atreus: "[...] Vendetta, oh gioia!/ Piena otterrò; godrò dell'anelato/ Piacer di sangue: [...]" (T III/5, vv. 262-4).⁵³ Hence in strident contrast to his Greek paradigm of the citizen king ("Re cittadino" [T IV/3, v. 201]) Tieste, stands Atreus as prototype of the tyrant:

TIESTE O come l'arti
 Del tiranno possiedi! In cor *furore*,
 Pace nei detti; comandar misfatti,
 E punirne il ministro: e vita e fama
 Tor, per rapir sostanze: adoprar fraude,
 Ove spada non val: pietà con pompa
 Mostrar, e beber sangue. Oh! ben t'adatti
 Il regal manto! ei ben ti copre! regna,
 Chè tiranno sei vero. (T IV/3, vv. 231-8 my emphasis)⁵⁴

Foscolo replaces the monstrosity that distinguishes Seneca's Thyestes, presented on stage with the voracious appetite of a beast, with the exemplary figure of a righteous and magnanimous sovereign: "ATREO [...] Tu troppo/ Concedevi alla plebe, e prepotente/ Troppo a' grandi toglievi. [...]" (T IV/3, vv. 181-3). Through the omission of the cannibal banquet scene, which witnesses Thyestes indulging in the rapacious consumption of his children, Foscolo achieves a starker dichotomy between a compassionate and humane Tieste

⁵³ Cf. as well the *Letters of Ortis* in which the author defines the Romans "ladroni del mondo" ("20 Ottobre" [O 12]). On the equivalence of Seneca's Atreus with Nero, see Volk's recent study. At the end of her analysis, the scholar adds a curious remark explaining how Nero would have found himself flattered by Atreus' role on stage despite his personal predilection for Thyeste's character (2006: 200, fn. 40).

⁵⁴ When Venice will be definitely ceded to the Austrian rivals, and the image of the despotic usurper will be more individually identified with Bonaparte, the tyrant figure will renounce its predominantly negative traits to acquire a distinctively ambiguous connotation. In the epistolary novel of *Ortis*, this ambivalent meaning will be carried by Teresa's father, Signor T*** – whose name already is allusive of an indefinite identity, and whose role in the story resembles Napoleon's part in history. The wavering relationship that Ortis (*alias* Foscolo) entertains with Signor T*** corresponds to the author's mixed feelings towards his once trusted "Giovin Eroe": "Che importa ch'abbia il vigore e il fremito del leone, se ha la mente volpina [...]" (letter of "17 Marzo" (O 46 my emphases).

versus his merciless and feral brother.⁵⁵ Hence the beastly ferocity of "Alta, *inumana*/ Crudeltà" (T V/2, vv. 67-8 my emphasis) is exclusively ascribed to Atreus to render justice of the brutal violence inflicted by his hand:⁵⁶

TIESTE *Rapitore*
 Della promessa un dì tenera amante;
Usurpator del trono mio; *feroce*
 Dell'oscurata mia vita raminga
Persecutor, tiranno infine: questi
 I vanti son da contrappormi. [...] (T IV/3, vv. 162-67 my emphases)

All three attributes ("rapitore", "usurpator" and "persecutor") suggest the idea of illegitimate appropriation through a relentless abuse of power.⁵⁷ In sharp contrast to Seneca's

⁵⁵ Cf. Atreus' perseverance in his vengeful hatred ("ATREO [...] è santo/ Anzi il castigo, ed il furor d'un sire" [T V/2, vv. 265-6]) with Tieste's lenient response: "TIESTE Fratel, ti cedo io tutto:/ Fratello, io scordo, e ti perdono tutto./ Giovin alma ardentissima a funeste/ Opre m'addusse; a pentimento vero/ Or mi ti guida: questo caldo pianto/ Deh ti sia pegno" (T V/3, vv. 251-5). Atreus' "furore" in both quotations becomes indicative of a madness nurtured by brute passions, residing below human reason and compassion, and from which his cruelty ultimately stems. In his essay *On Mercy*, Seneca explains to Nero why "of all men mercy becomes none so well as a king or an emperor" (Bk. I/2). As sovereign of his people, the ruler is superior to all living creatures, both animal and men. He shall therefore refrain from "[s]avage and relentless anger [...]" for in this he does not rise much above the other man but puts himself on the same level" (Bk. I/2). Hence cruelty "is not appropriate for a man", it corresponds instead to "the madness of a wilde beast to delight in blood and wounds" (Bk. I/25). Although Foscolo is far from displaying on stage Seneca's revolting scene of gruesome cannibalism, his tragedy was blamed by contemporary critics to educate the spectators in nefarious deeds rather than contribute to their moral instruction (cf. *Notizie storico-critiche sul "Tieste"* [EN II, p. 208-9]). As Del Vento remarks, a similar critique had been advanced a few months earlier in the Italian literary gazette *Mercurio d'Italia* against the German contemporary theater (2003: 43).

⁵⁶ On the metaphor of bestiality in Seneca's tragedy, cf. Davis (2003: 55), and Littlewood (2008: 247).

⁵⁷ Whereas Seneca's brothers are arranged in a juxtaposition that contrasts the emotionally charged Thyestes to the rationally calculative Atreus (Schiesaro 2009: 225), Foscolo's characters point through their rivalry to the collision between the individual morality and the unbending *raison d'État*; see Nicoletti (1989: 138), and Del Vento (2003: 44). Certainly, a substantial lack of morality is common to both Seneca's and Foscolo's vicious figure of Atreus. In the Italian tragedy however, the opposition between the subject and the State is rendered explicit in the king's concern to save the state from his brother's sense of morality which would endanger its stability: "ATREO [...] Alla ruina/ Argin por volli del fraterno regno,/ Ch'era mio pure; ed argin posi; ch'arte/ Usai co' grandi, e con la plebe scure./ Ed io fui re. Se a te in natio retaggio/ Veniva il solio, sotto a te crollava./ Io sol fermo l'eressi; ed io più fermo/ Sul trono sto. [...]" (T IV/3, vv. 183-90). The relevance of this dichotomy is signaled by its reappearance as *Leitmotiv* in the clash between the heart and the reason of his ensuing *Letters of Ortis*, where it be will additionally reenacted in the opposition between the protagonist and his beloved's father, Signor T***. As we shall see, this same conflict will constitute the dramatic *crux* of Kleist's *Prince Homburg*.

Thyestes, Foscolo's tragic hero indulges therefore in the manifest role of the victim.

Juxtaposed to Atreus' cruelty, Tieste hence translates on stage more pervasively than in

Seneca's tragedy the ritual of sacrifice originally enacted by the original Greek myth.

Resolute to offer his life to Atreus in order to save Aerope and their son from the tyrant's

iniquities (cf. T V/3, vv. 158-63), Tieste will eventually complete the sacrificial rite by

committing self-murder in the *explicit* scene.⁵⁸ Through his suicide Tieste overtly defies

despotic supremacy according to a *topos* of classical matrix (De Sanctis 1965: 103), and

renounces to his life to save that of the kingdom:

TIESTE [...] Or tu pon fine
A nostre gare, e all'infelice madre
Sol rendi il *figlio*: de' suoi mali fonte

⁵⁸ The idea of death as extreme solution to an irrevocable verdict of exile, as last salvation of one's homeland, and as sanction against fate's adversities, returns in Ortis' resolution of suicide: "A che vivo? di che pro ti son io, io *fuggitivo* fra queste cavernose montagne? di che onore a me stesso, alla *mia patria*, a' miei cari? [...] La mia morte sarebbe per me la *meta de' guai*, e per voi tutti la *fine delle vostre ansietà* sul mio stato. Invece di tante ambasce continue, io vi darei un solo dolore – tremendo, ma ultimo: e sareste certi della *eterna mia pace*"; "Ventimiglia, 19 e 20 Febbraro" (O 153 my emphases). For Ortis as for Tieste, death appears as *ultima ratio* when every hope is forsaken, and the only freedom worth to seek is from life's horrors: "TIESTE [...]. Io voglio/ Mescer mio sangue a quel... del figlio. – Atreo!.../ Vista d'orror!... Ch'io morendo... nol veggia..." (T V/5, vv. 303-5). Tieste's decision to kill himself upon realizing that he had unknowingly drank the blood of his dead son strikingly resembles Penthesilea's determination to die after becoming aware of unconsciously tearing her prey Achilles, like a hunt dog, to pieces. In his dialogue *On the Tranquillity of the Mind*, Seneca praises Socrates for his perservance of action and exemplifies through his figure the idea of death as ultimate liberation and thus utmost freedom: "Socrates was [...] offering comfort to the city fathers in their grief and encouragement to those who despaired of the state, and he castigated the rich citizens who were now dreading their own wealth for their late display of repentance of their dangerous greed, carrying round with him for those who wished to copy him an impressive example, as he walked a free man among thirty masters. Yet this was the man whom Athens itself put to death in prison, and liberty did not tolerate the liberty of the man who had with impunity mocked an entire troop of tyrants [...]" (§ 5, p. 122). Compared to Tieste, Ortis lacks the same drive to action: it appears that the later Foscolo may have realized to a certain degree the inanity of opposition (Catalano 2001: 99). Whereas in *Ortis* prevails the political-amorous disillusion and the protagonist eventually resigns himself to Teresa's loss, Tieste displays a stronger resistance against the tyrant's threats and is willing to risk his life to free his beloved: "TIESTE È omai tutto risolto. Entrar le porte/ D'Argo, troppo costava: or sonci, e mai/ Non fuggirò, se pria meco non viene/ Eropé, o se con lei non vommi a morte. –" (T II/2, vv. 59-62). These two different attitudes are indicative respectively of a more confident pro-Bonapartist, and a subsequently resigned author who, in his *Letters of Ortis*, can merely launch his *j'accuse* against his pusillanimous compatriots: "Esclamano d'essere stati venduti e traditi: ma se si fossero armati sarebbero stati vinti forse, non mai traditi; e se si fossero difesi sino all'ultimo sangue, né i vincitori avrebbero potuto venderli, né i vinti si sarebbero attentati di comperarli"; "17 Marzo" (O 46). In his *Critical Essays*, De Sanctis observes how even Teresa, metonymy in Foscolo's novel of Italy, falls without resistance into the arms of her paramour just as Venice surrenders itself to the Austrians (1965: 107).

Noi fummo; e fonte di peggior sventura
 Sarem noi pur? – Altro non chieggio: e *in prezzo*
 A te gradito *ecco mia vita*. (T V/3, vv. 158-63 my emphases)

In contrast to Seneca, however, the first and foremost sacrifice, consummated in Foscolo's tragedy not by the father but by Tieste's son, acquires an overtly christological connotation. Contrary to Seneca's drama in which Thyestes' children are served as meal to their father, Foscolo reworks the original Greek myth and reduces his offsprings to one. The cup filled with the infant's blood – which on the Roman stage still stood as token of the genealogical heritage (Davis 2003: 90), hence perpetrating the doom that weighs on the Argive lineage – becomes in Foscolo's drama a symbol of Christ's blood. As the son of God the Father dies to redeem humanity from their sins, Aerope's and Tieste's son is immolated like a sacrificial lamb to soothe the tyrant's rancor and absolve the brothers' from their original sin of fratricide.⁵⁹ In Foscolo's reinterpretation, however, the biblical myth of salvation is divested of its religious significance and rephrased in terms of political protest and propaganda.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ As a metonymy of Italy, Aerope's child is contended (as nascent nation) by two hostile fathers: the loss of the child (*alias* the country) coincides with the simultaneous death of both parents, in other words of the author's "madre-patria". On the father metaphor, cf. Foscolo's later "Oration to Bonaparte" (1802) in which the author addresses the French first Consul in different occasions as "Padre" (EN VI, p. 230, p. 232). If in the epistolary novel of *Ortis* the role of the victim "che doveva sacrificarsi a' pregiudizi ed all'interesse" ("20 Novembre" [O 18]) will be assigned to the female protagonist Teresa, this part could not have been performed on stage by the adulterous figure of Aerope, and is instead carried out by her infant as the foremost innocent creature. Hence in *Ortis* the metaphor changes and the concept of "madre-patria" acquires a new meaning: Italy is no longer the nascent nation forsaken by its legitimate parents, but a (female) weak country forfeited to its illegitimate genitor, and whose children, as Ortis laments about his posterity, remain deprived of their father(land): "Quand'anche l'amica mia fosse madre de' miei figliuoli, i miei figliuoli non avrebbero patria [...]" ("17 Marzo" [O 50]).

⁶⁰ On Foscolo's atheism, cf. Del Vento according to whom Foscolo's aspiration for a political renewal was experienced by the poet as a nearly "messianic" event (2003: 36), Terzoli's study on the poet's numerous references to the Sacred Scriptures in his *Last Letters of Ortis* (1988: 38), and Piccoli's comment: "Jacopo Ortis legge la Bibbia, e non crede; sente il fremito della natura che sembra avere in sé qualche cosa di vivo, e non crede; venera i sepolcri come sacri, e non crede [...] se anche una realtà superiore parla talora al suo spirito, se anche gli apre infiniti orizzonti interiori [...] non gli reca alcun conforto" (1928: 155). By recovering for his

Another major discrepancy between the two tragedies becomes evident in their respective dénouements. Foscolo' modifies Seneca's ending by shifting the accent from the image of cosmic disruption to the tyrant's individual compunction: "Vendicarvi/ Vostro è dovere, o numi: io... vendicato.../ Fulmin di morte sul mio capo attendo" (T V/5, vv. 311-3).⁶¹ Atreus' self-inflicted verdict becomes an eminent matter of conscience.⁶² A major part of the moral question is posed by the female characters in the drama who are instead completely absent on Seneca's stage.⁶³ Their message of *pietas* stands in strident opposition to Atreus' *furor* which it strives to mitigate:

IPPODAMIA Figlio...
 Pietà, figlio, pietà. – Passa, nè degna
 D'un sol guardo la *madre*; ah! che Tieste
 È già perduto. – *Figli miei*, qual mai

tragedy a religious myth, Foscolo intends to equally pursue an eminently moral claim which, once again, draws him near to Seneca. A similar rewording of the original religious discourse had been undertaken already in France in the aftermath of the Revolution. Tied to the concept of martyrdom, the idea of sacrificing one's life for the sake of freedom began to acquire henceforth "sacred" value.

⁶¹ Atreus' realisation resembles the *memento mori* that Foscolo directs to Napoleon in the dedicatory letter that he adds in 1799 to his originally encomiastic ode: "Uomo tu sei, e mortale"; "A Bonaparte. Dedicata dell'Oda" (EN VI, p. 164). Fubini describes Foscolo's tyrant as being more "mature" than Alfieri's terrifying despots (1963: 32). And if Del Vento (2003: 44) denies any antityrannic motifs as determining force of the dramatic action by posing the accent primarily on the humiliation sustained by Atreus betrayed by both his wife and brother, Nicoletti instead defines *Tieste* as a manifest invective against despotism (1989: 136). Although Foscolo may not condemn Atreus' motive in attempting to save the kingdom from his brother's alleged ruling incompetency, he certainly aims at criticizing the risks involved in an abuse of power as well as in the absolute right claimed by those who hold it: "TIESTE [...]. Cotanta/ Autorità smodata io temprar volli" (T IV/3, vv. 199-200).

⁶² This introspective attitude will be more prominent in the figure of his son, Agamemnon, protagonist of Foscolo's next tragedy *Ajace*, who will immolate his daughter for the sake of power and thus reflect more profoundly upon the idea of sacrifice and its political instrumentalization and implications. Del Vento notes how Foscolo's emphasis on the characters' psychology is a peculiar trait that the poet may have desumed from the German contemporary theater (2003: 45). All of Kleist's tragic figures, as I shall demonstrate in particular at his Greek heroine Penthesilea and his historical antihero Prince Homburg, distinguish themselves for the complexity of their psychological introspection.

⁶³ Cf. Littlewood's studies who defines Seneca's a "very masculine drama" (2008: 244). Doni observes that this accent on the role performed by the female characters rather reflects a predilection of Foscolo's master and model Alfieri (1997: 15). In the *Last Letters of Ortis*, Foscolo will similarly attribute to the female figures the function to increment the protagonist's antityrannic *movens* (Fubini 1963: 31).

Trassemi odio di voi? Perchè nel vostro
 Sangue lavate le man vostre? Ahi lassa!
 Non m'udí già Tieste; e m'ode or meno
 Atreo, quanto più offeso, più feroce.
 Cadrà Tieste... Sí! Ben cadrà meco
Che mal posso soffrir vista più rea
D'eccessi: troppe omai già ne sofferesi.
 (T V/2, vv. 268-78 my emphases)⁶⁴

The melodramatic crescendo that pervades this passage is all contained in the maternal *pathos* which animates Hippodamia as much as Aerope in their prominent role of mothers, both concerned about their sons' lives.⁶⁵ The final image of Hippodamia while in the act of holding in her arms her dying son is that of a *mater dolorosa*.

If for Nicoletti *Tieste* represents an eminently political drama (1989: 136), Foscolo transposes on stage the tragic destiny of his country into the private sphere reproducing in the female figure of Hippodamia not only literally the poet's mother, but also metonymically his *motherland*. The distinctive intersection of private and political sphere becomes particularly manifest in the adulterous love affair that frames the dramatic action and catalyzes the fraternal conflict. The erotic theme turns into the *pretext*, which is to say into the text that precedes and into the pretense to the actual political subject.⁶⁶ The anonymous critic who compiled the contemporary *Historical Critical Notes for «Tieste»* has good reason to assert that the actual protagonist of the tragedy is Aerope who certainly has to sustain the double

⁶⁴ Several other passages in the text reiterate the idea of *pietas* and compassion: cf. T IV/3 (vv. 243-47), T V/3 (vv. 73-6, vv. 86-7, vv. 125-30).

⁶⁵ See also Fubini who speaks of the tragedy's "insistente nota patetica" (1988: 13).

⁶⁶ Del Vento remarks how the brothers' hostility is not caused by their competition to the throne, but results fomented by Tieste's and Aerope's relationship (2003: 45). *Tieste's* love story will become the intertext of *Ortis'* drama; on the correlation of love and politics, cf. also De Sanctis who identifies in *Ortis'* "individual tragedy" Foscolo's "national" one (1965: 103). Doni observes how despite the different "typologies" of love, one adulterous and the other platonic that distinguish the tragedy from the novel, both Tieste's and *Ortis'* feelings are ominously hindered and both will eventually reveal to be fatal (1997: 16-7).

tribulation derived from the loss of both her son and her beloved: an agony to which she will eventually succumb.⁶⁷ In the variation of the original sacrifice, the death of first Aerope's and later Ippodamia's son reenacts and thus renews the ritual of dominion and oppression expressed, executed and expiated through Thyestes' myth. Likewise, Kleist's remaking of *Penthesilea*'s narrative will account for the threats and disruptions initiated by imperialistic policy against national history as the place inhabited by the collective memory of the people.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Notizie storico-critiche sul «Tieste»*: "Le angustie che soffre Erope nel *Tieste* del signor Foscolo, sono maggiori assai di quelle che sofferte vengono dal protagonista. Perciò, secondo noi, o si doveva intitolare questa tragedia *Erope*, o darle minor parte nell'azione"; p. 207, fn. 3. Similarly, Nicoletti points out the conflicted "sovraccarico emozionale" that drives Aerope's action on stage (1989: 141), whereas Del Vento goes so far as to denominate this tragedy "il dramma di Erope" (2003: 44).

2.1.2. *Penthesilea* (1808)

Upon forwarding in late autumn of 1807 to his cousin Marie von Kleist what she described as "höchst barbarische[s] Fragment der Penthesilea", Kleist warned her: "Sie hat ihn wirklich aufgegeben den Achill vor Liebe. Erschrecken Sie nicht, es läßt sich lesen".⁶⁸ Written between 1806 and 1808,⁶⁹ Kleist's tragedy witnessed a period in Germany's national history devastated by the terrors of the Napoleonic era.⁷⁰ Kleist shared with Foscolo the same concern for the political consequences derived from French invasion to Prussia's identity.⁷¹

⁶⁸ The second quote precedes chronologically the first one which has been excerpted from a subsequent letter written by Kleist in reply to Marie's first reaction to his manuscript drama which she defined, in a comment that Kleist directly cites from her, a "highly barbarian Fragment"; cf. Kleist, Heinrich von. *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe : Briefe von und an Heinrich von Kleist 1793-1811*, vol. 4, no. 124, 125, p. 396-8; additional references in the text will be noted as "B" followed by the letter's number within parentheses.

⁶⁹ See as reference dates, Kleist's letter from the end of August 1806, sent from Königsberg to Rühle von Lilienstern in which he indirectly announces to his friend his new dramatic project *Penthesilea*: "Jetzt habe ich ein Trauerspiel unter der Feder" (B 103), cf. also Sembdner's comment to the epistle (1967: 10), and his letter to the editor J. Friedrich Cotta to whom he forwards his book manuscript in June 1808 (B 145). Kleist completed overall three different versions of his drama which considerably differ from each other due to the various circumstances they were adapted for: the comprehensive original manuscript, the significantly abridged version of the so-called *Phöbus* fragment (meant for publication in Kleist's omonymous literary journal), and eventually the published book edition from 1808. For the genesis of the play, see Port (2009: 50); for a more detailed overview concerning the omissions and changes of specific scenes made by the author to the three versions, see instead Brown (1977: 140-5).

⁷⁰ As early as in his letter from late July 1801, Kleist recollects a visit made to the Rhein valley, "wo der Geist des Friedens u der Liebe zu dem Menschen spricht", wondering not without a tone of reprimand: "war es möglich, daß dieses Thal ein Schauplatz werden konnte für den Krieg? Zerstörte Felder, zetretene Weinberge, ganze Dörfer in Asche, Festen, die unüberwindlich schienen, in den Rhein gestürzt – Ach, wenn ein *einzigster* Mensch so viele Frevel auf seinem Gewissen tragen sollte, er müßte niedersinken, erdrückt von der Last" (B 53, emphasis in the original). Kleist's tragedy reflects, akin to Foscolo, the destructive politics perpetrated by the French Empire against Prussia which had witnessed among others the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire upon Austrian Francis II's abdication on August 6, 1806, and Napoleon's ultimate defeat of the Prussian army in the double battle of Jena and Auerstedt on October 14 of the same year.

⁷¹ Kleist's severe critique is reminiscent of Foscolo's abjection against the Italians' state of servitude towards the French conqueror. In the summer of 1801 he writes to his youth friend Adolphine von Werdeck, lamenting the Germans' lack of resistance against foreign invasion: "Aber eine ganze Nation *erröthet* niemals. Sie dividirt die Schuld mit 30000000, da kömmt ein kleiner Theil auf jeden, den ein Franzose ohne Mühe trägt" (B 53, my emphasis). In the same letter written during his sojourn in Paris, Kleist promised "als *ein Deutscher* zurückzukehren in mein Vaterland" (B 53, emphasis in the original). Three decades after his death, Kleist's friend Christoph Dahlmann remembers in a letter from 1840, Kleist's national ardor: "Einen glühenderen Freund des deutschen Vaterlandes hat es nie gegeben als ihn, und er ist an gebrochenem Herzen über die Leiden der

His disdain for the course undertaken by contemporary national history and his reevaluation of mythical stories was, in his critique against modernity, akin to Foscolo.⁷²

The tragedy's cannibalistic ending, much to the distaste of the enlightened intellectuals and their sublimized aesthetics,⁷³ further aligns the tragedy with Foscolo's *Tieste* and calls for what Nietzsche described in *The Birth of Tragedy* as "the desire for the ugly, the good strong willing of the ancient Hellenes for pessimism, for tragic myth, for pictures of

Zeit gestorben" – words that echo Mazzini's comment upon Foscolo as unrecognized poet and patriot: "Un giorno l'Italia gli ergerà un monumento d'amore e lo riporterà tra i grandi delle nazioni" (1862: 128-9). For Dahlmann's letter from October 26, 1840 to the Historian and politician Gervinus, cf. *Heinrich von Kleists Nachruhm. Dokumente zu Kleist*, vol. 2, no. 81, p. 82, additional references in the text will be cited as "D" followed by the volume and document number.

⁷² Written upon the collapse in 1806 of the Holy Roman Empire, and Prussia's defeat only a few months later, the political crisis affected and exacerbated Kleist's disappointments. When in a letter to Marie von Kleist, he confides his cousin "mein innerstes Wesen liegt darin [sc. in Penthesilea] [...] der Schmutz zugleich und Glanz meiner Seele" (B 126), his confession is reminiscent of both the political and personal identity established by Foscolo with the protagonist of *Ortis* composed under equally difficult times for Italy's national identity after Napoleon ceded Venice to the Austrian Empire. The geo-political question of where to set the borders of a nation still in the process of formation was one acutely sensed by Kleist and articulated with rhetorical strength in his political writings. *Der Katechismus der Deutschen* (1809), though chronologically following *Penthesilea*, sheds light onto the preceding historical circumstances upon which the tragedy was written and the urgency with which the national prolem was perceived by Kleist and addressed in the dramatic development. Written retrospectively, in the first chapter of his dialogue, the reader is immediately confronted with the question on where the German fatherland ought to be found on the map, only to realize that it did no longer constitute a geographical reality after the Preßburg Peace Treaty from 1805 – for "Napoleon, der korsische Kaiser, hat es, nach dem Frieden, durch eine Gewalttat zertrümmert"; *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, p. 480; additional references in the text will henceforth be indicated as "SW" followed by the volume and page number. Kleist's preference for the dialogue as the ideal means to discursively foster national awareness was a formal choice that found in the dramatic genre its congenial space, and on stage, as the liminal space of interaction with the audience, its immediate and most direct actualization.

⁷³ Goethe's disdainful comment of the *Phöbus* fragment ("Mit der Penthesilea kann ich mich noch nicht befreunden." [B 138]), and a contemporary anonymous review ("Penthesilea ist im Wahnsinn eine Furie, die Abscheu erweckt, statt Grausen" [D I/283]) showed little understanding for a drama that clearly appeared to challenge the aesthetic tastes dictated by Weimar classicism. Kleist had been aware of the hostile reception his tragedy may have encountered on stage when he remarked to his cousin Marie: "Ob es, bei den Forderungen, die das Publikum and die Bühne macht, gegeben werden wird, ist eine Frage, die die Zeit entscheiden muß. Ich glaube es nicht [...]" (B 124). Neglecting to assess Kleist's dramatic production, prose work and poems within the historical and literary context in which they emerged would be shortsighted. Kleist's well known Kant crisis, the epistemological as well as existential dilemma since 1801 had had a considerable impact on his Weltanschauung that affected both his political experience and personal life.

everything fearful, evil, enigmatic, destructive, and fateful as the basis of existence" (BT 12-3), emphasis in the original), in other words the distinctive Dionysian trait of Attic drama.⁷⁴

Much ink has henceforth been spilled on a drama as controversial and cryptic as Kleist's *Penthesilea*. In this section, I will elucidate the specific use that Kleist makes of myth from a perspective that will differ from preceding scholars with specific regard to the analytical framework that I will adopt. Whereas former studies have directed their emphasis on the binaries that inform Kleist's poetics and reception of myths – in the juxtaposition, eminently subversive, of individual and state, nature and society, reality and dream, reason and emotions (only to mention a few) – I will approach the question of his historical criticism and the mythical violence displayed in his works from a hitherto unexplored theoretical perspective.

Departing from the disquisitions on mythical narratives advanced by Hans Blumenberg, I posit that Kleist's practice of myth is analogous to the philosopher's understanding of myth as a category of terror:

⁷⁴ In his negative critique of both Kleist's mythical plays, *Amphitryon* and *Penthesilea*, Lukács addressed the author as a precursor of Nietzsche: "[...] diese Dramen modernisieren die Antike, enthumanisieren sie: tragen die Gefühlsanarchie einer entstehenden neuen Barbarei in die Antike hinein. Kleist ist hier Vorläufer jener Tendenzen, die theoretisch in Nietzsche [...] ihren Gipfelpunkt erreicht haben" (1951: 33). Nietzsche himself had expressed his personal appreciation for the "edle Heinrich von Kleist" and his "hysterisch-heroische Weib" (D 2/612b). In 1921, Alfred Döblin will praise *Penthesilea*'s cannibalistic consummation as what makes Kleist's drama authentically tragic: "es muß einer gefressen werden, bildlich, und was hier so sensationell ist, auch unbildlich. Das ist in allen Tragödien so, und hier läßt es sich mit Händen greifen." (D 2/623a). In his reference to the dioynisian Rausch that possesses the heroine, Grugger refers both to the origin of Greek drama and to Euripides' *Bacchae* (2009: 145). Meanwhile, the Nietzschean myth of Euripides as a rationalist ("so mußte [Euripides] die 'trunkenen' Dichter als der erste 'Nüchterne' verurteilen" [BT 74]), responsible along with Socrates for the end of Greek tragedy ("Wenn an diesem die ältere Tragödie zugrunde ging, so ist also der ästhetische Sokratismus das mörderische Prinzip" [BT 75]), has been disproven by subsequent studies. Despite the more blatant connection that the emotionally charged *Bacchae* share with *Penthesilea*'s cannibalistic outrage, it is Euripides' denial of the alleged supremacy of human reason as guarantor of rational actions that attest the affinity of thought between the Greek and the German tragedian; for a detailed assesement of studies conducted in order to question Euripides' rationalism with specific reference to his *Bacchae*, see Oranje (1984: 7-19).

Was in der Mythologie Götterlehre im strengen Sinne gewesen sein mag, hat menschliches Leben vielleicht einmal mit *Zwang* und *Furcht* bedrückt; aber das alles ist in Geschichten aufgegangen, und daß selbst die Göttergeschichten *nicht mehr schrecken* und nicht mehr binden, disponiert sie zugleich zu ihrer ästhetischen Rezeption. (1971: 17 my emphases)

It is precisely this mythical force ("Zwang") and fear ("Furcht") which for Kleist still holds true in the present, thus explaining the "Entsetzen, Abscheu und Ekel" (D I/282) that they play provoked among the contemporary audience. The violence inscribed in 19th-century history finds, therefore, its correlative in the story of the Amazon queen and her matriarchal community.

My analysis of the play will be structured in two steps. Within the category of terror that defines the Amazon myth, I will elucidate at first the aesthetics of the monstrous – das "grässlich schöne" as Döblin put it (D 2/623a) – epitomized by Penthesilea in her relationship to the Greek hero.⁷⁵ Following the juxtaposition that the Greek and Amazon warrior pose in terms of male/ female, i.e. intellect/ emotion dichotomy, which became an essential key in understanding Kleist's post-Kantian thought,⁷⁶ I will explain how the author articulates through the historical discourse of his drama the problem of national identity, cultural difference and institutionalized community. I argue that in Kleist's tragedy, myth stands to history as poetics stand to politics. I posit, in other words, that the love/ hatred story

⁷⁵ In this respect, it shall be worthwhile to assess the extent to which Kleist's "Ästhetik des Schreckens", as Borelbach contrasts his poetics to Weimar classicism (1998: 96), demonstrates an affinity with Kant's aesthetic theory of the sublime despite his alienation from idealistic philosophy after his epistemological and existential crisis of 1801.

⁷⁶ See one of his so-called letters from the Kant crisis (March 1801) in which Kleist postulates the supremacy of emotion over intellect: "der Irrthum liegt nicht im Herzen, er liegt im Verstande u nur der Verstand kann ihn heben" (B 41).

entertained between the Amazon and Achilles functions for the author as allegory through which he articulates his historical critique as well as his political concern.

In elucidating the peculiar relationship that, according to Kleist, myth undertakes with history, I shall illustrate how the German playwright – though departing from Blumenberg's theoretical premises – arrives eventually at opposite conclusions. As a matter of fact, rejecting the idealism that grew from the philosophy of the Enlightenment, Kleist does not treat myth as a metahistorical category.⁷⁷ Instead of transcending time, myth remains for Kleist immanent to the terrors of history and thus of reality – which may account for the reason why, in contrast to Goethe's *Iphigenia*, *Penthesilea* left her spectators' distraught rather than cathartically discharged of their anxieties.

Kleist's work on myth witnesses a radical reversal of the original narrative and aims at double objective: to challenge 19th-century ethical views and critique its aesthetic practices.⁷⁸ For an appropriate evaluation and adequate assessment, the author's revisitation of myth must be viewed against the backdrop of his Kant crisis which from 1801 on led to his subsequent rejection of German idealism.⁷⁹ Kleist aimed in particular at questioning the false ideal of

⁷⁷ On Kleist's deconstruction of myth as "übergeschichtliche[] Kategorie[]", see Borelbach (1998: 92). With direct reference to Blumenberg's theory on myth, the scholar asserts how Kleist sanctions through his work on mythical narratives their inability to foster meaning.

⁷⁸ The original myth of *Penthesilea* is addressed by Homer in the *Iliad* through King Priamus' recollection of "the day when the Amazons came, the peers of men" (Bk. 3, v. 189) to assist the Trojans in their war against the Greek until their queen fell by the hand of the Achilles. Disregarding the epic tradition, Kleist follows instead Benjamin Hederich's revisitation of the Amazon myth in his *Gründliches mythologisches Lexicon* from 1770, who the heroine with the ability to successfully overpower the mighty hero; on the sources reporting the mythical narrative adopted by Kleist, see Streller (1966: 267), and Grugger (2009: 146-7) who compares Kleist's with Hederich's mythical revision and reversal.

⁷⁹ In *Penthesilea*, the forces of death and love which act as catalysers of the dramatic development, were intended to critique and question their idealized representations as they were common among Kleist's contemporaries. On the sublimation of lust and human mortality as formulated in the poetics of 19th-century

humanity upheld during Weimar classicism by contrasting it with the brutalities that were being perpetrated by history.⁸⁰ To fulfill this purpose, the author chooses to adopt a gender discourse whose traditional characterizations he essentially subverted: "PENTHESILEA Sie ist mir nicht,/ Tie Kunst vergönnt, die sanfterel der Frauen!"⁸¹ The female character, distinguished by the "weapons of gentle temper" ("Waffen der Sanftmut") that she traditionally wears, are substituted by the male "weapons of violence" ("Waffen der Gewalt") (B 13). Penthesilea's association to an animal as ferocious as the hyena, while Antilochus

intellectuals, see Borelbach's study who investigates Kleist's *Penthesilea* in direct relation to its literary and ideological context (1998: 95-8).

⁸⁰ It was from classic antiquity that Weimar intellectuals had desumed their concept of *humanitas* which Goethe articulated, in his writing dedicated to Winckelmann's memory, through the image of the human subject who – in "harmonischem Behagen" and "gesunder Natur" – acts "als ein ganzes" (1989: 98). It results evident to what extent Kleist's *Penthesilea* intended to undermine this aesthetic and anthropological claim. The transgressive work that Kleist performed on the Amazon myth was therefore also his statement against the exemplary value ascribed to ancient art and thought as epitome of perfection.

⁸¹ Heinrich von Kleist. "Penthesilea." *Sämtliche Werke. Dramen 1808-1811*, p. 213, scene XV, vv. 1887-8; further references in the text will be cited as "P" followed by the scene and verse number. Not all of Kleist's female characters are carrier of his Amazons' pugnacious resistance. In sharp contrast to the warrior queen's eager militance and self-determination stands for instance Kätchen's submissive obedience: whereas *Penthesilea* is an original child of nature personally conflicted and emotionally crippled by the law of the state, *Kätchen von Heilbronn* (1810) is the human product of bourgeois moral expectations. As the other side of one and the same coin, however, both female figures belong together: "sie gehören" as Kleist put it in his correspondence with the Austrian court secretary Joseph von Collin "wie das + und – der Algebra zusammen, und sind Ein und dasselbe Wesen, nur unter entgegengesetzten Beziehungen gedacht" (B 153). A comparison between the two plays sheds light onto Kleist's juxtaposition of nature versus society as well as his gender discourse which, contrary to what a feminist approach to his mythical tragedy might suggest, is articulated in traditionalistic terms. Instances in the play that account for a rather conventional gender characterisation is for example Penthesilea's construction of her identity as female object ("Staub lieber, als ein Weib sein, das nicht reizt" [P IX/ v. 1253]), and the relevance attributed to the Amazon's maternal role upon Otrere's wish for her daughter to fulfill her task of motherhood: "Werd' eine Mutter, stolz und froh, wie ich" [P XV/ v. 2139]). Otrere's request to Penthesilea is analogous to Kleist's personal request to her fiancé in an early letter from 1800 which more closely attests the author's traditionalistic views: "Dein nächstes Ziel sei, *Dich zu einer Mutter*, das meinige, *mich zu einem Staatsbürger* zu bilden" (B 26, emphasis in the original). More interested in an ideological and aesthetic discourse of critique, Kleist's disregard for the androgynous or virgo female, whom Achilles perceives as "[u]nweiblich [...] unnatürlich/ Dem übrigen Geschlecht der Menschen fremd" (P XV/ 1903), is further attested by the author's negative appraisal of his sister Ulrike, "das weder Mann noch Weib ist, u gleichsam wie eine Amphibie zwischen zwei Gattungen schwankt" (B 53). In this respect, Kleist seems to agree with Goethe's negative judgement of Penthesilea: "Sie ist aus einem so *wunderbaren Geschlecht* und bewegt sich in einer so *fremden Region*, daß ich mir Zeit nehmen muß, mich in beyde zu finden" (B 138 my emphases).

observes her advancing on the battlefield against the Greek army ("Seht die Hyäne, die blind-wütende" [P III/ 331]), is indicative of this gender inversion.⁸²

By inverting and invalidating 18th-century gender definitions, the boundaries subsisting between intellect and instinct, humaneness and harshness, are exchanged and effaced. The description which accompanies the heroine introduction on stage, reported from the perspective of the Greek warriors as they see her approaching in her pursuit of Achilles, provides an example of gender distinctions driven by Kleist *ad absurdum*, distorted in their traditional meaning, and consequently depleted of their univocal attribution:

Seht! wie sie mit den Schenkeln
Des *Tigers* Leib inbrünstiglich umarmt!
Wie sie, bis auf die *Mähne* herabgebeugt,
Hinweg die Luft *trinkt* lechzend, die sie hemmt! (P III/ 395-403).⁸³

The heroine's equation to a savage beast, is performed from the standpoint of Greek culture, intended as cradle of Western thought and civilization, representative of an outspoken

⁸² In Greek culture the image of the "hyena" was commonly linked to women to indicate their animal-like features and underline their identity as male preys; common in this respect is the representation on ancient pottery of Thetis carrying on her shoulder a hyena while she is pursued by Peleus. It is significant that the hyena imagery is equally restored by 18th-century literates and adopted, as Schiller does in *Das Lied von der Glocke*, to disdainfully describe the French women who actively participated in the revolution: "Da werden Weiber zu Hyänen/ Und treiben mit Entsetzen Scherz,/ Und zuckend, mit des Panthers Zähnen,/ Zerreißen sie des Feindes Herz" (vv. 365-8), *Schillers Werke: Gedichte. Nationalausgabe* (1983: 237), all further references to this edition will be cited in the text as "NA" followed by the volume and page number within parentheses; see also Hermand (1995: 44). The portrayal of female warriors was indeed common practice in contemporary historical paintings. The examples are conspicuous but it suffices to remember Delacroix's notorious female allegory of *Liberté guidant le peuple*, or Le Barbier's *Jeanne Hachette* from the legendary siege of Beauvais. The Spanish artist Francisco de Goya even titled one of his plates from the series *Los desastres de la guerra* with the inscription *Y son fieras* to indicate the image of women turning into wild animals while defying the French invaders; for a more extensive study on this subject cf. Nochlin (1999).

⁸³ There are certainly several other instances that associate the Amazon queen and her followers to animals: "erboste Wölfe" (I/ 5), "Wölfin" (I/ 163), "Wild" (I/ 220), "Tigerpferd" (I/ 225), "Köter" (III/401), "Heuschrecken" (IV/ 544), "Höllenhunden" (IV/ 557), "Löwin" (IV/ 2666) – only to mention a few indicative examples. Addressed by Diomedes as "Kentaurin" (IV/ 548), the mythological figure most closely indicates the Amazon's hybrid nature of human and beast.

rational society.⁸⁴ The traditional identification of women with animals is reevaluated by Kleist who transforms her identity from female prey to (fe)male predator.⁸⁵ The synesthesia achieved in combining the "air" ("Luft") with a lexical choice as "drink" ("trinkt") not only accentuates Penthesilea's ferine voracity, but more importantly sanctions a shift of value from the idealized representation of female heroines such as Goethe's Iphigenia or Schillers Jean

⁸⁴ Borelbach omologates the Greeks' attempt to tame the Amazons with the efforts undertaken by Enlightenment rationalists to subdue the influence and incidence of myth (1998: 62); I argue that Kleist's invective against rationalistic thinking discloses the author's more decisive polemic against the power exerted by the *raison d'État*. As known, the association of women to animals, as naturally prescribed, goes back to Aristotle's *Politics*: "Die zahmen Tiere sind in ihrer Natur besser als die wilden, und für sie alle ist es vorteilhafter, vom Menschen beherrscht zu werden [...]. Ferner ist im Verhältnis (der Geschlechter) das Männliche von Natur das Bessere, das Weibliche das Geringwertige, und das eine herrscht, das andere wird beherrscht" (Bk. 1, 1254b). In his natural disquisition on *The History of Animals*, Aristotle goes thus far as to define the female subject as a mutilated being: "Das Weibchen ist nämlich gleichsam ein verstümmeltes Männchen" (Bk. 2, 737b), juxtaposing female deficiency to the male counterpart of perfection. It is no coincidence that the motif of corporeal disfigurement plays an equally relevant role within the Amazon myth in the construction of the female warrior's identity who used to amputate their right breast to better hold the bow (P XV/ 1985-9) – a practice met by the Greek hero with awe and anguish: "ACHILLES: Und alle diese blühende Gestalten,/ Die dich umstehn, die Zierden des Geschlechts,/ Vollständig, einem Altar gleich, jedwede/ Geschmückt, in Liebe davor hinzuknien,/ Sie sind beraubt, unmenschlich, frevelhaft?" (XV/ 2007, my emphasis). The Amazons' physical defacement serves the author to underline the unnatural and inhumane quality of institutionalized violence inscribed by the community onto the subject. Kleist will readdress this problem shortly after in *Prince Friedrich of Homburg* suggesting a more conciliatory relationship between the state and its subjects.

⁸⁵ In her study on gender typologies, the Italian scholar Teresa de Lauretis points to the ambiguity intrinsic to the term "monstrous", as derived from its Latin etymon, implying the act of showing, thus of being exposed to the male gaze, which turns the female monstrous into an object of attraction and abjection (1996: 43). If it is usually the female character who stands for the contended object of conquest – the body of politics as it was the case for instance for Tieste's Erope, for Ortis' Theresa or as it will be for Guido's Ricciarda – by reversing the direction of sexual pursuit and thus transforming Achilles into the hunted object, Kleist achieves a sardonic emasculation and effemination of the valiant Pelide otherwise representative of virility and male beauty. The contrast and irony is rendered more striking if compared to the warrior's personal presentation as womanizer ("Im Leben keiner Schönen war ich spröde;/ Seit mir der Bart gekeimt ihr lieben Freunde,/ Ihr wißt's, zu Willen jeder war ich gern:/ Und wenn ich dieser mich gesperrt bis heute,/ Beim Zeus, des Donners Gott, geschah's, weil ich/ Das Plätzchen unter Büschen noch nicht fand,/ Sie ungestört, ganz wie ihr Herz es wünscht,/ Auf Küssen heiß von Erz im Arm zu nehmen" [P IV/599-606]). Kleist's parodical invective is launched against the tendency towards hero-worshipping and mythization. The Queen's assimilation of the Greek soldier with Hemios (P IX/ 1387), or the idealized depiction that the virgin Amazons provide him as he rides his steed ("Roß") "[a]uf einem Hügel leuchtend" (P VII/ 1037-43), reminds us of Napoleon's portrayal in historical paintings as hypostasized figure or riding his white horse against the background of a wide battlefield; cf. for instance J. L. David's notorious *Bonaparte on Granl-Saint-Bernard pass*, or J. A. D. Ingres' *Apotheose Napoleons I* in which the Emperor resembles Apollon, God of the Sun, in the act of riding his chariot across the sky.

d'Arc to an outspoken material quality that emphasizes the physical dimension, underscored in the quote by the use of a word as "Leib".⁸⁶

According to Jeffrey Cohen's *Monster Theory*, this accent on the corporeal can be considered a distinctive attribute of the monstrous body which he reads in terms of "pure culture" (1996: 4), which is to say as a construction that carries the offprint of specific cultural parameters. The depiction, for instance, that the Aetolian soldiers provide of the Amazon queen as ferine and emotionally driven subject, is upheld from an outspoken patriarchal standpoint. Following Cohen's premise, I would like in this subsequent section consider the monstrous as cultural construction from a more comprehensive perspective that shall account for Kleist's national and historical discourse. With this objective in mind, I will devote major attention to scene 15 in which the heroine narrates the origin of the Amazon state. The gender opposition thus far considered shall be articulated henceforth as cultural discrimination between Greeks and Amazons. The assertion of the Hellenic national self and supremacy in terms of the (Amazons') monstrous Other, shall be assessed in view of the antagonistic relationship shared between the French and the Prussian state. In this respect, Penthesilea's notion of fatherland shall be elucidated in terms of the author's patriotic discourse. The aesthetic considerations that will conclude this analysis, with specific

⁸⁶ Kleist's Penthesilea certainly has little in common with Goethe's Iphigenia who, harmoniously contained, is foreign to the experience of conflicting drives and duties that characterizes the Amazon's actions on stage. Antiquity has lost for Kleist its ethical value and moralizing weight; on the ideological differences between Kleist and Goethe towards the ancient aesthetic ideal see also Alt (2005: 87-8). Goethe's golden age of the ancient Gods and myths turns into a negative Arcadia to Kleist which is as distant from the peaceful and harmonious idyll as his Amazons' bellicose community can be. Their natural setting is more akin to the paradise lost upon the original sin. I will return to Kleist's idea of paradise and his notion of original sin as conceptualized in his essay from 1810 *On the Marionette Theater (Über das Marionettentheater)* in relation to Vico's disquisitions and his distinction between sacred and profane history, see fn. 26; for additional studies on Kleist's notion of nature as disenchanted idyll, and systematically put into question, see in particular Frons's comprehensive study (2000).

reference to the play's cannibalistic *dénouement*, shall shed light onto Kleist's historical pessimism as a consequence of the unfortunate circumstances in which Prussia found itself after 1806 which exacerbated Kleist's critique towards a state's inability to subvert Napoleon's politics of invasion with more strength.⁸⁷ In approaching the conceptual premises that inform Kleist's vision of national formation, I will avail myself of the theopolitical framework at the heart of Etienne Balibar's notion of the ideal citizen which, based on an act of individual internalization and acknowledgment of one's identity as member of the community, precedes the actual institutionalization of the nation. Charged with religious overtones, the political unity of the nation grows out, according to Balibar, from an intentional process of personal conversion and political consciousness that unfold *within* the individual subject.

Balibar's theory of historical and ideological formation of nations can be exemplified through the story reported by Penthesilea in order to explain and justify the creation of her Amazon community, hence renewing the "continuing power" exerted by "myths of national origins" (1988: 87). With an effectful *mise-en-abyme*, Penthesilea narrates, within her own myth, the myth of her state:

PENTHESILEA Wo jetzt das *Volk der Amazonen* herrschet,
 Da lebte sonst, den Göttern untertan,
 Ein Stamm der *Scythen*, *frei* und kriegerisch,
 Jedwedem andern Volk der Erde gleich.
 Durch Reih'n schon nannt' er von Jahrhunderten

⁸⁷ See Hermand's study of Kleist's tragedy (1995: 44), and the author's overt denunciation of Prussian politics to his friend Rühle at the end of 1805 when the further course of events became to Kleist easily predictable: "Denn so wie die Dinge stehn, kann man kaum auf viel mehr rechnen, als auf einen schönen Untergang. [...] Bist du nicht mit mir überzeugt, daß die Franzosen *uns* angreifen werden, in *diesem* Winter noch angreifen werden, wenn wir noch vier Wochen fortfahren, mit den Waffen in der Hand drohend an der Pforte ihres Rückzuges aus Östreich zu stehen. Wie kann man außerordentlichen Kräften mit einer so gemeinen und alltäglichen Reaction begegnen?" (B 97, emphasis in the original).

Den Kaukasus, den fruchtblühten, sein:
 Als Vexoris, der *Äthioper* König,
 An seinen Fuß erschien, die Männer rasch,
 Die kampfverbundenen, vor sich niederwarf,
 Sich durch die Täler groß, und Greis' und Knaben,
 Wo sein gezückter Stahl sie traf, erschlug:
 Das ganze Prachtgeschlecht der Welt ging aus.
 (P XV/ 1914-24, my emphases)

Penthesilea's account of the massacre that Vexoris conducted against the Scythian tribe, resembles the accusation that Kleist directed against Napoleon in his *Catechism of the Germans* (1809) for destroying his "Vaterland".⁸⁸ Kleist shares with his contemporaries the idea that nation-states are a historical product. In contrast, however, to those who assert the historical premise of a nation's formation, Kleist rejects the notion of its natural constitution, and underscores instead their origin, through Penthesilea's historical account, from an outspoken act of defense against illegitimate invasion.⁸⁹ Its origin is thus inscribed into both violation and violence (ACHILLES "Vernichtend war das Schicksal, Königin,/ Das deinem Frauenstaat das Leben gab" [P XV/ 1932-3]),⁹⁰ and its assertion is based on the transfer of power from the former Scythes to the Amazons:

PENTHESILEA Und dies jetzt ward im Rat des Volks beschlossen:
Frei, wie der Wind auf offnem Blachfeld, sind

⁸⁸ The passages in which Kleist voices his acrimony against this "verabscheuungswürdigen Menschen; [...] den Anfang alles Bösen und das Ende alles Guten" are frequent in his dialogic essay; cf. SW III/ 484. It is Sieck who suggests in his study Kleist's implied identity between king Vexoris and Napoleon (1976: 372). The reference to the values of "freedom" and "equality" can be viewed as a direct allusion to the French Emperor and its contradictory infringement of principles heralded by the French revolution out of which his empire eventually emerged.

⁸⁹ See Griffiths on Herder's and Kleist's different definitions of nation as "natural political" entities (2005: 54).

⁹⁰ Hence Borelbaach's remark according to which the ideals of freedom and equality can be achieved only by means of violence (1998: 57). This is a concept that Kleist shares, as we shall see, with Foscolo's notion of the law of force out of which the states originates and preserves its power. In contrast to his contemporaries, for Kleist the ideals of freedom and national independence had to be translated into real action in order to find their place in reality. Hence his reiterated emphasis on "Handeln" rather than "Wissen", which must be seen as a further consequence of his repudiation of German idealism, see also fn. 102.

Die Frau'n, die solche Heldentat vollbracht,
 Und dem *Geschlecht der Männer* nicht mehr dienstbar.
 Ein Staat, ein *mündiger*, sei aufgestellt,
 Ein Frauenstaat, den fürder keine andre
Herrschtsücht'ge Männerstimme mehr durchtrotzt,
 Der das *Gesetz* sich würdig *selber* gebe,
Sich selbst gehorche, *selber* auch beschütze:
 [...]. (P XV/ 1953-59, my emphases)

Penthesilea's call on freedom, individuality and self-determination is Kleist's attempt to renew the awareness of those ideals that had inspired enlightened intellectuals and incite them to consequently take action against French dominion and in defense of their country. There is, however, another aspect in the excerpted passage that deserves attention. The Amazons set up their identity as "Frauenstaat" in opposition to the "Geschlecht der Männer" (of which the Greeks in the play are ultimately representative). I argue that Kleist employs gender dichotomy to exemplify the notion of national identity as well as to explain the terms of his patriotic discourse.⁹¹ It is on the basis of such "deeper difference", described by Balibar as the involvement of "another type of community", in which the ideology of the nation as fatherland is rooted (1988: 95). The fact that Prothoe is consistently named sister ("Schwester") by the Amazon queen, and the maternal role beheld by the High Priestess whom Prothoe addresses as mother ("O meine Mutter!" [P XXIV/ 2712]), transfers into the patriotic discourse that "sense of the sacred and the affects of love, respect, sacrifice and fear which have cemented *religious* communities" (Balibar 1988: 95, my emphasis).⁹²

⁹¹ The fact that the gender characterization pursued in the tragedy is merely a rhetorical strategy can be further corroborated by the detail that when it comes for Kleist to articulate his national discourse, he does so in explicitly male defined terms. Penthesilea thus names her "Frauenstaat" still "Vaterland" (fatherland) despite its outspoken female settlement and sovereignty.

⁹² In his study on Shelley's *Frankenstein* novel, Hirsch supports the thesis – that reminds us of the meaning and message behind Penthesilea's monstrosity – according to which the protagonist constitutes the author's "response to the confidence of Enlightenment utopianism and to the Terror that destroyed many republicans"

Akin to her Amazon state, Penthesilea herself is the result of a historical construction. Through the conflict articulated by Kleist between heroine and the Law of Thanaïs, the drama illustrates Balibar's point about the "historical production of the people (or of national individuality)" (1988: 94). Penthesilea's determination for self-assertion and her desire for individualism represents a constrain upon the integrity and preservation of the Amazon community, just as political and military circumstances threatened the original Scythian tribe.⁹³

In his critique against the supremacy of reason, Kleist derides both Penthesilea's instrumental reasoning and double-thinking in the attempt to conciliate her feelings with her royal duties towards the community, and mocks Achilles' rational inability to recognize

belief in the French Revolutionary project" (1996: 119). At the end of his article, Hirsch articulates the antagonism between England and the French Empire, describing the "ethos of national patriotism" as an "extension of family love" in which "one's kin" is defined as "one *patrie*". More importantly Hirsch underscores the *false* principle of "a fraternally (let alone sororally) egalitarian state free of conflict" which he identifies instead as ideological construction of "nationalistic vainglory". When Penthesilea expels Prothoe from her community for defying her in her pursuit of Achilles, she does so precisely in the name of "Vaterland und Liebe" (P V/ 834) – in other words in the name of that "family love" which for Hirsch is rather the result of "selfish passions, than reasonable humanity" (1996: 137).

⁹³ On the "relationship between individual and collective identity" and the dangers it implied for the "official Amazon ideology of communitarianism", see Griffiths (2005: 55). In contrast to Penthesilea, Prince Homburg's conflict with the institutionalized law will lead, through the acceptance of his death sentence, to a conciliatory identification of the individual with the state. Penthesilea, in contrast, will remain caught within her dilemma of intellect versus emotion ("Doch taub schien sie der Stimme der Vernunft:/ Vom giftigsten der Pfeile Amors sei,/ Heißt es, ihr jugendliches Herz getroffen" [P VII/ 1074-6]). Oscillating between the reasons dictated by her "töricht Herz" (P IX/ 1281) and the reason imposed by her community, Penthesilea will experience the discrepancy between thought and action, reality and imagination. She thus repeatedly contradicts herself in her intentions on whether to return to Themiscyras and celebrate the Rose Festival, or to restore the war against the Greek army (cf. for instance scene IX). Unable to rationally conciliate her inner struggle, Penthesilea is often portrayed as absent minded (she is described as "Rasende", possessed by "Wahn", thus literally *out* of her mind): oblivious of what occurs in her immediate surroundings and eventually unaware of her own cannibalistic attack. In this respect, Kleist's heroine resembles Alkmene, the female protagonist of his earlier mythical play *Amphitryon* (1807). Akin to the Amazon queen, Alkmene is blinded by her feelings and unable to distinguish illusion from reality. Although the oscillation between dream and consciousness represents a constant of Kleist's poetics, it shall be considered with more emphasis in his last tragedy, where Prince Homburg both introduces and concludes the dramatic action in a dreamlike state of mind.

the Amazon's true nature ("Sie tut mir nichts, sag' ich" [P XXI/ 2472]) – a blunder which will lead him to a rather unheroic death.⁹⁴

Certainly, Penthesilea's voracious consummation"of Achilles situates itself in diametric opposition to the Kantian notion of aesthetic beauty: "Vom Schönen [...] denkt man, daß es eine notwendige Beziehung auf das *Wohlgefallen* habe."⁹⁵ Far from pleasing the viewers with her cannibalistic onslaught, Penthesilea exemplifies Kleist's poetics of alienation, leaving his audience estranged with an *ante litteram* dramaturgical effect à la Brecht: "Der Dichter hat mehr auszusprechen, als das besondere in engen Schulen anempfundene Gute und Schöne. Alles Vortreffliche führt etwas *Befremdendes* mit sich."⁹⁶ Distancing himself from idealistic philosophy, Kleist denies any aesthetic principle grounded in beauty, and reevaluates instead the epistemological function of art as means to reveal the hideous truth.⁹⁷

With the Amazons' negative idyll, Kleist intends to demonstrate enlightened thinkers how nature essentially does not so radically differ from culture, displaying on the contrary its

⁹⁴ According to Griffiths, Achilles' misjudgement of the Amazon's aggressiveness is Kleist's indirect critique against the underestimation with which the Prussian state met Napoleon's destructive politics of dominion (2005: 57).

⁹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 18; additional quotations in the text will be cited as KdU followed by the paragraph number.

⁹⁶ See Kleist's review of Achim von Arnim's "Halle und Jerusalem" (SW III/589).

⁹⁷ Cf. Kleist's letter from his Kant crisis to Wilhelmine von Zenge: "o wie oft habe ich diese glücklichen Menschen beneidet, welche kein Zweifel um das Wahre, das sich nirgends findet, bekümmert, die nur in dem Schönen leben" (B 48). The author's denial of a subjective instance able to verify and validate any phenomenological truth leads for the German writer to the dilemma on whether art can still be valued for its mimetic quality.

responsibility in dehumanizing the subject in its natural inclinations.⁹⁸ The regression into barbarity with which the tragedy reaches its culmination and conclusion is derivative of a social pessimism that Kleist had desumed from Rousseau. Whereas the author's belief, within this negative perspective, to be living in unheroic times, displays significant similarities with Vico's theory of history.⁹⁹

The immoderate act of violence perpetrated by the virgin Amazon bears, in this respect, traits in common with the concept of the sublime as defined by Kant in distinction to his notion of beauty: "Das Schöne der Natur betrifft die Form des Gegenstandes, die in der

⁹⁸ This holds true in particular with regard to the urgency voiced by Kleist to reestablish the poetic value of language in order to defy his prosaic times. In a letter to his sister from February 1801, the author laments the impossibility of conventional language to convey meaning, and thus the lack of an effective instrument of communication: "Und gerne möchte ich Dir Alles mittheilen, wenn es möglich wäre. Aber es ist nicht möglich, u wenn es auch kein weiteres Hindernis gäbe, als dieses, daß es uns an einem Mittel zur Mittheilung fehlt. Selbst das einzige, das wir besitzen, die Sprache taugt nicht dazu, sie kann die Seele nicht mahlen u was sie uns giebt sind nur zerrissene Bruchstücke" (B 38). One of the most suggestive examples adopted by Kleist to restore the poetic quality of language, used not only in metaphorical, but in outspoken *material* terms, is provided in Penthesilea's suicide scene that witnesses the heroine stabbing herself with a "destructive" *emotion* ("ein vernichtendes Gefühl") as cold as ore and as lethal as a dagger (P XXIV/ 3025-34). The power of language to materialize an emotion to the point that it substitutes the object itself is also an example of an outspoken antimimetic use of poetry. On the poetic reevaluation of language in Kleist's *oeuvre*, cf. Oschmann (2007: 264-6), on his notion of nature versus society, see Fronz (2000: 56-9).

⁹⁹ For the affinity between Kleist and Vico with regard to an originally poetic quality of language and the lamented loss of heroic times, see his *Betrachtungen über den Weltlauf*: "Diese Völker [*sc.* Greeks and Romans] machten mit der *heroischen* Epoche, welche ohne Zweifel die höchste ist, die erschungen werden kann, den Anfang; als sie in keiner menschlichen und bürgerlichen Tugend mehr Helden hatten, *dichteten* sie welche [...]" (SW III/542). Penthesilea further displays, in her very act of barbaric cannibalism, traits in common with Vico's historical theory of the giants. Prothoe addresses her queen as "Riese" (P IX/ 1347-9), and as giant does she act in her hybris to pile the mounts Ida and Ossa, and drag down the Sun (alias Achilles) from its celestial heights to her will and power; cf. on this point also Streller (1966: 111), and Bennholdt-Thomsen (2005: 188), although neither of them suggests an interpretation of Kleist's tragedy in Vico's terms. Penthesilea's gigantism is beyond human (DIE OBERPRIESTERIN "[...] du – Mensch nicht mehr, wie nenn' ich dich?" (P XXIV/ 2731): her monstrosity reaches outside the scope of the institutionalized law, it is in other words *ex-norm(ous)*; on Vico's theory *On Giants* (*De Gigantibus*), ninth chapter of his disquisitions on *Universal Right*, see Porro's study on Vico's concept of sacred and profane history (1992: 159-226); on the Vico's theory of history and its distinction between sacred and profane, see the more recent and comprehensive study by Nuzzo (2001).

Begrenzung besteht; das Erhabene ist dagegen auch an einem formlosen Gegenstande zu finden, sofern *Unbegrenztheit* an ihm" (KdU § 23).¹⁰⁰

The tragedy ends with the iconography of the oak, employed by Kleist as simile for Penthesilea's demise: "Sie sank, weil sie zu stolz und kräftig blühte!" (P XXIV/ 3040).¹⁰¹ If we consider that the oak imagery was traditionally associated with German nationalism (Bishop 2006: 114), Penthesilea can be identified with the allegorical figure of Germania as the numerous instances in which the oak is mentioned in the play in connection with the Amazon queen appear to account. Her self-sacrifice becomes, therefore, the expression of Kleist's incitation to action ("handeln ist besser als wissen" [B 38]) for the fatherland's sake.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ On the association of Kleist's tragedy with the sublime, see Brown (1977: 46). It is known that Penthesilea's monstrous rage against Achilles resembles the blind furies of Euripides' *Bacchae*. As René Girard notices in his analysis of Euripides' tragedy, what evokes fear is the sight of the animal part that the Bacchae display in their human appearance: "The metamorphosis from peaceable citizen[] into raging beast[] is too terrifying [...] for the community to accept it as issuing from within itself" (1977: 134). Hence the Priestess's aversion to the queen's carnage: "Hinweg, du Scheußliche! Du Hades-Bürgerin! Hinweg, sag ich!" (P XXIV/ 2714-5). According to Girard, it is the "loss of distinction between man and beast that is always linked to violence" (1977: 128). It does therefore not surprise that a drama as Euripides' *Bacchae* may have come close to Kleist's objective of questioning the classic ideal of *humanitas* upheld by his contemporary literates. Hence the Priestess's claim to the Amazon community to practise "Sanftmut", Kleist's female "gentle temper" (P XXIV/2734-5). In contrast to the sacrifice performed by the Euripidean Bacchae, whose savage ferocity is guided by divine intervention, in Kleist's drama the High Priestess denies *expressis verbis* any involvement in Penthesilea's cannibalistic atrocity: "Diana ruf' ich an:/ Ich bin an dieser Greuelthat nicht schuldig!" (P XXIV/ 2712-3). Banished from the sacred to the realm of the profane, Achilles' sacrifice allows Kleist to put ultimately into question the very notion of authority; see Stephens (1994: 226).

¹⁰¹ The play quotes almost *literatim* a passage from Kleist's letter to Adolphine von Werdeck from July 1801: "Die abgestorbene Eiche, sie steht unerschüttert im Sturm, aber die blühende stürzt er, weil er in ihre Krone greifen kann" (B 53 emphasis in the original).

¹⁰² See Sieck (1976: 373). Kleist had severely reprimanded the passivity of the Prussian state in his above-captioned letter to Rühle from 1805 (B 97); cf. fn. 88. According to Borelbach, in contrast to the Romantic "New Mythology", Kleist's myth is bereft of any prophetic value: the heroine's death precludes for Borelbach any prospect of redemption. Stephens suggests instead an outspoken christological interpretation of Penthesilea's demise (1999: 124), while Sieck views it more appropriately as a persiflage of Christian altruism (1976: 378). I argue that, akin to *Ajace's* suicide in Foscolo's homonymous tragedy, the redeeming force that Penthesilea derives from her self-murder is the freedom that she is eventually able to achieve through her death. The idea of self-sacrifice will return in Prince Homburg's historical play. Whereas, however, the patriotic

With *Penthesilea*, Kleist leads *ad absurdum* the enlightened beliefs in individual *humanitas* and *ratio*. His employment of myth as a device to unveil the incongruities and inconsistencies of reality, ultimately serves to contradict and challenge the alleged rationality declared, by the secularization of thought, through the triumph of logos over myth. The ambiguity permeating Kleist's drama is indicative of precisely this inadequacy and indeterminacy of meaning that concided for Kleist with the death of absolute truths. Whereas the ambivalence which distinguishes Kleist's tragedy is akin to the belief shared by the Attic theater and classic antiquity that the truth of myth is one that allows a multiplicity of truths to coexist.

The demythicizing function with which Foscolo endowed his work on myth in coming to terms with his historical reality, is deflected by Kleist onto the mythical narrative itself. Kleist's myth, in other words, is demystified in its ability to manage and master the aporias of reality. Unable to transform "das Schreckliche, das *tremendum* und das *fascinosum* [...] ins Erträgliche" (1971: 23, emphases in the original), it fails to dispel its terror. Contrary to Goya's dictum, Kleist's myths displays the monsters produced not by a dormant, but by a dominant use of reason. Penthesilea – "Sie, die fortan kein Name nennt" (P XXIII/ 2607) – is declared as nameless, therefore defying eventually the very "function of myth, in the overcoming of that archaic unfamiliarity of the world" (Blumenberg 1985: 48). In his following plays, Kleist will instead approach the national problem in more concrete and explicit terms with direct reference to Prussian history.

discourse pursued in *Penthesilea* is one that underscores the importance of the individual's assertion, *Prince Homburg* emphasizes the urgency of collective definition of national identity.

2.1.3. *Ajace* (1811)

Foscolo's second mythical tragedy departs from the poignant ascertainment that introduced the *Last Letters of Ortis*: "Il sacrificio della patria nostra è consumato: tutto è perduto; e la vita, seppure ne verrà concessa, non ci resterà che per piangere le nostre sciagure, e la nostra infamia" (O 5).¹⁰³ It is this hopeless vision that unfolds in Ajax's eyes, and gives way to the dramatic knowledge of a time witnessing the forfeiture of all aspirations to freedom, and thus no longer worthwhile to abide.

With Napoleon's troopes persevering in their conquests throughout Europe, Foscolo's rehabilitation of the Homeric epic of the Trojan war almost ten years after its outbreak, echoed the larger bellic conflicts that in the past decade had been raging across a continent increasingly prostrated to the French supremacy. To continue thus where Thyeste's tragedy had ended, and restore on stage the sanguinary sequel of the Argive dynasty was consistent to Foscolo's neoclassic predilection for Greek myths and its dramatic reinvention on the historical scenario.¹⁰⁴ This time, the cast would feature Atreus' son, the chieftain Agamemnon, in the role of the atrocious autocrat. The rehabilitation of the foregoing myth is

¹⁰³ The idea of sacrifice, to which Foscolo had introduced his reader already in *Tieste*'s tragedy, will return with equal insistence in this next play and develop into a key concept for his poetics. The term "sacrificio" will acquire a profoundly patriotic connotation with the political theorist of Italian unification and national revolution Giuseppe Mazzini, who will not accidentally express his praise to Foscolo in several of his writings. In an essay about the "Oration to Bonaparte", Mazzini comments on the poet's merit of predicting Napoleon's imminent rise to absolute power: "che il massimo dei guerrieri potea diventare il massimo dei tiranni" (1862a: 126). It is precisely from this discernment which in the later course of history had turned into irrevocable reality that Foscolo began to write his *Ajace*.

¹⁰⁴ In a letter to his friend Ciciliani from July 26, 1812 – hence after the tragedy was staged and censured – Foscolo declared to have written his tragedy, which had been inspired by his innermost feelings ("certo che vi è tutta l'anima mia"), in the tradition of Greek epic ("greicamente") (EP IV/1179). Following Gadamer, the link that evidently relates tragedy to the epic tradition would reside in the notion of the "tragic" itself, to the extent that "the tragic is a basic phenomenon, a meaningful structure which does not exist only in tragedy, the tragic work of art in the narrower sense, but can have its place also in other artistic genre, especially *epic*" (1975:114, my emphasis).

rendered explicit in the text through Ajax's defiance against the Greek tyrant "Perchè io mi prostri, devi/ Evocar la tua figlia e ricomporre/ Le ossa che a cena orrenda il padre tuo/ Teco imbandiva al suo fratel Tieste."¹⁰⁵ The mythical violence and ethical transgression derived by the sequence of infanticides that weighs upon the Atridean house finds its historical counterpart in the destruction perpetrated by the Napoleonic warfare and the subsequent dissolution of noble morality and the spirit of patriotism. With the decay of the traditional ethics of κλέος, which confers honor to glorious deeds, heroism was destined in turn to lose its force and function. It is in this perspective that Foscolo's call for civic virtues and human values in a time devastated by the terror of war and weakened by inner conflicts acquires its proper significance, and eventually rose to the prerogative of a national program that combined political with ethical claims.¹⁰⁶ It is the same patriotic discourse that Foscolo had articulated in *The Sepulchres*, an ode that preceded the composition of his tragedy: the poem celebrates the tomb as receptacle in which the virtues and valor of national heroes is

¹⁰⁵ *Ajace*, act IV, scene 5, vv. 238-41; all other citations in the text will be noted as "AF" in contrast to Sophocles's *Ajax*, quoted as "AS" followed by the act, scene and verse number (although the English translation of Sophocles's tragedy is in prose, reference will be made to the respective verses in the Greek original).

¹⁰⁶ This combination, strictly laical in Foscolo, will acquire religious connotation and messianic overtones in Mazzini's program of national unification. Certainly Foscolo's understanding of Machiavelli's political theory, whose work he had been reading and commenting during the same period as he was writing his tragedy (cf. his letter to Brunetti from March 1811 [EP III/1095]), and whom he had reserved in *The Sepulchres* a place into the Pantheon, was uniquely filtered through his patriotic lense: "[...] quel grande,/ Che temprando lo scettro a' regnatori,/ Gli allor ne sfronda, ed alle genti svela/ Di che lagrime grondi e di che sangue", cf. "Dei Sepolcri", *Le poesie*, vv. 155-9, p. 58-9; all further references in the text will be noted as "S" followed by the verse number within parentheses. Addressing Machiavelli's *Prince* as the literary vehicle committed to the promotion of national freedom ("niuno negherà ch'ei [...] non mirasse nel suo libro allo scopo di liberare la sua patria da' dittatori ecclesiastici, e dagli usurpatori malfermi che dissanguavano tutta l'Italia" [EN VIII, p. 15]), Foscolo eventually does not shy away from discerning in Machiavelli's fate his personal one: "per [i suoi scritti] sostenne la carcere, la tortura, l'esilio, la povertà e l'abbiezione." (EN VIII, p. 15).

commemorated and transmitted to posterity.¹⁰⁷ As such it served to the exhumation of a cultural identity which, preserved in the memory of posterity, contributes to establish the imagination of a national community.¹⁰⁸

It is precisely in the convergence of heroism and ethics that the dramatic force of Ajax's myth resides.¹⁰⁹ If *Tieste's* Greece corresponded to the abode of freedom, the Greece of *Ajace* coincided with the dwelling space of heroes.¹¹⁰ This need for heroism, however, implies an essential pessimism that had already found expression in *The Sepulchres'* materialistic worldview.¹¹¹ Exacerbated in *Ajace* against the backdrop of the violence

¹⁰⁷ Donadoni situates Foscolo's second tragedy between his epistolary novel and his sepulchral poem: "L'*Ajace* continua il pensiero fondamentale e l'atteggiamento dell'*Ortis* e gli spiriti filosofici dei *Sepolcri*: in un luogo dei quali è già accennato il motivo fondamentale della tragedia" (1964: 401).

¹⁰⁸ Foscolo desumes the theory according to which the rite of burying the dead accounts for the origin of civilization directly from Vico's *Scienza Nuova*, whom he quotes in his poem (S 91-3), and translates this tradition into the foundation of culture and collective identity: "Testimonianza a' fasti eran le tombe,/ Ed are a' figli; e uscian quindi i responsi/ De' domestici Lari, e fu temuto/ Su la polve degli avi il giuramento:/ Religïon che con diversi riti/ Le virtù patrie e la pietà congiunta/ Tradussero per lungo ordine di anni." (S 97-103); on the combination of public and private, i.e. the explicitly familiar dimension addressed in Foscolo's poem, cf. Di Benedetto who concludes: "Dalla famiglia sboccia la nazione" (1990: 208-9). In his *Essay on the Present Literature of Italy*, the author wrote about his ode in the third person: "The aim of Foscolo in his poem appears to be the proof of the influence produced by memory of the dead on *the manners* and on *the independence of nations*" (EN XI/2, p. 481 my emphases).

¹⁰⁹ See in particular Withman's (1951) and Knox's (1966) study on the ethical implications of ancient heroism. For Whitman the hero's reliance onto a specific moral codex coincided with the Greek concept of ἀρετή, whereas for Know it is contained in the Socratean idea of justice; I shall return in more detail to both key terms in the forthcoming course of my analysis.

¹¹⁰ In the letter he directed to the viceroy of the Italian Kingdom in December 1811 to defend his tragedy from censorship, Foscolo describes this heroism as "ill-suited": "mentr'io mirava a rappresentare in Ajace le imprudenze e gl'infortuni d'un eroismo *mal impiegato*" (EP III/1130 my emphasis). Myth for Foscolo, as a form of poetic expression, was meant to counteract the transient and ephemeral nature of human history. This idea, already presented in *The Sepulchres*, will be further developed in his later fragmentary poem *The Graces* where he will attribute to myth, in other words to poetry, an eternalizing and civilizing function – on a line of thought that appears to be strikingly reminiscent of Schiller's aesthetic theory as it was postulated in his letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Men* from 1801; see on this point also Binni's remarks in relation to *Ricciarda* and Foscolo's increased interest for a genuinely "national" literature (1982: 191).

¹¹¹ Cf. for instance selected verses in his poem that underline the destructive force of death and, beyond death, exercised by time: "[...] Anche la Speme,/ Ultima Dea, fugge i sepolcri; e involve/ Tutte cose l'oblio nella sua notte;/ E una forza operosa le affatica/ Di moto in moto; e se l'uomo e le sue tombe/ E l'estreme sembianze e le

displayed by contemporary history, Foscolo's pessimism will eventually inspire his last neoclassic work *The Graces* in which poetry is supposed to exert its civilizing force against the horrors of war.

Despite the distinctions underlined by those critics more keen to contrast than to connect Foscolo's and Sophocles' play, the analogous historical premise that inspired both tragedies and the associated need to exemplify and emulate in unheroic times the ethics of ancient valiancy, reveal in this context to be more significant than the structural differences that emerge on their surface.¹¹² The discrepancies subsisting between the two dramas are to be understood instead as part of a process of reelaborations that the Iliadic episode recurrently underwent.¹¹³ This continuous process of readaptations speaks for Blumenberg's

reliquie/ Della terra e del ciel traveste il tempo" (S 17-22). See also Di Benedetto's analysis of Foscolo's ode and his comments on the poet's materialistic pessimism (1990: 218).

¹¹² See Donadoni (1964: 401) and Paratore (1988: 271) who insist on the unconciliatory comparison between Foscolo's and Sophocles' tragedy. The fact, however, that the name of the Greek tragedian ("Soffocle") appears in the young author's early project of studies (and after all as the only ancient tragedian next to Shakespeare, Voltaire, and Alfieri) speaks clearly for a choice that was intentional and that the author does not omit to reiterate in his letters (cf. for instance in the epistle to his friend Ugo Brunetti from March 1813 "A febbraio incominciai finalmente, ed era ormai tempo, a verseggiar l'Aiace; ed ora mi sto giorno e notte con quegli eroi e semidei dell'Iliade; e talvolta *mi credo Sofocle* [...]" [EP III/1095 my emphasis]); Homer is equally mentioned under the column of epic poets, see *Piano di Studi* (EN VI, p. 4-5). As I shall elucidate in the following pages, one of the main reasons that justify Foscolo's interest for Sophocles is the motif of suicide to which Homer only allusively refers, and which becomes instead crucial for the ethical question that the Greek tragedy poses with regard to the hero's right to burial. Of the numerous Greek tragedies that elaborated on the theme of suicide, only Sophocles' *Ajax* eventually endured over time (Brann 2002: 72). In *Ajax*'s self-murder committed by the Greek hero to defend his honor, Foscolo will eventually identify his brother who had died by his own hand ten years earlier in 1801. To the death of his younger brother Foscolo had dedicated in 1802 his sonnet X. A year later Foscolo translates Catullus's poem on the myth of Berenice's hair (*Coma Berenices*), and while remarking how the Latin poet had rendered deference through the translation of Callimachus' original poem (*Berenice's Lock*) to his brother's death by visiting *Ajax*'s grave, Foscolo takes the opportunity to identify the Greek hero's unfortunate fate with that of his own brother; cf. *Considerazione Prima: Epistola di Catullo ad Ortalo*: "[...] pare che il poeta abbia viaggiato sino a Troia per fare l'esequie al fratello [...] ov'era il sepolcro d'Aiace Telamonio [...]" (EN VI, p. 159). Foscolo will eventually commemorate and immortalize his brother's suicide in the encomiastic verses that celebrate *Ajax*'s heroism in his patriotic poem *Dei Sepolcri* (*The Sepulchres*) from 1807.

¹¹³ The numerous rereadings of *Ajax*'s death were encouraged by the vagueness in which Homer had left any detail regarding the hero's fatal end. Contrary to Sophocles and Foscolo, there is no explicit mentioning in the

theory according to which myths are actually "told in order to 'kill' [*vertreiben*] something" (1985: 34): this "something" is identified by Blumenberg with fear. It is in fear, precisely in the violence witnessed through history – the clash of horror with humanity, of cruelty with compunction, of *ferinitas* with *pietas* – that Foscolo locates the dramatic *crux* of Ajax's myth.¹¹⁴ He employed the oxymoron of "discordia armonica" (EP/1272) to describe the principle of "harmonic discord" that governs his play.¹¹⁵

In the following discussion, I shall elucidate Foscolo's tragic theory in relation to his personal rereading of the original myth. Departing from Blumenberg's philosophical premise, I will demonstrate how the author articulates this chiasm in his work on myth, and how he develops the poetics operating in his drama both in contrast and concomitance with the Sophoclean version of Ajax's myth. My analysis will proceed in two subsequent moments. First and foremost, it shall consider how the idea of historical violence and mythical heroism is articulated in ethical terms through the characters' rivalry, and how the terror derived by their violation of the traditional values of honor and humanity culminates in the vindication

Greek epos of the protagonist's suicide. One of the reasons, as Kott observes, is that during Homer's time there was no need for a tragic hero to kill himself. Hence self-murder turns into the demonstration of valor possible in times when no other form of heroism is available: "If it is not possible to die like a hero, and there is nowhere one can escape to, one is left with suicide [...]. 'Heroic' suicide was discovered in unheroic periods. The world of the *Iliad* had not known suicide. [...] Ajax's suicide appeared only in the post-Homeric Epic Cycle" (1974: 57).

¹¹⁴ See the widely quoted letter from February 13, 1813 to Silvio Pellico in which Foscolo instructs his devoted literary disciple on how to write a good tragedy recommending him, among others, to leave the action simple and not to distract the attention of the spectator from the "profondissimo [sentimento] della *pietà* e del *terrore*" (EP IV/1272 my emphases) which Foscolo sees exemplified in his *Ajace*.

¹¹⁵ To exemplify this dramatic key concept, in his above-captioned letter to Pellico from 1813 Foscolo points to contemporary historical paintings in which often converge and coexist conflicting characters conveying an impression of overall "harmony" that, as he specifies, is rather *emotionally* then visually perceived.

of death.¹¹⁶ As I approach the conclusion, I shall illustrate how the dramatic development and *dénouement* leads the Greek hero eventually *out* of myth and *into* history.

As a matter of fact, Foscolo's tragedy can be said to derive its relevance from the eminently intermediate position that the play occupies between mythical and historical account by opting with the Trojan war for a historical event to which Homer had conferred through its epic cycle mythical status.¹¹⁷ For Foscolo, akin to Sophocles, the historical context played a decisive role in their specific choice of myth. Dismayed by the aftermath of the Spanish war of independence in 1808, and the Napoleonic campaign against Austria in 1809, the Italian soldiers found themselves at the mercy of a foreign King and conqueror who was about to set off in 1812 to another, yet ominous, campaign against Russia.¹¹⁸ Decimated in the warring French troops, and divided by inner conflicts, the discouragement felt by the Italian patriots echoed in the disdain voiced by the tragic hero on the battlefield of Troy:

AJACE [...] E chi corrompe
 Più sempre ed arma di superbia e d'ira
Il cor pria sí magnanimo d'Atride,
 Chi, se non tutti noi sempre *tra il giogo*
E libertà perplessi? Odio, querele,

¹¹⁶ As to the function of myth to dissipate and dispell terror and fear, Palumbo attributes this role, in direct reference to Blumenberg's theory, to Foscolo's fragmentary poem *The Graces* (2010: 13).

¹¹⁷ It shall be reminded in this context that in the first decade of the 19th century Foscolo had as well begun to translate Homer's *Iliad*. This was meant to become a lifetime project to which he resumed various times, but which was ultimately destined to remain incomplete upon his death. An "experiment" of his translation, however, appeared in 1807 under the title of *Esperimento di traduzione della Iliade di Omero*. For a meticulous study and critical collation of Foscolo's "infinite prove di traduzione", see Barbarisi's exhaustive study in EN III, 2 vols; here "Introduzione" (EN III/1, p. XXI).

¹¹⁸ See his *Apologetic Letter* (1825/26), in which appears Foscolo's polemic against the Italian intelligentsia that, favoring Napoleon's interests, encouraged the recruitment of Italian soldiers in the French army who kept sacrificing their lives for a foreign cause: "L'esercito italiano che ripartiva e ritornavasi ad udirsi applaudire di nuove vittorie ne' teatri con gli inni vostri e fra le illuminazioni delle città, non ritornava che mezzo. L'altro languiva disperso negli ospedali di Europa, o giacevasi senza lume di sacerdote, né lagrime né benedizioni di madri, e con ossa mezzo sepolte in terre che le esecravano [...]" (EN XIII/2, p. 133).

*Nell'avvenir cieca fidanza, i nostri
 Schermi son questi. Ma l'insulto mio
 Oggi n'è prova che il servaggio cresce,
 E v'ha forse chi l'ama. Atride, e i suoi
 Abbian tale prova omai, che se ognun trema
 In me la patria e la sua forza vive.* (AF II/6, vv. 183-93 my emphases)

The identification of the Atridean despot Agamemnon with the French emperor Napoleon, previously as admired as presently abjected, is hard to overhear in the *j'accuse* launched by the protagonist against the Greeks (alias Italians) reluctant to emancipate themselves from their servile status.¹¹⁹ In Ajax's intimation of persisting in submissive comfort and civil conflicts, one can easily discern the author's own persona, in particular behind the patriotic challenge that seals the concluding three verses.¹²⁰

Under historically equally belligerent circumstances, Sophocles' tragedy was staged during the Peloponnesian war that the oligarchic city-state of Sparta was conducting against the democratic polis of Athens (Weber 1959: 321) – a bloodshed that eventually led to the

¹¹⁹ The allegation of ideological opposition to the regime with which the tragedy was charged, forcing Foscolo to temporarily leave Milan for Florence, is recollected in his *Essay on the Present Literature of Italy* from his London exile: "It was reported that Moreau was his Ajax, that Napoleon was to figure in his Agamemnon, and that his holiness the Pope would be easily recognised in Chalcas." Flori reports that a circular letter issued by the secretary of the interior on December 15, 1811, only a few days after the play's premiere, prohibited its restaging not only in Milan, but the entire Italian Kingdom (1907: 111). Though in his letter to the viceroy of Italy, Beauharnais, Foscolo overtly denied any reference to contemporary political authorities ("io non poteva aver la stolta intenzione di turbare un popolo che venera il fondatore del regno d'Italia, e che benedice il governo di V.A." [EP III/1130]), without explicitly denying in his *Essay* his actual intentions, the author leaves the tragedy ultimately open to interpretation: "The known principles of Foscolo facilitated the recognition of these originals, who, after all, *perhaps*, never sat to the poet for their likeness. *Whatever were his intentions*, he received immediate orders to quit the kingdom of Italy, and to reside in some town of the French empire." (EN XI/2, p. 484-5 my emphases). Certainly, the tragedy's contemporaneity is attested by the author himself in a letter from February 7, 1816 to Quirina Mocenni Magiotti, his "Donna Gentile", in which he laments the loss of those patriotic feelings in Italy that his play had once supported: "*l'AJace agita passioni, che ora sono in Italia morte e derise: appena davano segni di vita generosa, quand'io lo scrissi, ma i cuori sono oggimai incadaveriti per quelle passioni. È meglio, non lo negherò, è assai meglio per gl'Italiani; ma la tragedia diventa fredda*" (EP VI/ 1834 my emphases); see also Donadoni (1964: 408).

¹²⁰ As to the assimilation of Ajace with Foscolo, see Donadoni (1964: 401-9). The scholar identifies behind the protagonist's tragedy the author's personal one; whereas the prophet Chalcas stands as mouthpiece of Foscolo's thought.

dissolution of the panhellenic feeling which once had held the Greek community together. Sophocles' revival of the mythical figure of Ajax, whose protection the Greeks had invoked during the battle of Salamina which had witnessed Sparta and Athens warring as allies to defend their country from the Persian invader,¹²¹ intended to remind the Hellenic people of the allegiance they had once enjoyed. Both the Greek audience viewing Sophocles' play performed in the amphitheaters of the Attic age, and the Italian spectators attending *Ajace's* premiere at *La Scala* in Milan on December 9, 1811, could not but notice the relevance to the present that the ancient myth displayed on both the classic and current stage.¹²²

As previously stressed, despite the obvious differences in plot and characters that distinguish the Greek from the Italian play, there are thematic coincidences which can be more appropriately assessed if one considers that they stem from comparable historical conditions, out of which both tragedies posit values – of ἀρετή and ἀγάπη, individual valor and virtue, courage and clemency, strength and solidarity – that transcend their temporal contingency. The suicide motif in Sophocles' drama, whose significance is clearly minor in Homer's epic, allows the Greek tragedian to thematize the hero's burial and its associated ethical claim. Foscolo not only recognizes in the Attic drama the attention for a concern he

¹²¹ Cf. Herodotus' report in the *Persian Wars*: "Prayers were offered to all the gods; and Telamon and Ajax were invoked from Salamis [...]" (Bk. 8, ch. 64).

¹²² Kott identifies the modernity of Sophocles' tragedy in both of rivals contending Achilles' armor: for his tendency to reflect upon the meaning and purpose of human existence, Ajax makes a tragic hero *ante litteram* (1974: 50), whereas Odysseus becomes representative, in the triumph of intellectual stratagem over physical strength, of "Athenian democracy": "The second part of *Ajax* is suddenly projected into modern times. It becomes contemporary of the audience. [...] It is contemporary to a *nonheroic* world. [...] To award the armor of Achilles to Odysseus [...] meant the end of the heroic era; as strength went down in price, cunning went up" (72-3 my emphasis). The alleged intimations against the political *status quo* of the Italian Kingdom conveyed by Foscolo's tragedy is amply attested by the audience's reaction towards the play and its subsequent censorship. In both cases, the tragedian's forefinger is pointed against a historical crisis deplorable for the forfeit of old values.

had already addressed in *The Sepulchres*, but also discerns in the gesture of self-destruction the ominous fate of death and downfall of his own times.¹²³

Foscolo directs his invective in the first stance against the pernicious provincialism and the sectarian strifes that had made the country vulnerable towards foreign aggressors. His denunciation is voiced through Agamemnon's response upon Ajax's refusal to return at his side to the battlefield: "L'Asia i Greci oltraggiò poi che s'accorse/ Quanti discordi avidi re tiranni/ Si sbranavano la Grecia" (AF IV/5, vv. 222-4). In the same passage, only a few verses later, Foscolo is able, through a lexical allusion, to explicitly articulate his deprecation for the struggles perpetrated by petty sects: "A voi traeste/ Sol con le *sette* e volgo e fama e

¹²³ Di Benedetto remarks how Foscolo had identified a "destino di morte" particularly in the *Iliad*, establishing it as Leitmotiv of *The Sepulchres* (1990: 129). Certainly the biographical allusion that Foscolo arranges through the tragic hero of his brother's premature death, situates itself in this same ethical problematic of honor and thus acquires equal relevance in this context. In *The Sepulchres*, Foscolo had already referred to Ajax and his diatribe with Odysseus about Achilles' armor (cf. vv. 215-25), but it is only in his eponymous tragedy that he explicitly addresses Sophocles' ethical claim of which the Chorus reminds the mourning Teucer: "think how you are to bury the man" (AS 1040-1); cf. in the Attic tragedy Menelaus' verdict ("he shall be cast out upon the pale sand and become prey for the birds along the coast" [AS 1062-5]) with Ajax's request to Calchas: "A quegl'iniqui invola/ Il cadavere mio: l'ascondi dove/ Nessun m'insulti e gridi: Ecco la fossa/ D'un traditor" (AF V/3, vv. 258-61); as for the need to burial in order to prevent profanation against the deads, see also *The Sepulchres* (vv. 35-40). The motif of false treason is another meaningful detail stressed by both tragedies, together with the loss of honor derived to the hero from this charge, and his right to deserve a grave; cf. "MENELAUS [...] we had brought him from home as an ally and friend to the Achaeans, when he had him with us we found him more an enemy than the Phrygians" (AS 1052-4). In Foscolo's *Ajace*, however, the gesture of treason extends to all of his people ("tutti siam noi traditi" [AF V/2, v. 148 my emphasis]). If the ethical concern raised by Sophocles is exclusively related to the valiant Greek warrior, for Foscolo it moves beyond the individual dimension to address an entire community befallen by deceit and destruction (cf. AF V/2, vv. 122-49). As it shall become clear on the later course of my analysis, whereas Sophocles' *Ajax* is prevalently engaged with the anthropological question of human hybris, in Foscolo's drama, Ajace's hybris (cf. "CALCANTE Obbliar vuoi che sei mortale; alzarli/ Oltre la inferma, sventurata, cieca/ Nostra natura. [...] [AF IV/5, vv. 258-60]) finds from the first scenes of the play its reason only in the service of freedom: "E a che questa corona, a che il mio brando/ A che la gloria delle mie ferite,/ S'io, la mia patria e i miei guerrier, quand'arsa/ Troja pur sia, servirem tutti a un solo?" (AF II/5, vv. 233-6). From the very beginning of the play, Ajace relates to himself through the idea of a collectivity ("Noi tra i delitti e il sangue" [AF II/5, v. 223 my emphasis]) of which he considers himself to be loyally part of: "Io con ben altri sacramenti venni/ A questa infausta guerra. Anima e fama,/ Toccando le frementi urne degli avi, alla patria votai. [...] (AF II/5, vv. 226-9 my emphasis). This line, strongly reminiscent of a verse in *The Sepulchres* ("e l'ossa/ fremono amor di patria" [S 196-7]), restores and reinstitutes the patriotic discourse of his previous poem, with a pessimism however to which any future prospect of rescue and redemption will remain denied.

cielo;/ E spenti ancor, resta alle vostre spoglie/ La perfidia e la rissa" (AF IV/5, vv. 226-9 my emphasis).¹²⁴

The relevance that the playwright attributes, in this regard, to the notion of brotherhood as premise and parameter of national (af)iliation shall be illustrated through Benedict Anderson's theory of nation-formation as cultural artefact. In the introduction to his study on *Imagined Communities*, Anderson explains how the concept of national identity and unity is rooted in a basic idea of affinity shared by the members of a community, fostered in turn by a feeling of "fraternity" (1991: 7).¹²⁵ "Alle fraterne greche/ Terre" (AF II/1, vv. 135-6) Chalcas admonishes Agamemnon from the beginning to commit his respect, and it is against the crime of fratricide that Ajax warns the Atridean king: "Il sole/ Le trame scopra, e il campo Acheo non veda di *fraterni cadaveri profano*" (AF IV/5, vv. 215-7 my emphasis). Nearing his death, Ajace's mourning for the bloodshed of civilians ("il civil sangue" [AF V/6, v. 399]) spilled in vain ("Fu vano tanto sangue offerto/ A libertà" [AF V/3, vv. 204-5]) reflects the author's complaint articulated in the early acts of the play for a war protracted in

¹²⁴ Foscolo's harsh critique against the continuous sectarian struggles as well as against their negative effect on any attempt and aspiration of national unification and freedom from foreign empires, is documented in several of his writings at different times of his life as a failure of his country. As early as 1802 in his *Oration to Bonaparte* Foscolo wrote, recollecting the once still free Republic of Venice: "Gli astii provinciali frattanto (armi già di vecchi politici) ora e per forza di destino e per arte straniera bollivano: repubblica questa di nome, ma veramente acefalo corpo di volghi [...] e dalle nuove sciagure più concitati, infaticabilmente per dismembrarsi si dibatteano" (EN VI, p. 223). And as late as 1825/26 when the author of the *Apologetic Letter* expresses one last time to the final disillusion of his once so fervidly auspicated national liberation "[...] vi preclusero ogni sentiero alla fiducia scambievolmente, alla unione e alla libertà, e vi precludono le speranze. Smembrarono le vostre forze, le vostre opinioni, le affezioni vostre domestiche per darne il governo alla tirannide d'ogni nuovo conquistatore [...]" (EN XIII/2, p. 85). The extent of this disappointment can be more blatantly assessed if located next to one of Foscolo's earliest poems from 1796 dedicated to his Venetian Republic, "'Ve mentre civil fama ulula ed erra,/ Siede negra Politica reina" (vv. 3-4), in which Napoleon was still the once acclaimed "gallico" liberator of the nation (vv. 12-4); cf. "A Venezia", *Le poesie*, p. 352.

¹²⁵ I shall return in more detail to this acceptance of fraternal ties in my investigation on Foscolo's and Kleist's historical plays in which the related idea of sacrifice for one's country will be crucial.

the interest of individual power and subjugation rather than patriotism and collective sovereignty:

AJACE Ma il lungo imperio tuo molti fea queti
Al giogo, quindi fu protrato ognora
Lo sterminio di Troja; e tuo d'altronde
L'utile e il vanto ne bramavi. [...] (AF III/4, vv. 303-6 my emphases)

"L'utile e il vanto" which Ajax condemns about Agamemnon's imperial warfare corresponds to Foscolo's criticism against his country's servilism rendered towards its tyrants' vainglorious political practice.¹²⁶

As the relief of history becomes visible beyond the surface of myth, behind Agamemnon's autocratic politics emerges Napoleon's claim to absolute hegemony: "Abbia la Grecia/ Vendicator de' numi suoi me solo;/ Moderator, dominator me solo" (AF IV/5, vv. 229-31).¹²⁷ In this respect, the contrast between Ajax, "[p]ropugnator di libertà" (AF

¹²⁶ See for instance the author's disapproval, in the *Oration to Bonaparte*, of his countrymen's hypocrisy displayed towards foreign tyrants and divided in their pursuit of personal and provincial interests: "Inveterate , pur troppo, sono le nostre inimicizie! ma che pro il vendicarle? Risorgeranno forse dalle nuove sciagure que' tanti nostri concittadini morti negli esili, nelle carceri e nelle civili battaglie? [...] E per chi? Non avete già finor combattuto nè per gli altari, nè per li figli, nè per le madri, nè per le spose, nè per le vostre sacre dimore; non avete voi già combattuto nè per le vostre opinioni, nè per la vostra gloria, nè per la vostre passioni: bensì per fare de' vostri cadaveri fondamento al trono degli stranieri" (EN VI, p. 45).

¹²⁷ Foscolo's nearly overt reference through Agamemnon's attitude to Napoleon does not make this character less ambiguous than Signor T***, the authoritarian father of Ortis' beloved Teresa; cf. section 2.1.1, fn. 54. This controversial portrayal reflects Foscolo's personal attitude towards a figure as complex and contradictory as Napoleon, at the same time "expression" – as Manzoni will describe him – "dell'antico imperio e della nuova rivoluzione" (1862: 122). In a letter that Foscolo wrote in 1814 to the duchess of Albany and F.S. Fabre, upon releasing one of the most implacable critiques against Napoleon the author concludes: "Ma egli aveva un altissimo merito presso di me; aveva riuniti ed educati alla guerra sei milioni d'Italiani; aveva precariamente aggregati all'Impero gli altri paesi d'Italia, e tiranneggiatili in guisa da invocare il momento di scuoter il giogo ed unirsi a quei del Regno [...]" (EP V/1495). After the end of the Napoleonic era, Foscolo recollects, during his exile in 1818, in his *Essay on the Present Literature of Italy*: "The truth is, that Napoleon conferred upon Italy all the benefit that a country divided and enslaved could possibly expect from a conqueror. To him she owed her *union*; to him, her laws and her arms [...]. But Foscolo was a citizen of the Venetian republic which Napoleon destroyed [...]" (EN XI/2, p. 488). On this, between disapproval and devotion, oscillating attitude as reproduced on stage in the relationship that Ajace entertains with Agamemnon, see Donadoni: "Ajace è ribelle verso Agamennone, ma anche desidera [...] di dirgli che una volta Ajace apprezzava Agamennone" (1964: 409).

IV/3, v. 79), and Agamemnon, "re de' re" (AF IV/4, v. 124) could not be more strident. As Ajax threatens the "King of kings" to defend his country's safety and freedom ("Ignudo/ Sempre a' tuoi sguardi questo acciar baleni/ Finchè sicura e libera non sia/ La Grecia meco" [AF IV/6, vv. 306-9]), he contrasts his patriotic ideals with the tyrant's reckless ambitions: "per mari d'innocente sangue/ Nuoti al sommo poter [...]; e la tua/ Fama, e la patria, e te sommergi [...]" (AF IV/6, vv. 303-5).¹²⁸ Hand in hand with the condemnation of martial violence goes the criticism of moral violation. After a decade of fighting the Trojans, the war had turned into Agamemnon's device of intrigue and increase of power.¹²⁹ "Tendea/ Più al racquisto d'Elena, e tu il sai,/ Questa impresa" (AF II/11, vv. 374-7) is Ajax's overt remark against the Atridean king's reprehensible behavior. The same charge echoes with equal strength in the challenge with which his brother Teucer confronted the tyrant already on the

¹²⁸ Cf. as well Calchas' description of Ajax to Agamemnon: "In ogni impresa che alla patria nocchia/ L'avrai nemico [...]" (AF II/1, vv. 68-9). The most elucidative comment to this juxtaposition is provided by the same author in the famous letter to his disciple Pellico from February 1813, which contains Foscolo's dramatic theory: "Ajace ama la gloria e vuol conseguirla per mezzo della virtù difendendo la indipendenza della patria: Agamennone ama la gloria ma la crede indivisa dal sommo potere" (EP IV/1272). The contrastive contiguity between an imprudent and an imperious hero, in accordance with Foscolo's poetics of "harmonic discord" ("il primo quindi ha i difetti dell'Eroe imprudente, l'altro dell'Eroe ambizioso" [EP IV/1272]), is correlated by the advice that Calchas directs to both Agamemnon ("Con le regali tue virtù la terra/ Consola; e il cielo alfin placa e te stesso. —" [AF IV/5, vv. 255-6]), and Ajax ("E tu, mio figlio (o a me più assai che figlio!)/ Obbligar vuoi che sei mortale; alzarti/ Oltre la *inferma, sventurata, cieca*/ Nostra natura. [...]" [AF IV/5, vv. 257-80]); on the filial relationship shared between Foscolo's Calchas and Ajax see also act II/7 (vv. 264-6); Donadoni perceives in the affinity of the characters with the author an allusion to the devotion shared by young Foscolo for Parini (1964: 403). Calchas' warnings towards Ajace coincides with the words uttered by the Sophoclean Calchas: "When men grow to a size too great of them, the prophet said, they are brought down by cruel misfortunes sent by the gods, yes, each one who has human nature but refuses to think only human thoughts" (AS 758-61). It is the same concept of *hybris* the Foscolo derives clearly from Greek tragedy, and indirectly from the traditional association of Ajax to a lion, addressed already by Plato in the notorious passage on the transmigration of souls at the end of his *Republic*: "The soul that [...] chose the life of a lion [...] was the soul of Ajax, the son of Telamon, which, because it remembered the adjudication of the arms of Achilles, was unwilling to become a man" (Bk. X, 620b). On this point, see as well the textual reference in the tragedy: "CALCANTE [...] — O Ajace,/ Solo tu pugni e contro il ciel. Volava/ L'aquila intorno alla tua culla, e Alcide/ Entro la *pelle d'un leon sanguigna*/ Ti ravvolgeva infante. [...]" (AF V/2, vv. 82-6 my emphasis).

¹²⁹ See also Mandruzzato's comment on Foscolo's tragedy "la decenne guerra è stanca", not without alluding simultaneously to the warring scenario in which Europe had been persisting since Napoleon's seizure of power (1978: 260).

Greek stage upon the hero's suicide: "I am proud to die before all fighting for him [*sc.* Ajax] than for your wife, or shall I say for *you* and *your brother*?" (AS 1310-3, my emphases).

Hence the instrumentalization of war to the pursuit of power. It is no one other than the master of deceit, Odysseus, who advises Agamemnon and alerts the audience from the play's initial scenes about the uprising suspicions: "Già bisbigliar s'intende/ Che il pugnar per l'adultera è pretesto" (AF I/3, vv. 142-3), "[per] *stender* quindi/ *Lo scettro tuo sovra la Grecia* (AF I/3, vv. 146-7). In a moment of self-consciousness, surprising for a despotic figure as the Atridean sovereign who, in the Greek tragedy yet refused to forgive Ajax for his transgression even after his death, shows now symptoms of regret for his delusive misdeeds: "E il lungo/ Dissimular finor mi spiace" (AF I/3, vv. 148-9).¹³⁰ In contrast to a well-established myth, Foscolo's parricide, whose ferocious violence did not shy away from sacrificing his daughter for the sake of politics, is permanently afflicted, as Calchas sees through him, by pangs of conscience: "Ma dentro/ L'ambizion co' suoi rimorsi ei pasce" (AF II/4, vv. 157-8).¹³¹ Behind his remorseful wretchedness there is Foscolo's plea for piety which represented – as he had already stated in *The Sepulchres* ("Le virtù patrie e la pietà congiunta" [S 102, my emphasis]), and as Ajace reiterates ("Se alle *paterne* leggi/ Tu sei

¹³⁰ On the passage in Sophocles' tragedy which reports Agamemnon's lack of pardon and piety, and situates him as such in a diametrically opposed position to Foscolo's character, cf. vv. 1371-3: "he both here and there shall be a deadly enemy to me". As Knox notes, this type of demeanor was in line with the Platonic concept of justice prevalent in ancient Greece: "The simple formula, 'Help your friend, harm your enemies,' was generally accepted, not just as a hardheaded practical advice, but as a moral principle, a definition of justice, a formulation of the *arete*, the specific excellence, of man" (1966: 32-3). It can be said that this mindset depended in part on the attitude of an empire, such as the Greek, which at the highpoint of its power, was concerned to detain its sovereignty and defend its supremacy. As we shall shortly see, Foscolo's reflections on justice, though different, were equally conditioned by the historical premises in which they matured and the future prospects towards which they were projected.

¹³¹ Cf. in the tragedy for instance acts II/1 (vv. 97-105), II/11 (v. 347), IV/1 (vv. 8-11), IV/3 (v. 127), V/7 (vv. 419-20). See as well Foscolo's description of Agamemnon in his already mentioned letter to Pellico (EP IV/1272).

custode; se *pietà* del nostro/ Sangue teco versato [...]" [AF II/11, vv. 310-4 my emphases]) – a prerequisite inseparable from patriotism.¹³² The shame, "la vergogna del simular" (AF IV/1, vv. 19-20), of which Agamemnon is consistently reminded, is at the same time an appeal that Foscolo directs to the conscience of his contemporaries responsible for the political intrigues that divided the country.¹³³

"Ulisse somiglia ad Agamennone nella *violenza e perfidia* dell'ambizione, benchè gli sia dissimile nell'*altezza di cuore*" (EP IV/ 1272, my emphases). By redefining the conventional characters according to the poetics of "harmonic discord", Foscolo sets forth his work on myth in distinctively dramaturgical terms. The theater is consequently transformed into a space of critique. Agamemnon, who is subject to a radical reinterpretation of his eminently despotic attributes provides a blatant example in this respect. The readjustment that Foscolo undertakes of the original mythical figure must be assessed against the backdrop of its historical counterpart. The fact that the playwright attributes to a traditionally onesided perfidious character human traits, meets a double objective. Endowed with a more profound and complex psychology, the stereotypical *dramatis persona* is both brought nearer to the concrete figure of Napoleon, and subsequently reproduces the author's ambivalent mindset towards an equally charismatic and contentious personality. The Argive seer Calchas makes

¹³² For Sophocles alike, compassion is to be granted to noble men. As will be shown shortly in the forthcoming paragraphs (see Odysseus' quote captioned below), the concept of nobility was closely linked to the idea of individual valor and heroism. This coincidence of thought may account for another reason why the author of *The Sepulchres* felt particularly drawn to the Greek tragedy.

¹³³ Cf. how the author recollects Italy's fatal discordances many years later in his *Apologetic Letter* (1825/26): "la *Discordia calunniatrice* è fatale all'Italia. Da principio Napoleone l'aveva istigata a imperversare fra le sette ecclesiastiche, le patrizie, le popolari, e la moltitudine misera e la città; e impediva confederazioni e congiure contro a' Francesi" (EN XIII/2, p. 162 my emphasis).

this ambiguity of mindset clear when he states referring to the king: "Empio non sei;/ Ebbro d'orgoglio sei" (AF IV/5, vv. 252-3).¹³⁴

Foscolo's Agamemnon displays beneath his violent pride a "highness of heart" which Sophocles attributed instead exclusively to the "[n]oble Odysseus" (AS 1381). Known and respected for his wisdom of judgement (AS 1374-5), it is Odysseus' appeal to the burial's ethical value which eventually grants him permission to perform Ajax's funerals (AS 1373):

ODYSSEUS [...] I beg you not to venture to cast this man out ruthlessly, *unburied*. *Violence* must not so prevail on you that you trample *justice* under foot! For me too he was once my chief enemy in the army, ever since I became the owner of the arms of Achilles; but though he was such in regard to me, I would not so far fail to do him *honour* as to deny he was the most *valiant man* among the Argives, of all that came to Troy, except Achilles. And so you cannot *dishonour* him without *injustice*; for you would be destroying not him, but the *laws of the gods*. It is *unjust* to injure a *noble* man, if he is dead, even if it happens that you hate him. (AS 1332-45 my emphases)

According to Odysseus' argument, the concept of justice is tightly related to that of honor which is granted in virtue of a man's nobility. That the term "nobility" does not indicate in this context a social rank, but rather stands for an ethical value as it becomes clear from the moral connotation with which Odysseus charges his idea of justice. Nobility corresponds more precisely to the Greek concept of ἀρετή. The quote allows moreover to infer that this *areté* is derived from individual audacity: for a "valiant man", whom is not honored, is treated without justice, and it is considered "unjust to injure a noble man". Personal honor, therefore, cannot be disjointed from heroism: in other words, a hero is deemed both noble and honorable.¹³⁵ It is in this sense that the prophet Calchas will describe Ajax's urn as

¹³⁴ For more details on this point, cf. also fn. 127.

¹³⁵ In Sophocles' tragedy, this concept had been already articulated by Ajax's brother, Teucer, against Agamemnon's refusal to render honor to the Greek warrior by granting him his burial: "Alas, how swiftly does

"sacra" (AF V/6, v. 382), where the term "sacred" is intended by Foscolo with a rigorously laic connotation.¹³⁶

As argued above, the author had already explored this idea of patriotic and civil valor in his poem on *The Sepulchres*.¹³⁷ More significant, however, in the context of his mythical tragedy, is the different perspective from which he approaches, in contrast to his Greek predecessor, his ethical discourse. If justice represents for Sophocles a principle dictated from the Olympian heights, Foscolo's materialism locates it, rather than beyond, *within* the human world: it resides, more precisely, *in* the reason of the State.¹³⁸ The act of violence, which is to say of "violation" of this *jus civilis*, is not viewed as an external force that (quoting Sophocles' Odysseus) "prevails *on*" the subject, but stems *from* the subject who tends to act in his own interest (EN VII, p. 177). Foscolo provides ample evidence and explanation of this standpoint in his essay *On the Origin and Limits of Justice* (1809), in

gratitude to the dead flow away among men and how soon is it caught betraying them if this man does not bear you in mind, Ajax, even to a small extent, this man whom you often protected, risking your own life!" (AS 1266-70).

¹³⁶ The Oxford dictionary reports the middle English action verb "to sacre" meaning "to dedicate (something) to (a particular person, a deity, or some special purpose)"; cf. *OED*, p. 1871. The act of rendering sacred is not derived in Foscolo's understanding by a divine, but rather a human entity who through his death performs a "sacrifice" (*sacrum facere*), i.e. devotes his life to the country's safety and salvation. This is the same idea of secularized "sacrality" that Foscolo attributes in *The Sepulchres* to Hector's valient death in the defense of Ilias "Ove fia santo e lagrimato il sangue/ Per la patria versato [...]" (S 293-4); see also Getto who views the poem as permeated by "un clima di assorta e laica religiosità" (1977: 145), and Di Fonzo who defines it a "laico canto" (2008: 32). There are other instances in the poem for which the author employs the term "sacred" as for example when he refers to Electra's death whose body and tomb Zeus "fe' sacro" (S 253). It is easy overall to detect a consistent train of thoughts that proceeds from the poem (1807) through the essay (1809) to the tragedy (1811). All three works illustrate the strong link the subsists for Foscolo between ethics and politics. In his essay on justice the author reiterates: "le parole *giustizia, patria e ragione di stato* suonano per me una medesima cosa" (EN VII, p. 180 emphasizes in the original), and the wise prophet Calchas remarks already in the second act of *Ajace*: "Re *giusto* io bramo e qual pur sia l'onoro:/ Ma non sarò di tirannia ministro" (AF II/7, vv. 269-70 my emphasis).

¹³⁷ For a closer and more explicit textual reference, see fn. 132 as well as the paragraphs to which it relates.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Sull'origine e i limiti della giustizia* (1809), EN VII, p. 170.

which the author describes "le sembianze che la giustizia assume dalla *forza*" (EN VII, p. 167 my emphasis), and thus locates the fulfillment or failure of justice within the sphere of the individual's responsibility.¹³⁹

Hence, if Sophocles' dramatic development is catalyzed by the contrast between Ajax's physical might and Odysseus' mind,¹⁴⁰ Foscolo structures the dichotomy instead in terms of Ajax's honesty versus Ulysses' propensity to deceit who, therefore, situates himself at the antipode of Sophocles' homonymous character.¹⁴¹ In Foscolo's tragedy, the most accurate description of Ulisse is given by no other than the wicked king: "Ecco già notte. E Ulisse aspetto io sempre! –/ Vil alma audace a un tempo, infida, fredda/ Sortí colui. Gli uomini, i casi, i tempi/ Attrae scaltro invisibile, [...]" (AF IV/1, vv. 23-6). Under his lucidly scrutinizing conscience, Agamemnon's judgement unfolds in dreadful clarity.

While Sophocles remains faithful to the Homeric epos, Foscolo – championing instead the Italian cause – diverts from the Greek myth of the crafty Odysseus, and resorts more plausibly to Virgil's cunning Ulysses.¹⁴² To say it with Ajax: "Te ambizion, me libertà sospinge,/ *Livor* costui [*sc.* Odysseus] [...]. Tu col terrore; io con l'amor, costui [*sc.*

¹³⁹ In his essay, Foscolo sets forth by identifying in the virtues of compassion ("compassione") and probity ("pudore") the two "forces", sustained by "gratitude and reciprocal respect", which can counteract human propensity to war and usurpation, violence and violation (EN VII, p. 184).

¹⁴⁰ The quote I am referring to in the Greek tragedy is by Agamemnon who remarks: "It is not *stout and broadshouldered* men who are the most reliable, but it is men of *good sense* that everywhere prevail" (AS 1251-2, my emphases).

¹⁴¹ In Foscolo's tragedy, the hostility and thus antithetical juxtaposition of Ajace and Ulisse is most symptomatically presented along the verbal dispute entertained by the two protagonists in act III, scene 4 (cf. in particular vv. 208-52).

¹⁴² See for instance in *The Odyssey* (Bk. XI) the encounter in the Underworld of the eponymous protagonist with Ajax from where Sophocles desumes his positive model for the king of Ithaca, and contrast it with the description of Ulysses provided in Virgil's *Aeneid* (Bk. II). In Aeneas' recount of the Trojan aftermath, Odysseus is presented as "inventor scelerum" (vv. 44-55, 164 ff.).

Whereas Sophocles' main focus in the tragedy is directed to the question whether Ajax deserves an honorable burial, Foscolo indulges instead in the description of the hero's protracted agony and death. With the theater's curtain falling on the spectacle of suicide, its staging (which Sophocles in contrast omits to perform) accounts not only for the play's most dramatic moment, but acquires also particular significance for the tragedy's dénouement. As dramatic highpoint, in it converge both key concepts thus far investigated of patriotic heroism and individual humanity.

Performed through Hector's sword, the suicide hypostasizes Ajax to the status of patriotic hero. Foscolo had already pointed to the juxtaposition of the Greek and the Trojan hero in *The Sepulchres* with whose death the poem equally ends, putting therefore his emphasis alike on the same set of ideals (S 292-5).¹⁴⁷ The main difference, however, between the two warriors resides in that the death of Priam's son can still be upheld as heroic ("AJACE Ti valse almeno a morir per la tua/ Patria, e cadesti lagrimato e sacro!" [AF III/4, vv. 257-8]), whereas Ajax faces the impossibility to perform any more valiant deeds within the spectacle of civil war and fratricide bloodshed that his execrable times display: "Ma io?... vedi... le furie mi strascinano/ A bagnar[e] [il fatal dono] di sangue, di quel sangue/ Che tu aborrevi, e ch'io finor difesi" (AF III/4, vv. 259-61). Agamemnon's disconsolate line ("Più forte,/ E più

author was not only familiar with Cicero's essay, but also held the Roman thinker in high esteem is attested by the project of study (*Piano di Studi*) he compiled in early 1796 which begins with the entry "Morality" (*Morale*) and reports next to the Gospels, "gli uffizi di Cicerone ed osservazioni sull'uomo" (EN VI, p. 3). There is in Ajace's last words before facing his death a strong resonance of the materialistic pessimism that underscores *The Sepulchres*; cf. in particular the numerous lexical and ideological correspondences in the hero's last monologue (AF V/4, vv. 267-304) in which key concepts regarding "death", "hope", the contrast between "darkness" and "light" could deserve in another place a more systematic attention.

¹⁴⁷ In his *Letter to Monsieur Guillon* (1807), Foscolo justifies his predilection for and inclusion of Hector in the poem for representing the epitome of the valiant warrior who died defending his country ("un guerriero caduto difendendo la patria" [EN VI, p. 513]).

esecrato, e piú infelice io sono" [AF V/7 vv. 419-20]) with which the play ends, certainly offers no solution to the violation perpetrated by myth and the violence intrinsic to human history. It is in this tragic awareness of disillusion and destruction that the curtain falls. The only redemption from death is offered by the work of poetry which grants the hero his glory (κλέος) and "onore di pianti" (S 292).¹⁴⁸

Through his death, myth joins history and Ajax becomes immanent to time. By rendering honor to his death and thus acknowledging his heroic demise with a grave memorial, Sophocles sets a historical monument that will guarantee his survival. The desolate scene of Ajax's death, with which Foscolo instead concludes his tragedy, integrates the hero in the natural cycle of demise and dissolution that he had already illustrated in the verses of *The Sepulchres*. In his poem, in fact, the author addressed the same peculiar coincidence of myth and history. The passage from the heroes commemorated in the Florentine church of Santa Croce to those immortalized in the battle of Marathon accounts for a contiguity between Italy and Greece which, in turn, speaks for a *continuum* that historical time establishes with myth.¹⁴⁹ Through the socio-political contextualization of his tragedy, Foscolo performs respectively a modernization of myth, and a mythization of coeval

¹⁴⁸ A yet more promising prospect, compared to *Ajace*, with which *The Sepulchres* end: "Il sacro vate [*sc.* Homer]/ placando quelle afflitte alme col canto,/ I prenci argivi eternerà" (S 288-90). In Foscolo's small article ("articoletto" as he names it) *Della poesia lirica* (1811), poetry is described – in its function of handing down the heroes' memory to posterity – as the original medium of historical narration: "Finchè gli uomini non avevano se non se il canto, tutta la storia e le loro leggi religiose e politiche doveano necessariamente trovarsi nella tradizione delle loro canzoni" (EN VII, p. 325-6). The poets' purpose to preserve their countries' stories accounts for a kinship between poetry and myth that the author desumed from Vico, and explains Foscolo's predilection for mythical narrations as receptacles and reminder of henceforth forfeited and forgotten values.

¹⁴⁹ On the affinity between Greece and Italy, see the systematic study on the parallelism of myth and history in *The Sepulchres* by Salvini (1995).

history.¹⁵⁰ If in his former poem, however, the temporal trajectory progressed backwards from present history to the immemorial past, Foscolo inverts the direction in his drama and proceeds instead from myth to history.

Through his suicide, Ajax aims to resist reality and reject its absurdity or, to say it with Blumenberg, its "absolutism."¹⁵¹ But Foscolo's tragedy ends with the disconcerting tableau of a king who eventually submits himself to a widow's doom (AF V/7 vv. 415-8). How ought this conclusion to discharge, through the terror of myth, the horrors of history be assessed? Foscolo's *Ajace* represents what Blumenberg defines as the "final myth" – in other words: it "bring[s] myth to an end" (1985: 263).¹⁵² Ajax's myth is no longer meant to "provide answers to questions", but rather to "make it seem as though there is nothing left to ask" (1985: 288). *Ricciarda*, Foscolo's third and last tragedy, will eventually sanction this progressive transition from myth to history as definitive.

¹⁵⁰ See Binni, to whom Foscolo's tragedy represents "un alto *documento poetico* di testimonianza, di esperienza e di sofferenza di un dato *momento storico*" (1982: 151, my emphases).

¹⁵¹ In his hybris, Sophocles' Ajax has been compared by the critics to a new Prometheus in the act of defying the will imposed by the goddess Athena; see in particular Grene (1967: 135), but also the comments advanced by Knox (1966: 38), and Hogan (1991: 180). Foscolo's *Ajace*, instead, resembles for its more overtly political connotation Vico's Hercules who, to quote again the author of the *New Science*: "every gentile nation boasts as its founder" and "whom we find to have been the type of the *political heroes*" (NS 3, my emphasis). Not the "fire-bringer" Prometheus whom Vico saw, in Blumenberg's interpretation, as "figure of a disabling anxiety" (1985: 378), but rather the "vanquisher of monsters" Hercules (Blumenberg 1985: 378), "contemplat[ed] in his greatest labor": "the slaying of the lion which, vomiting flame, set fire to the Nemean forest, and adorned with whose skin Hercules was raised to the stars" (NS 3), can be said to exemplify more closely *Ajace's* active heroism. Foscolo himself, mentions the Greek mythological hero in his inaugural speech at the Italian university of Pavia, with visible allusions to Vico's theory of the emergence of society and nation, when he writes: "Tutte le nazioni esaltando il loro *Ercole patrio* ripeteano con quante fatiche egli avesse protetti dagl'insulti delle umane belve, ancor vagabonde per la grande selva della terra, que' mortali che la certezza della prole, delle sepolture e dei campi, e lo spavento delle folgori e delle leggi aveano finalmente rappacificati; e quegl'inni accendeano *i condottieri alla gloria e i combattenti al valore*" (EN VII, p. 18 my emphases).

¹⁵² Hence myths that intend to be "final", according to Blumenberg, demand the prerogative of totality: "Such total schemata are mythical precisely in the fact that they drive out the desire to ask for more and to invent more to add" (1985: 288). Agamemnon's concluding interjection "O grande anima! – o a te *funesta* e a noi!" (AF V/7, v. 414 my emphasis) conveys the idea of reaching an end in which death constitutes the ultimate answer: "AJACE – Sotterra t'aspetto, / O re de' re!" (AF V/7, vv. 410-11).

2.1.4 Summary

This first section ends by predicting the gradual shift from myth to history and reiterating the authors' affiliation, as it was laid out in the introduction, in terms of the same epistemological claim posited by their narratives for meaning and truth. The analysis of Foscolo's and Kleist's plays illustrated the adoption and adaptation of ancient myths in terms of the rationality intrinsic to mythology. The representation and rhetoric of death served the playwrights' double objective to both exhibit and elude the violence enacted on the scenery of contemporary history.

Thyestes' suicide, performed in the interest of national polity, becomes indicative of the ethics that inspire these works. In restoring and rewriting the Greek myth, Foscolo's tragedy underscores the "sacrality" bestowed upon the protagonist's sacrifice which, performed in the name of collective salvation, results pervaded by christological overtones. More akin to the bestiality of Seneca's *Thyestes* than to Foscolo's *Tieste*, Kleist's *Penthesilea* displays a likewise cannibalistic propensity. In line with Foscolo's and the original Greek myth, the heroine performs her carnivorous misdeed fully unaware of what she is accomplishing. Unlike Foscolo's tragic protagonist, however, Penthesilea's monstrosity becomes more directly allusive of Napoleon's bloodthirsty politics of conquest.

Rooted in the inexorable terror of reality, Kleist's reversal of the original myth to unspell its alienating frights is led by the author thus far as to question the narrative's own logos and undermine the rationality attributed to human history and existence. The reshaping from ancient to allegorical myth not only fulfills the author's purpose to express his political criticism, but exposes simultaneously the very fictionality of narratives. As the mythical

Greek-Amazon antithesis reproduces the historical French-Prussian hostility, the story accounting for the formation of the Amazon state corroborates Etienne Balibar's theory of the nation as historically manufactured and maintained. For all three tragic characters, death becomes the ultimate means to avoid despotism and assert the cause of their individuality and national institution.

Akin to Balibar, Benedict Anderson argues that the concepts of "nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are *cultural* artefacts", and sets forth specifying how the idea of nation can be more appropriately grasped "if one treated it as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion'" (1983: 4-5). The mediation of national and religious belief exemplified in the mythical dramas through the notion of fraternity and filiation upon which the national community relies, will return with emphasis in the forthcoming historical plays. The relevance and repercussion of mythological narratives for the authors' historical present is eventually accentuated in Foscolo's *Ajace* and sanctions through the hero's historization – i.e. his integration and inclusion in cultural memory as achieved through the ritual reenactment on stage of the classical myth – the substitution of myth through history, in other words, its transition from an immemorial to a memorable past.

2.2. Historical Plays

Kleist's *Penthesilea* (1808) and Foscolo's *Ajace* (1811) appear to anticipate the gradual destitution of mythical plays in favor of the historical drama. As a matter of fact, both tragedies refer and resort in their mythical plots to history: *Penthesilea* by retelling the story of the Amazon society as emerged out of the struggle between Scythians and Aethopians, *Ajax* by means of its intrinsic contextualization to the Trojan epic.¹⁵³ Moreover and more significantly, their compositions coincided with the authors' increased study of historical accounts, initiating a shift of focus that will lead respectively to the teutonic legendary drama of *Die Hermannschlacht* (1808/09) and the Italian medieval play of *Ricciarda* (1813). Kleist's *Prince Friedrich of Homburg* (1810/11) occupies, instead, an exceptional position in the sequence of historical tragedies.

On the following pages I intend to examine, as exhibited in their tragedies, the authors' individual approaches to history in terms of three different ways to address and act upon their historical contingency of national self-assertion and emancipation. My investigation shall rely in this endeavor upon two main studies: Fredric Jameson's concept of ideology at work in historical narratives, and Homi Bhabha's theory of the dynamics operating specifically in national narratives.¹⁵⁴ Rather than implying a distortion of truth,

¹⁵³ The dichotomy of Scythians versus Aethopians was originally part of the Greeks' ethnocentric discourse that distinguished the Aethopians' darker complexion from the fairly skinned Scythians, and thus the North from the South. The topos was later assimilated by Christians to distinguish themselves from the Scythian slave and the black Aethopian evil doer (Snowden 1970: 197).

¹⁵⁴ I am referring to Jameson's *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981) and Bhabha's "DissemiNation: time, narrative and the margins of modern nation" in his collation of essays on *Nation and Narration* (1990b). In contrast to Jesi's assumption of ideology as attached to technical-functional myths, which ought to be distinguished as false from their originally "genuine" counterparts, Jameson's notion of ideology is divested of an equivalent negative connotation. What Jameson points to in his hermeneutic theory is the role played by the "interpretative system [...] of psychoanalysis" (in which he identifies the component of

with the term "ideology" Jameson points to the set of social, cultural and political expectations that are unconsciously involved in the interpretation and construction of narratives. In his own words: "Interpretation [...] always presupposes, if not a conception of the unconscious itself, then at least some mechanism of *mystification* or *repression* in terms of which it would make sense to seek a latent meaning behind a manifest one, or to rewrite the surface categories of a text in the stronger language of a more fundamental interpretative code" (1981: 60 my emphases).

Following the tragedies' order of composition, the analysis shall proceed in three subsequent moments respectively introduced by Kleist's tragedies and ending with Foscolo's last drama. Whereas the thesis underlying my argument will endorse and elucidate, as it was premised in the introduction to section II, the closeness and kinship shared by mythical and historical narratives, the overarching goal of this assumption will be to pinpoint, explore and ultimately prove the literary strategies employed by the authors in their work, this time, on history.

Hence my objective will be twofold: I will illustrate *why* Kleist and Foscolo decide to turn away from myths in favor of history, and indicate *how* they elaborate on past accounts in the construction of a meaningful history in the present and for posterity. As to the "why", I shall depart from Jameson's disquisitions on the textual nature of history, whereas the "how" shall be determined on the basis of Bhabha's reflections concerning the process of national formation intended as fictionalization.¹⁵⁵ Despite its preeminent attention towards

"desire" as driving force of human thinking and action), and the power exerted by language as the "very vehicle of mystification" (1981: 61).

¹⁵⁵ See Bhabha's quote in introduction on page 4.

contemporary manifestations of nation-state formation, Bhabha's theory has the merit to disclose and dismantle the rhetorical practices that are generally involved in any construction of national narratives. The idea that national histories are linguistically conveyed and politically conceived, draws Bhabha near Jameson and thus allows for their parallel discussion and treatment.

Bhabha's theory shall serve as source of analysis for our first tragedy. Kleist's *Herrmannsschlacht* offers, in this respect, evidence of how national history can acquire mythical traits. Not only does the act of reiterated narration elevate the historical agent of events to the status of national hero, the mimetic representation of these events on stage allows, in turn and more importantly, to present and promote by means of a concrete plot embedded in dramatic action, national ideals otherwise abstract and more arduous to grasp. The theater, therefore, becomes the space in which the drama of history can be reenacted as much as it can be retraced, with propagandistic purposes, to the dimension of historical reality.

Prince Friedrich of Homburg, Kleist's subsequent historical play will display instead a more sophisticated example of Bhabha's thesis. Through a reverse procedure, this drama enacts in contrast, what I shall describe, following Bhabha, as "counter-narrative" (1990b: 300).¹⁵⁶ Both the drama's plot, which diverts from the original historical account, and its highly ambivalent dénouement, suggest that Kleist disregards the traditional glorification of history, and deconstructs its discourse of heroic apotheosis by presenting the audience with a

¹⁵⁶ With the definition of "counter-narrative" Bhabha refers more precisely to those discourses that subvert "totalizing" conceptualizations (1990b: 300). Following his assumption of competing narratives latent to the national master narrative, I employ this term to indicate the more comprehensive idea of alternative narratives that can be derived from the conventionally established one.

protagonist endowed with overtly human traits of fears and faults. By the same act of demystifying the aura of history, Kleist achieves to disclose the very fictionalized nature of which national narratives are made.

The Italian drama of *Ricciarda*, Foscolo's last tragedy and the final play in this chronological sequence, will focus instead on Jameson's notion of "historical allegories" (1981: 29), exploring the potential that this acceptance implies for the author: "the opening up of the text to *multiple meanings*, to successive *rewritings* and *overwritings* which are generated as so many levels and as so many *supplementary interpretations*" (1981: 29-30, my emphases).¹⁵⁷ In line with the premise of linguistically fashioned national histories and Kleist's undertaking of "rewriting" and/or "overwriting" the historical text, Foscolo's play shall illustrate, in turn, Jameson's model of allegorical hermeneutics. In an essay on Jameson's theory, Hayden White describes his concept of "narrativization" as one that "sublimates [historical] necessity into a symbol of possible *freedom*" (1987: 149 my emphasis). It is within the spectrum of alternative "multiple meanings" and "supplementary interpretations" that said "freedom" finds, as we shall see, its space of expression and its ideological strength.

¹⁵⁷ The concept of allegory will return towards the end of my study in section IV, dedicated to the examination of Goethe's and Manzoni's dramas, when I shall resort to Ricoeur's definition of historical narratives as allegorical experiences of temporality as formulated in his multivolume work on *Temps et récit* (1983). It suffices to specify in this context that Jameson and Ricoeur depart from quite different premises (in contrast to Jameson, in fact, Ricoeur is eminently interested in displaying the symbolic nature common to all narrative discourses), and that their notion of allegory is quite distinctive. Jameson's allegorical system has a materialistic matrix of thought that deals with the socio-political constituents involved in the construction of historical narratives. Ricoeur, on the contrary, approaches the idea of allegory as a form of figurative discourse shared by history as much as by myth; his theory of allegoresis has a strong metaphysical component, completely absent in Jameson's disquisitions and which becomes evident for Ricoeur in the dramatic human experience of temporality caught between death and eternity.

2.2.1. *Die Herrmannsschlacht* (1808/09)

"Die Herrmannsschlacht ist ihrer historischen Bedeutung nach das wichtigste der Kleistschen Stücke" – it is with these words that the historian and literary critic Gervinus praised Kleist's play in 1842.¹⁵⁸ The author himself accounted his drama to those "die in die Mitte der Zeit hineinfallen" (B 156). As a matter of fact, the historical significance that the drama bears is twofold acting as document both of the past, in its quality and function of national myth, and of a present that was witnessing the violation and violence of Napoleonic warfare. If Kleist's pessimism had found already in *Penthesilea* its expression in the heroine's regression to a primal, bestial state, the playwright exposes in the *Herrmannsschlacht* the barbarous consequences of atavistic bloodsheds derived from the quest of national assertion.¹⁵⁹ Certainly both plays equally deny any possibility of compromise, and hail the sacrifice of death as the key to freedom and national emancipation.

The considerable scholarly research conducted on the *Hermann's Battle* as manifesto of Kleist's nationalism, was meant to rectify the ideological distortion and instrumentalization that the play underwent during the Nationalist Socialist era.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Georg Gottfried Gervinus. *Neuere Geschichte der poetischen National-Litteratur der Deutschen*, qt. from Lütteken (2004: 164).

¹⁵⁹ As Griffiths observes in his illuminating reading of *Die Herrmannsschlacht*, Kleist's recasting of the historical account was affected, in contrast to previous reworkings by J.E. Schlegel's *Herrmann* (1740) and Klopstock's *Herrmanns Schlacht* (1769), by the atrocities of the French terror: "including the violence he ascribes to female characters such as Thusnelda and Penthesilea was undoubtedly shaped by the bloody extremes of the revolutionary era" (2008: 135).

¹⁶⁰ See Müller-Salget (2002: 262-4). There have also been examples of new terms coined to redefine Kleist's nationalism such as Allemann's "Nationalistik" as a solution that mediates both a "national" and a "nationalistic" perspective. On Kleist's "renaissance" as political martyr, patriot and prophet in the reappropriation of his works during the Kaiserreich of the 1870s, and the Third Reich, see Lütteken (2004: 151-90). As a matter of fact, the author was more concerned to voice, through the dramatic portrayal of brutal violence, his loath against the enlightened tenets that were upheld by his contemporaries, suggesting their inconsistency and inadequacy under the Napoleonic devastating politics of conquest and colonization; cf. Griffiths (2008: 133).

Proceeding from this conspicuously studied aspect of the play, I will approach Kleist's drama as example of *monumental* historical narrative in which the myth of the nation is ultimately inscribed.¹⁶¹

In my analysis of the play, I will borrow from Bhabha's conceptualization of national narratives as "strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of 'the people' or 'the nation'" (1990b: 292). More precisely, departing from the author's fictionalization of the Teutoburg battle fought by the Germans against the Romans in the 9th century, the objective of my study will be to elucidate Kleist's resort to and readaptation of national history through Bhabha's notion of "cultural liminality", i.e. the articulation of the German tribes' cultural difference within the political entity of the Roman Empire.¹⁶² With this purpose in mind, Kleist disrupts the master narrative of the Roman Empire's history, to assert in turn over it the "temporality" of the German people, which is to say their specific "national culture" (Bhabha 1990b: 292).¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ I am borrowing the term "monumental" from Nietzsche's conceptualization of and critique against *The Uses and abuses of History*. As he purports: "Monumental history lives by false analogy; it entices the brave to rashness, and the enthusiastic to fanaticism by its tempting comparisons" (1964: 16). See also McNeill's definition of *Mythistory*: "A nation or any other human group [...] knows how to behave in *crisis situations* because it has inherited a heroic historiographical tradition" (1986: 13). The year 1808, in which Kleist set pen to his play, fell indeed into a moment of political crisis which followed the Prussian setback at Jena and Auerstedt in 1806: the dramatic action thus aimed to promote the alliance of all German princes under the aegis of one national leader.

¹⁶² On the relevance of culture and its relation to political power in *Die Hermannschlacht*, see Griffiths who identifies in the various dramatic versions of the play by Schlegel, Klopstock and Kleist the "recognition that culture and power are closely bound together, that culture serves as an instrument of power and that the exercise of power is in turn mediated through cultural forms" (2008: 134-5). More specifically, the Germans' diatribe with the Romans serves Kleist as pendant to the German subjection by the French Empire – a correspondence suggested all the more by the assimilation, anything but uncommon among Kleist's contemporaries, of Napoleon to the figure of Caesar Augustus.

¹⁶³ In contrast to "historicity", Bhabha points to the "disjunctive" effects exerted by "temporality" on the "causal logic" of history (1990b: 293). The suspension of historical rationality is achieved by Kleist through the alteration of facts and the addition in the play of anachronisms (cf. SW II/1118). By doing so, the author demonstrates his lack of that "historical sense of reverence" that Nietzsche ascribed to the "antiquarian" who, in contrast to the monumental historian (interested in the first stance in the "greatness" of the past), "emphasize[s]"

The inclusion, within this scope of study, of selected political writings from 1809 shall further assess Kleist's ideological considerations and provide a more thorough understanding of his political engagement. In line with previous research, my investigation aims to corroborate Kleist's portrayal as national, rather than nationalistic poet. In contrast to former studies, however, I will avail myself of an outspoken contemporary theory of nationhood which has the merit of displaying – as Bhabha's notion of national narrative illustrates – two distinctive moments involved in the articulation of cultural identity: the "pedagogical" and the "performative". If the pedagogical exhumes the cultural value of a national community from its past, the performative renews its tradition in the present, whilst in each instance the people act respectively as objects and subjects of the national discourse.

As a matter of fact, no unified German state was yet established when Kleist turned to a historical drama that was meant to provide an answer to its actual existence:

HERRMANN Fragst, wo und wann Germanien gewesen?
 Ob in dem Mond? Und zu der Riesen Zeiten? (H V/ 24, vv. 2613-4)

Albeit directed to Aristan, the German prince who had remained allied to Rome, Herrmann's taunting rhetoric accounts for the recognition and assertion of a nation yet in the process of becoming:

ARISTAN Ich las, mich dünkt, ein Blatt von Deiner Hand,
 Das für Germanien in den Kampf mich rief!
 Jedoch *was galt Germanien mir?*
 Der Fürst bin ich der Ubier,

what is customary and what is traditionally valued" (1964: 21-2). Despite the assessment of Kleist's drama as "Gründungsmythos" during the Third Reich (Müller-Salget 2009: 77), the author's concept of history defied a rigorously linear and teleological conceptualization, and was combined instead with a circular, thus Vichian, notion to which I shall return in my analysis of *Prince Homburg*; cf. section 2.2.2., fn. 204.

Beherrscher eines *freien Staats*, (H 5/24, vv. 2604-10 my emphases)¹⁶⁴

Against Aristan's indifference ("Jedoch was galt Germanien mir?") to the prospect of national unification, Kleist urges to spur an awareness of cultural collectivity and cohesion.¹⁶⁵

Advocating a program of national education able to extend the freedom of single states ("Beherrscher *eines* freien Staats") to "das gesamte Reich Germaniens" (H I/1, v. 71), Kleist begins his play condemning the particularism of individualistic territorial interests:

WOLF [...]. Es bricht der *Wolf*, o Deutschland,
In Deine Hürde ein, und deine Hirten streiten
Um eine Handvoll *Wolle* sich. (H I/1, vv. 72-4 my emphases)

Through the consonance of "Wolf" ("wolf") and "Wolle" ("wool"), Kleist juxtaposes the key terms of his polemic. Underestimating the threat posed by the Roman "wolf", the Germans

¹⁶⁴ Aristan's derogatory remark "Jedoch was galt Germanien mir?" at the end of the play stands in striking opposition to Wolf's *pluralis maiestatis* "uns Deutsche" that introduces the dramatic action under the banner of a collective identity. Notice, in this regard, the anachronism employed by Kleist in ascribing to the Germanic tribes of the 9th century, which identify themselves as states, a political consciousness that originated, especially in the terms posited by Aristan as "freien Staat[]", from enlightened thought and had found its first actualization only with the French Revolution.

¹⁶⁵ In the introduction to his prospective patriotic journal *Germania*, Kleist postulated his pedagogical program in explicit terms: "Jetzt, oder niemals, ist es Zeit, den Deutschen zu sagen, was sie ihrerseits zu tun haben, um der *erhabenen Vormundschaft*, die sich über sie eingesetzt hat, allererst würdig zu werden" (SW III/492 my emphasis). Not without a note of poignant sarcasm directed against Kant's enlightened philosophy and German idealism, Kleist argued instead in favor of that same zest for action which had already animated *Penthesilea's* warfare against the Greeks, and which will be proclaimed by Marbod ("Zu Worten hätt' ich keine Zeit gehabt:/ Mit Taten würd' ich ihm die Antwort schreiben" [H IV/2, vv. 1463-4]), and Herrmann ("Es braucht der Tat, nicht der Verschwörungen" [H IV/3, v. 1515]) on the eve of the Teutoburg battle. As to the objectives of his journal, Kleist specified: "Dich, o *Vaterland* will sie [*sc.* die "Germania" Zeitschrift] singen; und deine Heiligkeit und Herrlichkeit; [...]. Sie will herabsteigen, wenn die Schlacht braust, und sich, mit hochrot glühenden unter die Streitenden mischen, und ihren *Mut* beleben, und ihnen *Unerschrockenheit* und Ausdauer und *des Todes Verachtung* ins Herz gießen" (SW III/492-3 my emphases). Next to courage ("Mut"), intrepidity ("Unerschrockenheit") and defiance of death ("Todesverachtung"), all keywords of Kleist's national discourse and of the martial propaganda hailed in the *Herrmannsschlacht*, I shall return in more detail to the term "fatherland" and explore its meaning within the dramatic development of Kleist's subsequent historical play. In *Prince Friedrich of Homburg*, however, the author prefers to milden the belligerent tones of the *Herrmann's Battle*, and accentuate instead his emphasis on the moral implications of political leadership that in Herrmann's drama are completely subverted. Not only are deceit, fraud, and instrumentalisation considerate legitimate, but every means appears to justify in Herrmann's, i.e. in the author's eyes, national defense and liberation.

were, in fact, subordinating the defense against foreign invasion to their quarrel over personal goods ("wool").¹⁶⁶

As early as in October of 1806, under darkly foreboding times, Kleist was writing to his sister: "Es wäre schrecklich, wenn dieser Wütherisch [*sc.* Napoleon] sein Reich gründete. Nur ein sehr kleiner Theil der Menschen begreift, was für ein Verderben es ist, unter seine Herrschaft zu kommen", and stigmatizes in the same letter the Germans as "die unterjochten Völker der Römer" (B 105).¹⁶⁷ Akin to a colonial power, Napoleon's far-reaching regime – to which the German states of the Rhine Confederation had been annexed since 1806 – finds on stage in the territorial vastness of the Roman empire its historical correlative.¹⁶⁸

WOLF Rom, dieser Riese, der, das Mittelmeer beschreitend,
Gleich dem Koloß von Rhodus, trotzig,
Den Fuß auf Ost und Westen setzt,
Des Parthers mut'gen Nacken hier,
Und dort den tapfern Gallier niedertretend:
Er wirft auch jetzt *uns Deutsche* in den Staub. (H I/1, vv. 2-7 my emphasis)

The pronominal phrase "uns Deutsche" displays from the incipient verses the author's intent to signify the identity of the Germanic tribes, enumerated in the subsequent lines, as

¹⁶⁶ According to Gervinus's comment of the play: "[wollten] selbst die Gutgesinnten nicht um die *Freiheit*, sondern um ihren *Besitz* kämpfen"; qt. from Lütteken (2004: 164 my emphases).

¹⁶⁷ The German intelligentsia was indeed not as defamatory as Kleist about the charismatic figure of Napoleon. As a term of comparison it suffice to think of Goethe's glorification of Napoleon, an enthusiasm about which Blumenberg conjectured: "In Napoleon he is confronted by the maker of a *history without any possible theodicy* – just as the Sturm and Drang poet had needed no other justification than that contained in his work" (185: 471). It was this absolute quality that Kleist intended to question through the systematic hatred promoted in the play by Herrmann against the Romans: "EGBERT: Im Wahn, den Du [*sc.* Herrmann] geschickt erregt,/ Es gelte Rom und die Tyrannenmacht,/ Die unser heil'ges Vaterland zetriff"; "Die Herrmannsschlacht", *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, act 5, scene 11, vv. 2129-31, p. 533, additional references in the text will henceforth be cited as "H" followed by the act, scene and verse number.

¹⁶⁸ For Kleist's understanding of Napoleon's empire as colonial power, see also Stephens (1999: 230). The consequences that were derived by Kleist's contemporary politics of colonializations is addressed more explicitly in his short story *Die Verlobung von St. Domingo*; on the topic of colonialization as addressed in 19th-century German literature, see also Dunker (2008).

one single community – to which the speaker, prince of another Germanic progeny (the Chatten) does not neglect to include himself.¹⁶⁹ Borrowing from Bhabha's terminology, the story of Herrmann, greeted at the end of the play as "Germaniens Retter, Schirmer und Befreier!" (H I/23, v. 2541), and his triumphant battle of the Teutoburg forest thus becomes the "pedagogical object" in Kleist's narrative of the nation and his construction of cultural affinity. He comes to represent that "*a priori* historical presence" (1990b: 299) whose knowledge was unanimously shared by all Germanic tribes which, as proclaimed in the final scenes by Herrmann's entourage, find themselves indistinctively united by a common history witnessing their glorious victory over the Romans: "Triumph! Triumph! Germaniens Todfeind stürzt" (H 5/22, v. 2524).¹⁷⁰

In their pursuit of freedom, the dramatic action is set in motion by the rallying cry of martial propaganda:

¹⁶⁹ This ethnical identification is complemented by an outspoken topographical one in Kleist's patriotic ode from 1809 *Germanias Aufruf an ihre Kinder*, where the various tribes are appointed with respect to their specific geographic location: "Die des Brockens Regionen,/ Die des Elbstroms heitre Aun,/ Die der Donau Strand bewohnen,/ Die das Odertal bebauen,/ Aus des Rheines Laubensitzen,/ Von dem duft'gen Mittelmeer,/ Von der Riesenberge Spitzen,/ Von der Ost- und Nordsee her!" (SW III/427, vv. 1-11); additional references in the text will be quoted as "G" followed by the verse number within parentheses.

¹⁷⁰ According to Griffiths, Kleist's resort to a historical event as notorious as the Teutoburg Battle and recasting in terms of a politics of alliance was dictated by the danger of disappearance that "national" history was risking under the lack of collective cohesion (2008: 132). The successful outcome of the Spanish insurrection against French troops in 1808 had renewed Kleist's national hopes: the Spanish spring had, in fact, provided an example of collective insurgence that deserved to be emulated. In his letter to the German playwright from late April 1809, Joseph von Collin links the Spanish resistance with Kleist's drama for the proximity to the present that it purports: "Vielleicht erhalten wir einen Pendant zur Geschichte von Spanien. – Wenn nur die Österreicher erst hier wären! Doch, wie steht's, mein theuerster Freund, mit der Herrmannsschlacht? Sie können leicht denken, wie sehr mir die Aufführung dieses Stücks, *das einzig und allein auf diesen Augenblick berechnet war*, am Herzen liegt" (B 161 my emphasis). Written in Dresden between Juni and December 1809, i.e. shortly after the Austrian victory over Napoleon in the Aspern Battle of May 1809, Kleist emphasized the importance of a comprehensive coalition among German people under the banner of liberation and emancipation from French dominion. Allemann thus identifies in Marbod, prince of the ancient Suebi tribe, the Austrian emperor who, reminiscent of the military victory of Aspern, turns eventually into an ally of the "Prussian king" Herrmann (1967: 310). It is evident that Kleist was encouraging the alliance of Prussia with Austria as requisite to counteract the Napoleonic politics of oppression.

HERRMANN [...] – Einen Krieg, bei Mana! will ich
 Entflammen, der in Deutschland rasselnd,
 Gleich einem dürrn Walde, um sich greifen,
 Und auf zum Himmel lodern schlagen soll! (H I/3, vv. 332-5)

In contrast to the otherwise highly ambivalent works by Kleist, in the *Herrmann's Battle* language acquires a directness and transparency that is characteristic only of his political writings. The same military slogan echoes for instance in the initial strophes of his poem *Germanias Aufruf an ihre Kinder* where, in a dialogic interplay with the personified female nation, the chorus calls her children out on battle with analogous militant zeal:

CHORUS Zu den Waffen, zu den Waffen!
 Was die Hände blindlings raffen!
 Mit der Keule, mit dem Stab,
 Schlacht, in dein Geklüft hinab! (G 26-30)

Pursued in the name of "Freiheit, Vaterland und Rache" (H V/9, 2070), Kleist's patriotic pedagogy knows no interim solution, but is an all-out war based on antagonism, degradation, and resentment.¹⁷¹ Much of Herrmann's national rhetoric consists in fostering the Germans' hostility and mistrust towards Roman legions, and thus strategically enhance their military determination and devotion for their country. This tactic is symptomatically exemplified by the scene in which Herrmann attempts to convince his wife Thusnelda of Ventidius' deceitful

¹⁷¹ See Griffiths' comments on "Herrmann's methods of education" (2008: 134). The reference to "revenge" ("Rache") is one that appears with consistent frequency in Kleist's military-political considerations; cf. e.g. his above-captioned ode: "Stehst du auf, Germania?! Ist der Tag der Rache da?" (G 16). Another recurrent motif is the association of war with hunting (with the Roman "wolf" as prey) encountered both in *Herrmann's* drama, where the victory over the Roman beast is compared to Thusnelda's successful defeat of the wild aurochs (H I/3, vv. 144-9), and in the *Germania* ode (G 5-7). In Kleist's play, Varus himself is addressed by the Germans as "Wolf der Wüste" (H I/3, v. 203). If the Roman official Varus represents Herrmann's archenemy, the Roman legate and Thusnelda's former suitor Ventidius turns into her bitter adversary. Political and private spheres are in the play closely bound and unfold in nearly parallel moments. Thusnelda's love-drama, following her initial infatuation derived by the Roman's advances, appears almost to foreshadow the play's decisive political developments – for both the hunting scene at the beginning of the play, and her revenge against Ventidius in the end, act as correlatives to the subsequent military actions.

motives as indicative of the Romans' manipulative endeavors to subjugate the Germanic people to their empire:

HERRMANN Was ist der Deutsche in der Römer Augen?
 [...]

Was? – Eine Bestie,
 Die auf vier Füßen in den Wäldern läuft!
 Ein *Tier*, das, wo der Jäger es erschaut,
 Just einen Pfeilschuß wert, mehr nicht,
 Und ausgeweidet und gepelzt dann wird!
 (H III/3, vv. 1070-5 my emphasis).

As Herrmann accuses the Romans to degrade the Germans to the status of animals ("Tier"), at the end of the play Thusnelda will acquire, akin to Kleist's former heroine Penthesilea, beast-like features and turn, though figuratively, into the ferocious she-bear which will tear the Roman legate to pieces: "Er hat zur Bärin mich gemacht!" (H V/15, v. 2321).¹⁷²

Herrmann performs, in the articulation of national rhetoric, the role of the enunciatory subject who, in Bhabha's understanding, is responsible for the construction of the people's image. In this performative stage of a nation's "self-generating" narrative moment, the community – or in the specific case of the play, Arminius, who acts as representative of the Germanic people – defines its identity "as a differentiating sign of Self, distinct from the Other" (1990b: 299). The cultural discourse is expressed primarily in ethnical terms, pointing either to the Romans' distinctive dark complexion (H III/3, vv. 1004-12), or to the natural disposition that distinguishes the Germanic from the Italic tribes:

WOLF Es scheint, Du hältst dies Volk des fruchtumblühten Latiens
 Für ein Geschlecht von *höh'rer Art*,
 Bestimmt, uns roh're Kauze zu beherrschen?

HERRMANN Hm! In *gewissem* Sinne sag' ich: ja.

¹⁷² Thusnelda's statement picks up on Herrmann's comment in the first act, in which her husband had compared the Germans to bears in opposition to the Roman "schlanken Löwen" (H I/3, v. 297).

Ich *glaub'*, der Deutsch' erfreut sich einer *größern*
Anlage, der Italier doch hat seine mindre
 In diesem Augenblick *mehr entwickelt*.
 (H I/3, vv. 300-6 my emphases)

What might resemble a plea for racial supremacy is instead the acknowledgment of a contingent hegemony enjoyed by the Romans over other people, indicative of their own presumption and subject to change according to a cyclical understanding of history.¹⁷³ The Germans' alleged natural greatness ("größern Anlage") is by no means asserted in the peremptory tone that distinguishes his military considerations. It is, instead, addressed with caution through the addition of a verb as "glauben" ("to think") which leaves room for objection, as the restrictive formulation "in gewissem Sinne" ("to a certain extent") that introduces his actual statement further corroborates.

The Germans' "größern Anlage" is not dictated by imperialistic motives of prevarication over other tribes, but by reasons of defense and self-assertion. The same passage from which stems the above-captioned quote, entails, on the contrary, explicit reference to a cosmopolitan vision of coexistence, in which the leadership of "die ganze Menschheit" may be equally assigned, with exclusion of the Romans, to either a German ("Deutcher"), a Brit ("Britt") or a Gaul ("Gallier"):

HERRMANN Wenn sich der Barden Lied erfüllt,
 Und, unter einem Königszepter,
 Jemals *die ganze Menschheit* sich vereint,
 So läßt, dass es ein *Deutscher* führt, sich denken,
 Ein *Britt'* ein *Gallier*, oder wer Ihr wollt;

¹⁷³ A few lines before, the protagonist had explicitly identified the enemy's superiority in their outspoken military power to which the German troops, as Foscolo had equally warned the Italian army against the French, were clearly inferior: "HERRMANN Wie wollt Ihr doch, Ihr Herrn, mit diesem Heer des Varus/ Euch messen – an eines Haufens Spitze,/ Zusammen aus den Waldungen gelaufen,/ Mit der Kohorte, der gegliederten,/ Die, wo sie geht und steht, des Geistes sich erfreut?/ Was habt ihr, sagt doch selbst, das Vaterland zu schirmen,/ Als nur die nackte Brust allein,/ Und Euren Morgenstern, indessen jene dort/ Gerüstet mit der ehrnen Waffe kommen,/ Die ganze Kunst des Krieges entfaltend,/ In den vier Himmelsstrichen ausgelernt?" (H I/3, vv. 286-96).

Doch nimmer jener Latier, beim Himmel!
 Der keine andere Volksnatur
 Verstehen kann und ehren, als nur seine. (H I/3, 307-14 my emphases)¹⁷⁴

Kleist transforms the German military leader into an eloquent spokesman of his people and their freedom:

HERRMANN Kurz wollt Ihr, wie ich schon einmal Euch sagte,
 Zusammenraffen Weib und Kind,
 Und auf der Weser rechtes Ufer bringen,
 Geschirre, goldn' und silberne, die Ihr
 Besitzt, schmelzen, Perlen und Juwelen
 Verkaufen oder sie verpfänden,
Verheeren Eure Fluren, Eure Herden
Erschlagen, Eure Plätze *niederbrennen*,
 So bin ich Eurer Mann -: (H I/3, 374-82 my emphases)

The threefold juxtaposition of verbs as "verheeren" ("devastate"), "erschlagen" ("strike dead") and "niederbrennen" ("burn down") speaks for a war led in the name of total destruction and death. Hence liberation must be pursued at any price, even at the cost of material or personal losses.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ In his political writing *Was gilt es in diesem Kriege?*, Kleist posits as ultimate goal of the war the constitution of a society in which the Germanic countries join the rest of humanity. To the title question of his essay the author replies: "Eine Gemeinschaft gilt es, die den Leibniz und Gutenberg geboren hat; in welcher ein Guerike den Luftkreis wog, Tschirnhausen den Glanz der Sonne lenkte und Keppler der der Gestirne Bahn verzeichnete; eine Gemeinschaft, die große Namen, wie der Lenz Blumen, aufzuweisen hat; die den Hutten und Sickingen, Luther und Melanchthon, Joseph und Friedrich auferzog; in welcher Dürer und Cranach, die Verherrlicher der Tempel, gelebt, und Klopstock den Triumph des Erlösers gesungen hat. Eine Gemeinschaft mithin gilt es, die *dem Menschengeschlecht* angehört; die die Wilden der Südsee noch, wenn sie kannten, zu beschützen herbeiströmen würden; eine Gemeinschaft, deren Dasein keine deutsche Brust überleben, und die nur mit Blut, vor dem die Sonne erdunkelt, zu Grabe gebracht werden soll" (SW III/ 478-9). The idea of a cosmopolitan rather than chauvinist Kleist is also supported by Allemann (1967: 307 my emphasis).

¹⁷⁵ It is with this same call to "either freedom or death" that his ode *Germania* ends: "Frei auf deutschem Boden walten/ Laßt uns, nach dem Brauch der Alten/ Seines Segens selbst uns freun,/ Oder unser Grab ihn sein!" (G 32-5). In *The Catechism of the Germans*, Kleist makes his notion of an absolute liberation war, in which death becomes the only alternative to servitude, through the dialogic form of his writing explicit: "Fr. Was; wenn gleich! – Also auch, wenn Alles unterginge, und kein Mensch, Weiber und Kinder mit eingerechnet, am Leben bliebe, würdest du den Kampf noch billigen? Antw. Allerdings, mein Vater. Fr. Warum? Antw. Weil es Gott lieb ist, wenn Menschen, ihrer Freiheit wegen, sterben. Fr. Was aber ist ihm ein Greuel? Antw. Wenn Sklaven leben" (SW III/ 491). In his subsequent historical drama, Kleist will abandon the tones of Herrmann's

Upheld by the commitment "Das Vaterland von dem Tyrannenvolk zu säubern" (II/10 782), what had begun as "Freiheitsschlacht" (H IV/2, v. 1450) turned on the eve of the Teutoburg battle into "Feuer, Raub, Gewalt und Mord,/ Und alle Greuel des fessellosen Krieges!" (H IV/3, vv. 1483-4):¹⁷⁶

HERRMANN Denn eh' doch, seh' ich ein, erschwingt der Kreis der Welt
 Vor dieser Mordbrut keine Ruhe,
 Als bis das Raubnest *ganz zerstört*,
 Und nichts, als eine *schwarze Fahne*,
 Von seinem *öden Trümmerhaufen* weht!
 (H V/24, vv. 2632-6 my emphases)

Ending with Arminius' troops marching onto Rome to secure the enemy's total liquidation ("ganz zerstört"), the Germans' warfare conducted under the banner of demise ("schwarze Fahne") and dissolution ("öden Trümmerhaufen") reproduces on stage the unethical war politics of French conquest:

HERRMANN Du weißt was *Recht* ist, Du verfluchter Bube,
 Und kamst nach Deutschland, unbeleidigt,
 Um uns zu unterdrücken?
 Nehmt eine Keule doppelten Gewichts,
 Und schlagt ihn tot! (H V/13, vv. 2216-20 my emphasis)¹⁷⁷

Directed against the Roman chief Septimius, Herrmann's reproof ought to remind the audience – with his overt reference to "Recht" – of Napoleon's infraction of personal rights and war laws in the pursuit of absolute dominion. As the historical battle of the Teutoburg

emotionally charged warfare, which will be far removed from the Elector's reasoned politics and the "rational" nationalism enacted by *Prince Homburg*.

¹⁷⁶ For Gönner the Germans' irrational outbursts of massive aggression must be viewed as a consequence of fear (1989: 32), whereas for Stephens, the violence portrayed by Kleist in his drama reflects the unscrupulous politics of French oppression (1999: 244).

¹⁷⁷ Cf. strophe 5 of the *Germania* ode in which the enemies corpses turn into river banks that describe and define the national borders: "Alles, was ihr Fuß betreten,/ Färbt mit ihren Knochen weiß,/ Welchen Rab' und Fuchs verschmähten,/ Gebet ihn den Fischen preis,/ Dämmt den Rhein mit ihren Leichen,/ Laßt, gestäuft von ihrem Bein,/ Ihn um Pfalz und Trier weichen,/ Und ihn dann die Grenze sein!" (G 30-6).

forest had posed an end to the expansion of the Roman empire, Kleist aspired to achieve through an action of collective resistance and rebellion the downfall of French sovereignty. His hatred against Napoleon, however, and his attempt to promote an insurrection did not find strong support among contemporaries, and the play failed to be staged until 1806 in occasion of the Leipzig battle.¹⁷⁸

The promotion in the *Herrmannsschlacht* of national cohesion will return in his forthcoming historical drama, *Prince Friedrich of Homburg*. This time, however, under clearly disillusioned historical premises, Kleist will replace Arminius' martial paroxysm with an outspoken military pragmatism.¹⁷⁹ The Elector's strategically conceived and calculated warfare will be alien to Herrmann's destructive, deceitful and denunciatory war politics. Whilst Arminius' fellow princes had to be cajoled into action, Prince Homburg will be animated by an "instinctive" patriotism. Whilst Herrmann manipulated and marginalized his army, the Elector will grant Prince Homburg his share of moral autonomy and authority.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Upon a first partial print in 1818, the play appeared in press in its full length in 1821 (Müller-Salget 2009: 77). Not only was Kleist's aversion for Napoleon irreconcilable with Goethe's profound admiration, but the violence put on stage offended the aesthetic taste of an audience that did not look with favor to politically engaged literature. In a letter to his son Theodor from December 1808, Gottfried Körner commented on Kleist's drama with the words: "Sonderbarerweise aber hat es *Bezug auf die jetzigen Zeitverhältnisse* und kann daher nicht gedruckt werden. Ich liebe es nicht, daß man seine Dichtungen an die wirkliche Welt anknüpft. Eben um die drückenden Verhältnisse des Wirklichen zu entgehen, *flüchtet* man sich ja so gern in das Reich der Phantasie" (D I/304a my emphases). Many intellectuals were still reminiscent of the French "Grand Terreur", and were opposed to a possible *levée en masse*. In a letter from August 2, 1793, Schiller wrote to Körner: "Ich kann seit 14 Tagen keine franz. Zeitung mehr lesen, so ekeln diese elenden Schindersknechte mich an", *Schillers Briefe 1.3.1790 – 17.5. 1794*, p. 183. The French terror had contradicted and dismissed those principles of reason and thought that had represented the pillars of Kant's philosophy and German idealism.

¹⁷⁹ After the marriage in 1810 of the Habsburg Princess Marie Louise to Napoleon, Kleist resigned his last hopes for national emancipation and added on the manuscript of his drama the epigramm *Die tiefste Erniedrigung* (Streller 1966: 195).

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Griffiths: "Communal decision-making has no place within this military structure" (2008: 134-5). In his study on the nature and type of Kleist's nationalism, Allemann concludes that, in contrast to Herrmann, Kleist's nationalistic tenet will no longer be applicable to Prince Homburg (1967: 310-1). As I shall illustrate in the

Within his project of patriotic education, Kleist will henceforth address with preeminent attention the notion of "fatherland" indispensable to guarantee national heroism, and apt to conciliate the reason of the state with the will of its citizens, thus strengthening their awareness of national belonging.

following section, Kleist will be less concerned with national propaganda than with the prospect of political reeducation.

2.2.2. *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* (1809/10)

In his letter from June 21, 1811 to Andreas Reimer, Kleist asked the editor: "Wollen Sie ein Drama von mir drucken, ein *vaterländisches* (mit mancherlei Beziehungen) Namens *der Prinz von Homburg*, das ich jetzt eben anfang, abzuschreiben?" (B 237, emphases in the original). Commenced to write in Dresden, shortly after concluding the *Herrmannsschlacht*, Kleist's work was put neither on stage nor in print more than a decade after its completion.¹⁸¹ The "various connections" ("mancherlei Beziehungen") that Kleist's "patriotic drama" established with the history of his "fatherland" had been so manifest and manifold that the play was not granted its *imprimatur* until after the author's death.¹⁸²

For his play, "das aus der Brandenburgischen Geschichte genommen ist" (B 171), Kleist began to consult historical sources since 1809.¹⁸³ The political circumstances that were recorded in the following two years, eventually deluded Kleist's yet idealistic patriotism that had inspired the Teutonic legend of the *Herrmann's Battle*. Kleist's disapproval for the Prussian king's, Friedrich Wilhelm III, abstention from joining in 1809 the Austrian coalition

¹⁸¹ The play was published only in Tieck's collection of Kleist's works (*Heinrich von Kleists hinterlassenen Schriften*) from 1821. On October 3 of the same year, it was premiered at the Vienna Burgtheater under the censored title *Die Schlacht von Fehrbellin* (*The Battle of Fehrbellin*), albeit withdrawn from stage by orders of the archduke Karl, brother of the Prussian King, after its fourth performance; cf. Hamacher (2009: 80-1).

¹⁸² As it was noticed already, the same misfortune had befallen the *Herrmannsschlacht*, whose "Beziehung auf die Zeit" (B 165), as Kleist lamented in his precarious financial circumstances to his sister Ulrike, prevented the play from finding an editor willing to publish it.

¹⁸³ It is attested that Kleist borrowed, between January and March 1809, from the Dresden library Karl Heinrich Krauses' monograph *Mein Vaterland unter den hohenzollerischen Regenten* (1803) which constitutes the most evident and direct source employed by the author for his play. As a recollection and a reminder to the public of Prussia's heroic past, the historical plot refers to the Fehrbellin Battle from 1675 which witnessed the victorious outcome of the Brandenburg Elector, Friederick William I, over Swedish and with France allied troops, strengthening Brandenburg's and thus Prussia's political position. cf. Müller-Salget (2002: 265-7), Hamacher (2009: 81). For a systematic insight into additional sources consulted by Kleist and relevant to the play's historical background, see also Häker (1987: 18-57), and the more recent contribution by Dölemeyer (2001) which has the merit to shed equally important light onto the socio-economic context of 17th to 18th-century Prussian history.

against Napoleon, and the disappointment following Austria's military defeat by the French troops in the Battle of Wagram (July 5/6, 1809), had shattered his aspirations for national emancipation.¹⁸⁴ In a letter to his cousin Marie, only a few days before his suicide, he resignfully deplored Prussia's political affairs: "Die Zeit ist ja vor der Thür wo man wegen der Treue gegen ihn [*sc.* the king], der Aufopferung und Standhaftigkeit und aller anderen bürgerlichen Tugenden, von ihm selbst gerichtet, an den Galgen kommen kann" (B 251).¹⁸⁵ *Prince Homburg* articulates, in the protagonist's infraction of insubordination, this very critique against the state and its self-interested politics – in colonel Kottwitz' parlance: against "[d]ie schlechte/ Kurzsicht'ge Staatskunst."¹⁸⁶

To neglect these historical premises, would preclude an adequate understanding of the utopian state envisioned, as critics claim, in Kleist's drama. Rather than the expression of wishful thinking, Kleist's utopia appears indicative of a new relationship that the author establishes with history which, in contrast to *Herrmann's* monumental narrative, is

¹⁸⁴ See Hinck (2006: 152-3). After the calamitous Battle of Wagram, Kleist reports his disappointment as the most devastating thus far experienced: "Noch niemals, meine theuerste Ulrike, bin ich so erschüttert gewesen, wie jetzt. Nicht sowohl über die Zeit – denn das, was eingetreten ist, ließ sich, auf gewisse Weise, vorhersehen; als darüber, daß ich bestimmt war, es zu überleben" (B 165). This was the second decisive disillusion experienced by Kleist after 1805 when – shortly before beginning to write *Penthesilea* – the Prussian state refused to participate in the Austrian-Russian coalition against Napoleon, declaring itself neutral. In his letter to Rühle, the author had remarked: "Die Zeit scheint eine neue Ordnung der Dinge herbeiführen zu wollen" (B 97) – presentiments that were to be confirmed by the calamitous events that marked the course of history since 1806.

¹⁸⁵ The coalition signed on February 24, 1811 by the Prussian state with Napoleon had been the cause for Kleist's discouragement and disillusionment of national politics, see SW IV/1080. Kleist's political engagement since 1809 took place in connection with the governmental reform project in which he was directly involved. His occasional work at the Prussian finance department, in fact, and his political writings of this time aimed to mobilize awareness on the larger scale of the population, and promote *en masse* resistance; see Essen (2005: 101-3), and Schmon (2006: 37-49).

¹⁸⁶ "Prinz Friedrich von Homburg", *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, act 5, scene 5, vv. 1583-4, p. 632; additional references in the text will be quoted as "PH" followed by the act and scene number. More concretely, Kleist's polemic had its reason in his historical reality directed against the Prussian king, Friedrich William III, who severely sanctioned any attempt of insurgence against the French (Müller-Salget 2002: 266).

approached with the reservation of a critical mind sharpened by the discouraging development of events and the dissatisfaction experienced with Prussian politics. Kleist's readjustment of the original factual accounts consist in demystifying the historically glorified Brandenburg elector.¹⁸⁷ Akin to his female counterpart Penthesilea, Prince Homburg is enriched with a psychological depth that eventually humanizes the protagonist, and transforms him from antihero to *real*, human hero.¹⁸⁸ By revisiting the historical records, Kleist simultaneously discloses their construction in terms of *fictionalized* national narratives.

Departing from Bhabha's understanding of the nation as "narrative strategy" (1990b: 292), I argue that Kleist provides, with his alternative interpretation of history an example of "counter-narrative". With the institution of the Rhine Confederation, upon signing the homonymous treaty on July 12, 1806, Napoleon had brought the German city-states under the sovereignty and in the service of the Napoleon's politics of advance on the Eastern front of Europe. Within this geo-political space, Kleist's *Prince Homburg* marks that "structure of cultural liminality *within the nation*" or French Empire's (1990b: 299). His dramatic experiment becomes representative of those "heterogenous histories" and "tense cultural locations" that defy the supremacy of a superimposed identity (1990b: 299).

¹⁸⁷ Friederich the Great's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg* reports, in fact, contrary to the play that Prince Homburg would have led through his infraction of the military order to a fatal outcome of the battle, had the Elector not intervened on time and secured victory. Hence Kleist transfers the act of heroism to the Prince, a minor figure compared to the Elector, in whose service he stood, and whom history tends to ascribe the preeminent role of its maker concealing, instead, the true protagonists. It is in this respect that Colonel Kottwitz's critique against the instrumentalization of soldiers for the achievement of personal power and fame conveys its significance, and goes along with his subsequent demand to grant the soldiers their own scope of discretion: "KOTTWITZ Willst du das Heer, das glühend an Dir hängt,/ Zu einem Werkzeug machen, gleich dem Schwerte,/ Das tot in Deinem goldenen Gürtel ruht?" (PH V/5, 1579-81).

¹⁸⁸ In a letter from August 1828 describing Arnim von Achim to his wife Bettina the heroism that Kleist stage with *Prince Homburg* as one that "kühn der angenommenen Heldenmaske entgegen [tritt], sie ab[reißt] und zeigt, daß unter der Maske doch noch ein *wirklicher Held* leben kann" (D II/77a).

If *Penthesilea* had incited the Prussians to defend their (father)land,¹⁸⁹ *Prince Homburg* expressed the urgency of defining the borders and boundaries of this entity.¹⁹⁰ In his *Catechism of the Germans* (1809), Kleist articulates *expressis verbis* the problem of national identity:¹⁹¹

Frage. Sprich, Kind, wer bist du?

Antwort. Ich bin ein *Deutscher*.

Fr. Ein Deutscher? Du scherzest. Du bist in *Meißen* geboren, das Land, dem Meißen angehört, heißt *Sachsen*!

Antw. Ich bin in Meißen geboren und das Land, dem Meißen angehört, heißt Sachsen; aber mein *Vaterland*, das Land dem Sachsen angehört, ist Deutschland, und dein Sohn, meine Vater, ist ein Deutscher.
(SW III/479-80 my emphasis)

With his dialogue, significantly developed between a *father* and his son, Kleist confronted his contemporary readers with the idea of a German nation-state yet inexistent. The question and concept of citizenship, however, that the father directs to his son, becomes the essential notion for the creation of a nation-state. It is, therefore, no surprise that it is this very question which introduces the entire dialogue that will extend over sixteen subsequent chapters.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ It is in particular in scene 5, when the Amazon queen confronts Prothoe's reluctance to join her on the battlefield against the Greeks, that she condemns the "unkriegerische Jungfrau" (P V/ 823) as unpatriotic.

¹⁹⁰ If *Penthesilea*'s individualism was Kleist's appeal to the Prussian State to oppose its resistance to Napoleon, who in 1805 had swept away the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation leaving a blind spot in Europe's geography, after the Confederation of the Rhine, Kleist concentrated his main efforts on fostering national awareness by encouraging the Prussian authority to be more flexible and conciliatory with his people and redirect its politics to the benefit and progress of the state as unified and unanimous collective entity. If in *Penthesilea*'s drama Kleist's accent was drawn onto the individual, in *Prince Homburg* it is posed on the ideal state.

¹⁹¹ Kleist's politically inspired writing was presumably composed around Mai 1809, in other words, precisely while he was writing his drama; cf. SW III/ 1073.

¹⁹² In his disquisitions on the "political unconscious" at work in narratives, Jameson defines the dialogue as an eminently "*antagonistic*" form of discourse (1981: 84) to the extent that it "allows us to *reread* or *rewrite* the hegemonic forms themselves; they also can be grasped as a process of the reappropriation and *neutralization* [...], the *cultural universalization* of forms which originally expressed the situation of 'popular', *subordinate*, or *dominated* groups" (1981: 86 my emphases).

In what follows, I shall elucidate Kleist's definition of "fatherland" and "vaterländisches" drama as he presented it to his editor Reimer. Benedict Anderson's reflections on this notion will help clarify and corroborate the assumption already advanced in Foscolo's *Ajace* underscoring the filial connotation inherent to the conceptualization of the nation. Based on the father-son relationship suggested in his essayistic dialogue, I posit that the father-son conflict developed in the play functions as metaphor for the tension displayed between the state and its citizens. On the basis of this analogy, the process of education that father and son undergo through their catechism can be homologated to the transformation experienced by both Prince Homburg and the Elector, in terms of national awareness and agreement between the individual and his community, considered indispensable to the imagination and establishment of a collective unity and identity. The father-son mediation thus suggested at the end of the play, enacts the conciliation as well as convergence of interests auspicated by Kleist between the Prussian sovereign and his citizens.

In his work on *Imagined Communities*, Anderson explains how the term "Vaterland" (next to "motherland" and "patria") implies, whether in its notion of "kinship" or "home" the essential idea of "natural ties" (1983: 143).¹⁹³ When the Prince addresses the Elector in the

¹⁹³ Müller-Salget warns against equating Kleist's definition of "vaterländisches" with "patriotic", and prefers to understand the term rather as "heimisch", i.e. as history taking place on Prussian ground (2002: 264). Although 18th-century patriotism can certainly not be confused with 20th-century totalitarian nationalism, the term "patria" can be interpreted more broadly, as Anderson remarks, as the expression of a sense of belonging to a specific community without necessarily implying its supremacy or superiority over others. Kleist makes this clear in his brief essay on the question *Was gilt es in diesem Kriege*, written probably shortly before the battle of Aspern (Mai 1809), in which the author auspicates a community ("Gemeinschaft") of brother-nations ("Brüder-Nationen"): "unbekannt mit dem Geist der Herrschsucht und der Eroberung" and regulated by the "Kunst des Friedens"; (SW III/478). It is indicative that Anderson addresses the difficulty of defining nation and nationalism, which has turned in the scholar's opinion into a pathological neurosis of modern history: "Part of the difficulty is that one tends unconsciously to hypostasize the existence of Nationalism-with-a-big-N [...] and then classify 'it' as *an* ideology [...]. It would, I think, make things easier if one treated it as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion', rather than with 'liberalism' and fascism" (1983: 5). This fine, though salient semantic

first scene with a threefold apostrophe: "Friedrich! Mein Fürst! Mein Vater!" (PH I/1, v. 68) and equally greets his wife with the appellative of mother "O meine Mutter!" (PH I/1, v. 69), it is precisely this coincidence of political and private, personal and public cause emphasized by Kleist that Anderson denotes as the familial bondage of imagined communities.

Homburg is introduced on stage as a somnabulist plaiting himself a laurel crown while he is literally dreaming of his military glory ("Genius des Ruhms" [PH I/4, v. 172]).¹⁹⁴ This motif is restored and thus reinforced at the end of the first act through the Prince's apostrophe, in his monologue, to the allegory of fortune:

DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG Du hast mir, *Glück*, die Locken schon gestreift:
 [...]

 Heut, *Kind der Götter*, such' ich, *Flüchtiges*,
 Ich hasche Dich im Feld der Schlacht und stürze
 Ganz deinen Segen mir zu Füßen um:
 Wärest Du auch siebenfach, mit Eisenketten,
 Am schwed'schen Siegeswagen festgebunden!
 (PH I/6, vv. 358-63 my emphases)

Homburg's pursuit of glory, for which he calls upon Fortune, is addressed by the prince as "ephemeral" ("Flüchtiges").¹⁹⁵ True immortality, in fact, will be granted to him only after

distinction will be crucial in understanding the coexistence of patriotism next to cosmopolitanism, as it shall become more evident, in the works of Pellico and Schiller; see section III.

¹⁹⁴ The protagonist reproduces through his pose the stylized heroism of 18th-century iconography. Through the allusion to heroic portrayals with which the audience was well acquainted from the conspicuous production of historical paintings during this time, Kleist intends to ridicule and consequently rescale the heroic glorifications performed by monumental history.

¹⁹⁵ As Böckmann observes, Kleist employs dreams to disclose the inner, and thus authentic, motives for his characters' actions (1967: 49). In *Was gilt es diesem Kriege?* (1809), Kleist questions the very value attributed to the quest of individual glory as measure and motivation of warfare: "Gilt es, was es gegolten hat sonst in den Kriegen, die geführt worden sind, auf dem Gebiete der unermesslichen Welt? Gilt es den *Ruhm* eines jungen unternehmenden Fürsten, der, in dem Duft einer lieblichen Sommernacht, *von Lorbeern geträumt hat?*" (SW III/477). The proximity displayed by the play to Kleist's contemporary historical events is indirectly addressed through a brief reference to the "Mamelukes" (PH I/4, 98) who, as derogatory term employed against Bonapartists, stand for the French (SW II/1252-3). The war conducted on stage against the Swedes corresponds, therefore, in the author's historical contingency to the resistance auspicated against the French invaders. As

endowing his martial fierceness with the notion of national sacrifice rather than personal prestige:

DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG Was kann der *Sieg* euch, meine Brüder, gelten,
 Der *eine*, *dürftige*, den *ich* vielleicht
 Dem Wrangel noch entreiße, dem *Triumph*
 Verglichen, über den verderblichsten
 Der Feind' in *uns*, dem Trotz, dem Übermut,
 Errungen *glorreich* morgen? Es erliege
 Der Fremdling, der *uns* unterjochen will,
 Und *frei*, auf *mütterlichen* Grund, behaupte
 Der *Brandenburger* sich; denn sein ist er,
 Und seiner Fluren Pracht nur *ihm* erbaut!
 (PH V/9, vv. 1753-65)

The distinction between victory ("Sieg") and triumph ("Triumph") is presented in the dichotomy of individual versus national grandeur. Whereas the "Sieg" is qualified as particular ("eine"), precarious ("dürftige") and personal ("ich"), the "Triumph" receives the attributes of collectivity as it becomes manifest through the significant transition from the singular pronoun "ich" to the *pluralis maiestatis* "uns", in relation to which both glory ("glorreich") and freedom ("frei") acquire their value and validity. The idea of collectivity is eventually personified in the figure of the "Brandenburger" as metonymy of the Prussian people. The distance instituted through the substitution of the plural pronoun "uns" with the third singular "ihm" is one that implies the hypostatization of the national community to a transindividual entity.

Homburg's juxtaposition of the genius of Fame next to the goddess of Fortune sets him sharply off from the Elector who disapproves of fortune ("Glück") as a "child of chance"

Homburg's awakening marks the passage from dream to daylight, it can be said to denote at the same time the transition from dramatic fiction to historical reality.

("Kind des Zufalls"), and identifies, in his diatribe with colonel Kottwitz, the law with political sovereignty:

DER KURFÜRST Mit welchem Recht, Du Tor, erhoffst Du das,
 Wenn auf dem Schlachtenwagen, *eigenmächtig*,
 Mir in die Zügel jeder greifen darf?
 Meinst Du, das *Glück* wird' immerdar, wie jüngst,
 Mit einem Kranz den *Ungehorsam* lohnen?
 Den Sieg nicht mag ich, der, ein *Kind des Zufalls*,
 Mir von der Bank fällt; das *Gesetz* will ich,
 Die Mutter *meiner Krone*, aufrecht erhalten,
 Die ein Geschlecht von Siegen mir erzeugt.
 (PH V/5, vv. 1561-9 my emphases)

The Elector's dismissal of arbitrary will ("eigenmächtig") *in lieu* of obedience ("Gehorsam"), allows Kottwitz to equate the notion of the law ("Gesetz") first with the fatherland, and subsequently to assimilate the concept of "Vaterland" to the Elector figure, who rises in turn to its epitome:

KOTTWITZ Herr, das Gesetz, das höchste, oberste,
 Das wirken soll, in Deiner Feldherrn Brust,
 Das ist der Buchstab *Deines Willens* nicht;
 Das ist *das Vaterland*, das ist die Krone
 Das bist *Du selber*, dessen Haupt sie trägt.
 (PH V/5, vv. 157-4 my emphases)

This personification endows the idea of "Vaterland", as land of the father, with an emotional quality that is naturally implied by family ties. It is precisely on the basis of this blood bondage that Homburg identifies himself, upon his unexpected arrest, as the Elector's German son: "Bei Gott, in mir nicht findet er den *Sohn*,/ Der, unterm Beil des Henkers, ihn bewundre./ Ein *deutsches* Herz, von altem Schrot und Korn," (PH II/10, vv. 781-4) – a tenet which he renews in the prison scene:

DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG [...] Ich bin ihm wert, das weiß ich,
 Wert *wie ein Sohn*; das hat seit früher Kindheit
 Sein *Herz*, in tausend Proben mir bewiesen.

[...]
Bin ich nicht alles, was ich bin, durch ihn?
 Und er, er sollte lieblos jetzt die *Pflanze*,
 Die er selbst erzog, bloß weil sie sich ein wenig
 Zu rasch und üppig in die *Blume* warf,
 Missgünstig in den Staub daniedertreten?
 (PH III/1, vv. 829-9 my emphases)

Through a rhetorical question, Homburg corroborates his identity as son and as German in eminent relation to his father and his land. The recourse to the botanic simile of the "plant" and the former "flower" employed to illustrate their "natural" ties, suggests moreover an organic idea of national development as it was commonly upheld by German Romantics' deterministic theories.¹⁹⁶

Homburg's emphasis on the Elector's "heart" and his paternal feelings, will be reiterated by Natalie's plea to the Elector to pardon the prince: "Das Kriegsgesetz, das weiß ich wohl, soll herrschen,/ Jedoch die *lieblichen Gefühle* auch" (PH IV/1, vv. 1129-30).¹⁹⁷ It is precisely this "political *love*", as Anderson puts it (1983: 143), that defines the very notion of

¹⁹⁶ See Smith (2001: 39).

¹⁹⁷ It was to the "order of his heart" that the prince appealed prior to launching his attack against the enemy, disregarding the colonel's admonition to await his military orders: "DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG Auf Ordnr? Ei, Kottwitz! Reitest Du so langsam?! Hast Du sie noch *vom Herzen* nicht empfangen?" (PH II/2, 474-5 my emphasis). If Homburg is representative of emotional ardor, the Elector stands for the reason of the state. Ellis argues that the Elector's consistent association in the play with the sun, as light metaphor, equates him to the attributes of "reason and consciousness" (1969: 80). The antinomy established by the author between heart and mind is metonymic of his inconciliatory dichotomy between "denken" and "handeln". The eighth chapter of Kleist's *Catechism of the Germans* addresses precisely this antinomy, reprimanding from his post-Kantian perspective the privilege attributed to reason, and the Germans' propensity of thinking when they ought instead to feel and act: "*Antw.* Der Verstand der Deutschen [...] habe, durch einige *scharfsinnigen Lehrer*, einen Überreiz bekommen; sie reflektieren, wo sie empfinden oder handeln sollten [...] und gäben nichts mehr auf die alte, geheimnisvolle Kraft der Herzen." (SW III/486). Kleist's preference for (emotionally driven) action over thinking became for the poet, after rejecting the tenets of German idealism, the only conceivable philosophy of life: "Es ist ein Wurf, wie mit dem Würfel; aber es giebt nichts Anderes" (B 103).

patriotism and national heroism – if Natalie bemoans its loss in the prince's frightful reaction to his death sentence: "- Ach, welch' ein *Heldenherz* hast du geknickt!" (PH IV/1, v. 1155).¹⁹⁸ During the highly contentious and contested scene that closes the play's third and central act, portraying Homburg's unheroic dismay at the vision of his grave and the thought of his execution, the historical figure overwhelmed by his anguish and apprehension, is bereft of his heroism and presented on stage in his innermost human traits.¹⁹⁹

When Homburg, in the above-captioned scene, beseeches the Electress to plead her husband for clemency, he reminds her of their family ties and the maternal role she committed to take over at his mother's deathbed: "DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG Geh hin, als hättest du mich erzeugt, und sprich:/ Um Gnade fleh' ich, Gnade! Laß ihn frei" (PH III/5, vv. 1017-8).

The prince will be able to overcome his unheroic and unmasculine fear only upon acknowledging the father's rightness and his own duty: "Er handle, wie er darf;/ Mir ziemt's hier zu verfahren, wie ich soll!" (PH IV/4, vv. 1374-5).²⁰⁰ Upon recognizing the law as that

¹⁹⁸ Natalie as Thusnelda, and Foscolo's female characters, plays the role of the contended political body. In the *Herrmann's Battle*, the corpse of Hally, dismembered by Arminius into as many pieces as the fifteen Germanic tribes, turns literally into the "embodiment" of the nation (cf. H IV/6, vv. 1611-5). Upon declaring his willingness to die, Prince Homburg demands from the Elector, in the name of the "sacred law of the war" ("heiliges Kriegsgesetz") that had convicted him to death, not to desist from defying the enemy by negotiating the peace of the state through Natalie's wedding with the Swedish sovereign: "Erkauf' o Herr, mit Deiner Nichte Hand,/ Von Gustav Karl den Frieden nicht! Hinweg/ Mit diesem Unterhändler aus dem Lager,/ Der solchen Antrag ehrlos Dir gemacht:/ Mit Kettenkugeln schreib' die Antwort ihm!" (PH V/7, 1797-80).

¹⁹⁹ For the reference that the question of insubordination established with notorious historical figures, the play was severely censured. In particular the unheroic scene of the third act provoked harsh reaction among contemporaries for being reminiscent of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia's death on the battlefield of Salfeld in 1806, arbitrarily initiated and for which he was glorified by history as national hero (Hamacher 2009: 81). Examples of mock death sentences employed to scare the victims, and literally fright them to death, were also historically reported. Dölemeyer mentions at least two notorious cases between 1803 and 1808 (2001: 24).

²⁰⁰ Streller remarks that in contrast to the historical hero of Kleist's *Herrmann*, Prince Homburg had to first become a hero through a conscious process of integration into the national community (1966: 213). According to Simpson, all plays of Kleist's "war trilogy" (i.e. *Penthesilea*, *Herrmannschlacht*, and *Prince Homburg*) were

of his father(land), and thus as his own, Homburg is able to accept his death sentence: "Ich will den Tod, der mir erkannt, erdulden!" (PH V/7, vv. 1745).²⁰¹ The Prince's readiness for self-sacrifice is justified upon an act of self-determination:

DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG [...] Es ist mein unbeugsamer Wille!
 Ich will das heilige Gesetz des Kriegs,
 Das ich verletzt' im Angesicht des Heers,
 Durch einen *freien Tod* verherrlichen!
 (PH V/7, vv. 1749-52 my emphasis)²⁰²

By transforming his death sentence into a personal choice, Homburg reasserts his individuality over the arbitrary will of absolutistic regimes: "Tyranen, wollt ihr/ Hinaus an Ketten mich zum Richtplatz schleifen?/ Fort! – Mit der Welt schloß ich die Rechnung ab!" (PH V/8, vv. 1805-7). It is, in fact, not only the prince who undergoes a development, but equally and more eminently the Elector who declares himself inclined to mediate his institutionalized power with the will of his subjects, and offers to exonerate the convicted upon granting him the freedom of personal judgment and responsibility:

DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG "Mein Prinz von Homburg, als ich euch gefangen setzte,
 Um eures Angriffs, allzu früh vollbracht,
 Da glaubt' ich nichts, als *meine Pflicht* zu tun;
 Auf euren eignen Beifall rechnet' ich.
Meint ihr, ein Unrecht sei euch widerfahren,
 So bitt' ich, sagt's mir mit zwei Worten –
 Und gleich den Degen schick' ich euch zurück."

verified upon "their ability to represent adequately the German fatherland and the masculine", a criterion that eventually affected their reception among contemporaries (2006: 134). It might be worthwhile, in this respect, to compare Prince Homburg's growth to manhood with Penthesilea's female masculinity, and Herrmann's threefold male identity as "Gatte" (husband), "Vater" (father), and "Fürst" (prince) (H II/1, vv. 436-8).

²⁰¹ Cf. act V, scene 5 when Kottwitz's will explicitly articulate the analogy of the law with the fatherland: "Herr, das Gesetz, [...] / Das ist das Vaterland [...]" (PH V/5, vv. 157-8), cf. also complete quote on p. 8.

²⁰² "Freitod", the German expression for suicide, has the merit to underscore the idea of freedom (involved in the act of self-murder) as well as the notion of liberation achieved through death, as both Kleist's *Penthesilea* and *Prince Homburg* allude to. It is indicative that the author stresses the attribute of freedom ("freien") by separating the original compositum in its constituents.

(PH IV/4, vv. 1307-13 my emphases)

Hence the idea of a nation's freedom able to find its actualization solely on the ground of its individuals' deliberate action and thought. Such insight relies on the imagination of the nation as family entity.²⁰³ The prince's internalization of the law is based on the recognition of his father's authority which cannot be questioned without jeopardizing the integrity of the fatherland that he personifies.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ On Kleist's representation of the Prussian state in terms of "Gesellschaft als Familienverband", see also Ottmann (2001: 267-8). It is, however, Anderson who in his comprehensive study on the nation as imagined community explains that "the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this *fraternity* that makes it possible [...], for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings (1983: 7 emphasis in the original). For additional, more recent, contributions on the appropriation and application of the notion of "nation as family", see also Heuer (2005), and Lakoff (2002).

²⁰⁴ Homburg's agreement with the law brings along the recognition of his guilt which he is determined to expiate through his self-sacrifice: "Der Tod wäscht jetzt von jeder Schuld mich rein" (PH V/7, v. 1770). It is precisely when he finds himself confronted with the vision of death (cf. his monologue in the third scene of act IV), that the protagonist experiences his highest degree of self-reflection. The equation that Natalie suggests to a prince terrified by the image of his grave, between death as sanctioned by the martial court, and the one inflicted on the battlefield, underscores Homburg's lack of awareness up to that point in the dramatic action: "Geh, junger Held, in Deines Kerkers Haft,/ Und, auf dem Rückweg, schau noch einmal ruhig/ Das Grab dir an, das Dir geöffnet ward!/ Es ist nichts finsterer und um nichts breiter,/ Als es Dir tausendmal die Schlacht gezeigt!" (PH III/5, vv. 1053-7). The plot developed between act I and act V, describes a movement that goes from the ideal to the corrupted, and eventually back to its initial ideal stage. This triadic structure, reminiscent of Vico's concept of eternal history, delineates an endless circle at whose beginning we can locate the original sin and – as Kleist posits in his essay *On the Marionette Theater* (*Über das Marionettentheater* [SW III]), published (on December 15, 1810) while he was in the very process of writing *Prince Homburg* – the loss of his "Grace" ("Grazie"). Schröder remarks how the idea of paradise encountered at the play's incipient scene appears therefore challenged through history (1994: 127). By finding its conclusion where the play had commenced, seamlessly recovering the thread of the dramatic action where it had ended after the first scene of act I, history thus appears contained between the two delimiting points of a paradisiac condition ("die beiden Enden der ringförmigen Welt" [SW III/560]). Homburg had to go through this historical process to establish full knowledge of himself. Böckmann describes Kleist's characters aptly as marionettes who grant insight into their feelings which the common man avoids by advocating himself and relying instead on his own consciousness (1967: 48-9). Hence grace, paradise and innocence are used by Kleist as synonyms (Wiese 1967: 204). His notion of grace ("Anmut" or "Grazie") associated with the marionette had been unconceivable to both Schiller, for whom "Anmuth" could be possessed only by humans (more precisely by women), and to Goethe who, in contrast, extended the notion of "Anmut" to the human as well as to the natural environment (Wiese 1967: 203). For Kleist, the marionette in her graceful movement becomes a chiffre of unreflected motion and action. Prince Homburg and Penthesilea are able to experience their blissful state of grace ("Seligkeit"), shortly before their death, only by falling back into a state of unconsciousness (cf. PH V/10, vv. 1830-9, and P XXIV/2865-6); in striking analogy with his dramatic characters, the notion of "Seligkeit" was articulated by Kleist in his last suicide letters (cf. B 250). As Blumenberg notices, it was a challenge for Kleist to mediate the notion of the original sin with the "post-Christian concept of freedom [which] no longer permitted one to be guilty of an unconscious action" (1985: 88). The irony derived by Kleist's attempt to mediate the myth of the Original Sin

DER PRINZ VON HOMBURG Daß er mir Unrecht tat, wie's mir bedingt wird,
 Das kann ich ihm nicht schreiben; zwingst Du mich,
 Antwort, in dieser Stimmung, ihm zu geben,
 Bei Gott! so setz' ich hin: *Du tust mir Recht!*
 (PH IV/4, vv. 1355-8 my emphasis)

Prince Homburg, therefore, becomes representative of that "Nationalgeist" that Kleist had advocated as worthwhile "ehrenvoll zu sterben" (B 97).

The immortality eventually addressed by Homburg in the final act ("Nun, o Unsterblichkeit, bist du ganz mein!" [PH V/10, v. 1830]), refers back to the motif of glory which had introduced the dramatic action with the imagery of the laurel crown, and is eventually acknowledged, at the end, through the Roman salute that tributes the prince as *Caesar divus*.²⁰⁵

KOTTWITZ Heil, Heil dem Prinz von Homburg!
 DIE OFFIZIERE Heil! Heil! Heil!
 ALLE Dem Sieger in der Schlacht bei Fehrbellin! (PH V/11, vv. 1854-5)

The war scene with which the play ends expresses the author's reiterated encouragement to action and is thus reminiscent of the national fervor that had incited the *Herrmann's Battle*:

MEHRERE OFFIZIERE Ins Feld! Ins Feld!
 GRAF TRUCHSS Zur Schlacht!
 FELDMARSCHALL Zum Sieg! Zum Sieg!
 ALLE In Staub mit allen Feinden Brandenburgs! (PH V/11, vv. 1857-8)

with the secularized idea of history was once that "was now possible only in the form of *comedy*" (Blumenberg 1985: 88, my emphasis). As a matter of fact, tragicomic features are so distinctive in Kleist's poetics that Brentano von Arnim could describe a war drama as the *Herrmann's Battle*: "in [der] Haltung groß und in der Bizarrität ungemein *lustig*." (D II/ 76 my emphasis).

²⁰⁵ Considered from the standpoint of Kleist's political utopia, as critics have frequently interpreted the play's ambivalent dénouement (cf. fn. 207), Homburg's transition from death to dream can be understood in the drama's references and analogies to Roman history as the auspicated rebirth of that Holy Roman Empire which since its collapse in 1806 had left no trace on the geographic map and could have thus been recalled on stage in the people's national imagination and historical memory.

The collective calling to reduce to dust all of Brandenburg's (i.e. Prussia's) foes was meant to resonate in the theater hall and awaken the audience from their lethargy. It thus echoes the Elector's introductory admonition to action: "Im Traum erringt man solche Dinge nicht!" (PH I/1, v. 77).

Yet this national dream, towards which the prince expresses his incredulity ("Nein, sagt! *Ist es ein Traum?*" [PH V/11, v. 1856]), and Kottwitz's replies: "Ein Traum, *was sonst?*" (PH V/11, v. 1856), remains overshadowed by the doubts of its future realization.²⁰⁶ The colonel's response to Homburg renews the father's rhetorical remark to his son in Kleist's *Catechism*: "Du *träumst!* Ich kenne kein Land, dem Sachsen angehört, es müßt denn das rheinische Bundesland sein. Wo find' ich es, dies Deutschland, von dem du sprichst, und wo liegt es?" (SW III/480).²⁰⁷

For Kleist, who did not witness the dissolution of the Rhine Confederation in 1813 and its subsequent developments, the institution of a German nation-state was indeed going to remain wishful thinking. The only alternative to the personal and political *impasse* relied for the author on that very "art of self-sacrifice" with which he had endowed his dramatic

²⁰⁶ This dramatic closing passage audibly echoes Schiller's verse "Freiheit ist nur in dem Reich der Träume" ("Freedom is only in the realm of dreams") with which the poet ends his notorious poem *Am Antritt des neuen Jahrhunderts* (1801/1803) (NA II.1/ 363). This is more so true if one calls to mind Kleist's fervid admiration for Schiller's work (Borchardt 1948: 98), and his admiration for the most idealist of his dramatic character, Don Carlos' friend and "edeln Menschen" Posa; cf. his letter to sister Ulrike from August 21, 1800 (B 80, 16.), and to his fiancé Wilhelmine von Zenge from 11 January 1801 (B 181, 35.). As the Austrian submission to the French troops upon the Battle of Wagram in 1809 had prompted Kleist to set pen to his tragedy, Schiller decided to first write his poem after the Peace of Lunéville (February 9, 1801) which followed the defeat suffered by Austria in the second Coalition War (1798-1802) under French victory.

²⁰⁷ Critiques tend to interpret this highly ambiguous ending in positive terms as the utopia of the ideal state that Kleist envisioned; see for instance Schmon (2006: 49) or Streller's notion of "historische Utopie" (1966: 221) which I prefer to contrast with Schröder's statement of "utopischen Schein" (1994: 131), or Leistner's more appropriate description of "dissonante Utopie" (1985: 142-90). The play ends, in fact, with the image of a negative idyll, reminiscent of *Penthesilea's* final scenes.

protagonists: "Die Kunst [...] sich aufzuopfern, ganz, für das was man liebt, in Grund und Boden zu gehn" (B 250).²⁰⁸ As it was significantly concluded in a posthumous commentary to Kleist's trilogy of war dramas: "der preußische Offizier, der die Hermannschlacht und den Prinzen von Homburg geschrieben hatte, legte den Degen ab, als er keinen Glauben an sein preußisches und deutsches Vaterland mehr haben konnte."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ This epistle directed to his cousin and confidant Marie von Kleist on November 9, 1811 was written shortly before his suicide letters.

²⁰⁹ A. Moeller van den Bruck, *Der Preußische Stil*, 1915 (D II/ 621).

2.2.3. *Ricciarda* (1813)

As Kleist exemplified with the *Herrmannschlacht*, and experimented with *Prince Friedrich of Homburg*, history "can be approached only by way of prior (re)textualization" (Jameson 1981: 82).²¹⁰ History hence intended as an eminently narrative mode allows for a more accurate understanding of Foscolo's exhortation to write stories that he directed to the Italians already in his oration *On the Origin and Duties of Literature* (1809):²¹¹

O Italiani, io vi esorto alle *storie* perché niun popolo più di voi può mostrare nè più calamità da compiangere, nè più errori da evitare, nè più virtù che vi facciano rispettare, nè più grandi anime degne di essere *liberate dalla obblivione* da chiunque di noi sa che si deve *amare e difendere ed onorare la terra che fu nutrice ai nostri padri ed a noi*, e che darà pace e memoria alle nostre ceneri. [...] Chi di noi non ha figlio, fratello od amico che spenda il sangue e la gioventù nelle guerre? e che speranze, che ricompense gli apparecchiate? e come nell'agonia della morte lo consolerà il pensiero di rivivere almeno nel petto de' suoi cittadini, se vede che la *storia in Italia* non tramandi i nobili fatti alla fede delle venture generazioni. (EN VII, p. 33-4)

Through the identity established in this excerpt between stories ("storie") and Italian history ("storia in Italia"), in other words by attributing to literature the office ("ufficio") to rescue from oblivion their forefathers' "ashes" and, by doing so, love, honor and defend their motherland, Foscolo attributes to history the same task allocated to ancient myths: to produce and preserve its heroes.²¹² In line with Jameson's tenet according to which "history is

²¹⁰ See also Bottici who, in her study on "Myth, Historical Narrative and the Social Imaginary", shares with Jameson the very idea of history as "textualization" when she asserts that it is in the first stance the "*writing of history*" and explains: "history exists only inasmuch as it is accessible to us and therefore only as already *interpreted events*" (2007: 214 my emphases). It is on the basis of its linguistically constructed nature that history is apt to be employed, according to Bottici, in the conception of political identity.

²¹¹ *Dell'origine e dell'ufficio della letteratura*, presented as inaugural lecture upon his teaching appointment at the university of Pavia.

²¹² Through their contribution to the history of the nation, these stories partake at the same time in the constitution of national literature ("il Palladio della patria letteratura" [EN VII, p. 36]) and thus become the cultural basis of national identity: "Amate palesemente e generosamente *le lettere e la vostra nazione*, e potrete alfine *conoscervi tra di voi*, ed assumerete il coraggio della *concordia* [...]" (EN VII, p. 36). In this respect, the

inaccessible to us except in textual form" (1981: 82), Foscolo's stories constitute the aesthetic device apt to commemorate the soldiers' patriotic deaths and glorify their sacrifice in the annals of national history. The author reiterates this moral objective of literature in a collection of discourses *On the Servitude of Italy*, which he began writing shortly prior to his exile and in the aftermath of the last political disappointment experienced in the Milan spring of 1814.²¹³ In his introduction to discourse X "On the History of the Italian Kingdom", Foscolo expresses his concern for what was mainly a history of foreign invasions and national subjugation:

Durante l'intervallo di quasi tre secoli, che si frappone da Carlo V a Napoleone, gl'innumerevoli volumi che sotto nome di Storia furono pubblicati in Italia, si potrebbero ridurre a pochissime pagine veramente importanti. Infatti, negli storici delle altre nazioni non si parla mai de' tre ultimi secoli dell'Italia se non se per indicare i campi di battaglia ove gli eserciti forestieri hanno vinto o perduto; per noverare i tributi che gl'Italiani hanno pagato al vincitore, e per registrare il giuramento di fedeltà che gli hanno prestato. (EN VIII, p. 326-7)

acknowledgment of a literary patrimony shared by the members of the same community would become the premise as well for national concord and thus political unity. In another lecture held at the university of Pavia *On the Morality of Literature (Della morale letteraria)* Foscolo explicitly asserts the patriotic value of national literature, in his own words: "l'amore delle lettere e l'amore della patria, dacchè l'uno non può andare disgiunto dall'altro" (EN VII, p. 97).

²¹³ See the "Introduction" to the genesis of the work in EN VIII, in particular p. XLIV-LXXXII. The incipient drafts of Foscolo's *Discourses*, which is known he was carrying with himself while fleeing from Milan on March 30, 1815 (EN VIII, p. LXXXII), date back to the time of the city's massacre that followed a popular insurrection in April 1814, only a few months after staging *Ricciarda* in September 1813. Driven by inner discord, Italy had thereupon lost for Foscolo its last opportunity for national independence. The country had eventually proven deaf to the message of national reconciliation which, as condition for national unity, Foscolo had reiterated on stage through Ricciarda's hope, ultimately demised, "che sospite alfine/ Vedute avrei le crude ire fraterne"; cf. *Ricciarda*, act II, scene 2, vv. 57-8, all other citations in the text will be noted as "R". Tragically contended between a tyrant and her beloved, Ricciarda is reminiscent of the dramatic figure of Teresa in *Ortis* novel. With the emphasis, however, on eminently familiar ties – for the tyrant is Ricciarda's father and the young suitor no other than her cousin – Foscolo puts major emphasis on the idea of familiar kinship and fraternal belonging that ought to unite, rather than divide the Italian community. Furthermore, the assonance between the two names, Guido and Guelfo – so striking that it appears motivated – encourages to assume a superimposition of the two male characters in their identity as *genitors* (as their initial letter may suggest) or "father" figures. No less attention deserve the anti-papal implications and the political critique that Foscolo addresses in the play by means of the telling name "Guelfo". This male antagonist, not surprisingly negatively portrayed by the author as the tyrant of Salerno, becomes in fact allusive of the invective launched by Foscolo against the Church's intervention in Italian politics and its responsibility in compromising the country's freedom.

The author refers in particular to the temporal hiatus comprised between the three centuries that stretched from the end of the Middle Ages, which coincided for Italy with the simultaneous end of its freedom by the hands of the Spanish emperor Charles V, and the Napoleonic takeover, in which the history of Italy became the history of foreign domination and national subjugation. Foscolo's interest in a historical and, more specifically, a medieval play as *Ricciarda* must be thus understood as a reminder both of the national freedom once enjoyed, and of their current dark times. The encouragement, therefore, to produce new stories that may henceforth feature the Italian people, emancipated from their servile status, as agents of their own history.

In the analysis that follows, I will elucidate – by resorting to Jameson's narrative theory – Foscolo's engagement with national history through the literary device of a historical drama. By doing so, I shall illustrate how Foscolo mediates ideology and aesthetics, and successfully conciliates fact with fiction.²¹⁴ The inferences desumed from this theoretical premise will be utilized to interpret the play and understand its historical significance for Italy's national formation and freedom. In contrast to Kleist's plays, in fact, which are derived from historically documented accounts, the tragedy of *Ricciarda* is based on a thoroughly

²¹⁴ Foscolo's interest for history is certainly not new. As he personally recollected in the above-captioned discourse X *Of the Servitude of Italy*, the author states to have observed and written about the history of Italy since 1796, hence since his first arrival in Venice (EN VIII, p. 324). The idea of a politically engaged literature and the endeavor to promote the history of the nation through poetry and "libere carte" was postulated by the author from the incipient editions of his epistolary novel. It was eventually reiterated in the concluding pages of his inaugural academic speech *On the Origin and Duties of Literature* by reminding his audience to visit the graves of Dante, Machiavelli, Galileo, and Tasso and take an example from the great representatives of the Italian culture and history: "Prostratevi su' solo sepolcri, interrogateli come furono grandi e infelici, e come l'amor della patria, della gloria e del vero accrebbe la costanza del loro cuore, la forza del loro ingegno e il loro beneficj verso di noi" (EN VII, p. 37). This thought was not only elaborated by Foscolo already in his patriotic poem *The Sepulchres* and much earlier in *Ortis*, but remained a key concept of his poetic program. The novelty that Foscolo sets forth with *Ricciarda*, however, is the dramatic enactment of history. On stage, space of transition between the theater and the world, between fiction and reality, the Italian Middle Ages are represented, and thus literally made *present* again to the audience's awareness.

invented story. The "hermeneutic question", to put it with Jameson, that deals with the "meaning" of this historically fictionalized drama can be answered by taking into account the ideological component involved in the conception of this literary work.

According to Jameson "the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an *ideological act* in its own right, with the function of *inventing imaginary or formal "solutions to unresolvable social contradictions"* (1981: 79 my emphases). Two assumptions shall be inferred and isolated from this excerpt. The first one lying in the assertion of art as an ideological act which corresponds to saying that narratives (whether fictional or historical) do not construct ideologies, but *are* ideological actions. Narratives, in other words, have the ability to *act upon* reality (1981: 81).²¹⁵ As a matter of fact, if "interpretation" consists for Jameson in a "rewriting of the literary text" (which in turn "may itself be seen as the rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological *subtext*"), the "literary or aesthetic act [...] always entertain some active relationship with the *Real*" (1981: 81 my emphasis).

The interaction shared by literary texts and their historical subtexts suspends the conceptual gap between fact and fiction, and thus validates Foscolo's own aesthetic theory.²¹⁶ Following Jameson's argument, Foscolo can be said to employ the Middle Ages as historical subtext for the literary text of his drama. The result of this combination is a (historical)

²¹⁵ According to Jameson, "language", due to its symbolic nature, "manages to carry the Real within itself as its own intrinsic or immanent subtext" (1981: 81).

²¹⁶ In his later essay *On the New Italian Dramatic School (Della nuova scuola drammatica italiana)* from 1825 (EN XI/1, p. XCV), Foscolo articulates in response and contrast to Manzoni's historical tragedy *Carmagnola*, written only a few years after *Ricciarda*, an aesthetic theory that mediates without contradiction historical with poetic truth: "Il secreto in qualunque lavoro dell'arti d'immaginazione sta tutto nell'incorporare e identificare la realtà e la finzione in guisa che l'una non predomini sovra l'altra, e che non possano mai dividersi, né analizzarsi, né facilmente distinguersi l'una dall'altra" (EN XI/2, p. 564).

medieval narrative which reads as *allegory* of the "dark ages" of the author's contemporary historical reality.²¹⁷ The ideology, consequently, at work in the interpretation of historical allegories permits to *imagine* a correspondence and connection with another time, place and reality.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Jameson exemplifies the idea of historical allegories by referring to what he calls the "master narratives" that are found in the Bible. Biblical allegorical narratives entail a historical subtext whose interpretation consists in "rewriting", for instance, "the bondage of the people of Israel in Egypt as the descent of Christ into hell after his death" or as "the destiny of the human race as a whole, Egypt then coming to prefigure that long purgatorial suffering of earthly history from which the second coming of Christ and the Last Judgement come as the final release" (1981: 30-1). The concept of allegory, allows to draw an affinity of thought between Jameson and Ricoeur, apart from the obvious differences distinguishing the two thinkers and their theoretical approaches; cf. section 2.2., fn. 157. Both view narratives as being *symbolic* ("acts" for Jameson, "discourses" for Ricoeur). According to Jameson, the symbolic act is the ideology that partakes in the hermeneutics or interpretation of narratives, for Ricoeur the symbolic discourse has instead the heuristic or instrumental value to translate into figurative language the aporias intrinsic to the "experience of temporality", which is impossible to convey in logic terms. As equally symbolic in nature, Ricoeur treats fictional and historical stories alike; see also Hayden White's extensive comments on his theory (1987: 169-84). Whereas Jameson materialistic approach to narratives lends itself to be used with an author as Foscolo, I shall return in more depth and detail to Ricoeur's theory and its metaphysical implications in connection with Manzoni under section IV.

²¹⁸ This imaginative crossing of time is possible because, according to Jameson's marxist approach "there is nothing that is not social and historical". For the historical theme (oppressor vs. oppressed) is one and "uninterrupted" in time, therefore accounting for the "unity of a single great *collective story*". Only to the extent that this "human adventure is one" are we able to "glimpse" into the "mystery of the *cultural past*" (1981: 19-20 my emphases). If history for Jameson can be perceived only as narration, in other words, precisely to the extent that it is narrated, where narratives cease to exist, history ceases to exist and the community, unable to position itself in the temporal continuum of past, present and future is doomed to disappear; cf. also White's inferences derived from Jameson's argument (1981: 148-9). I argue that this notion of history is akin to Foscolo's for whom stories must be told so that the history, in which the cultural community ought to be located in order to assert its identity, can be kept alive. For Foscolo, as he had pointed out in *The Sepulchres* (1807) carrier of this cultural past is the tomb. For the tomb represents, as metonymy of the past, the symbol of history which the poet, in turn, is responsible to narrate, commemorate as collective story, and hand down to posterity (S 226-34). *Ricciarda's* sepulchral setting constitutes, in this respect, as I shall exemplify in more detail, a direct allusion to this figurative meaning of the tomb as receptacle of the past and history. Only two years after *The Sepulchres*, Foscolo would comment in his opening address *On the Origin and Office of Literature* (1809) held at the University of Pavia on the emergence of human history in its passage from nature to society. Foscolo does so in terms that resemble the master-servant dialectic of the historical materialism, albeit less from the economic than from an existential and anthropological perspective: "Ma per decreti immutabili l'universalità de' mortali non può essere nè quieta nè libera. Incontentabile ne' desideri, cieca nei modi, dispari nelle facoltà, dubbiosa sempre e le più volte sciagurata negli eventi, non potea se non eleggere il minor danno, rinunziando la guida delle sue passioni alla mente de' saggi o all'imperio del forte. Quindi il genere umano dividesi in *molti servi* che tanto più perdono l'arbitrio delle loro forze, quanto men sanno rivolgerle a proprio vantaggio, ed in *pochi signori* che fomentando co' timori e co' premi della giustizia terrena, e con le promesse e le minacce del cielo le passioni degli altri, hanno arte e potere di promuoverle a pubblica utilità" (EN VII, p. 16-7 my emphases).

In the context of these considerations, we can extrapolate from the above-captioned passage the second assertion which views "ideology" as the "representational structure that allows the individual subject to conceive or *imagine* his or her lived relationship to *transpersonal* realities such as the social structure or the *collective* logic of History" (Jameson 1981: 30, my emphases).²¹⁹ This "transpersonal reality" and the "collective logic of History" is precisely what distinguish allegorical narratives, that constitute for Jameson a "persistent dimension of literary and cultural texts precisely because they reflect a fundamental dimension of our collective thinking and our collective fantasies about history and reality" (1981: 34).

All three historical plays considered thus far in this section exemplify such ideological action in their endeavor to deal with their reality by *imagining* "solutions" to "unresolvable [...] contradictions" (Jameson 1981: 79).²²⁰ Treating the historical accounts as allegorical narratives means to suggest alternative interpretations. According to Jameson, the hermeneutic process involved in allegorical narratives *opens up* the (totalizing) narrative closure for alternative meanings: "as a mechanism for preparing such a text for further ideological investment" (1981: 30).²²¹ The medieval play of *Ricciarda* signals Foscolo's

²¹⁹ Jameson indicates as examples the Old Testament readings that permit to transcend the specific historical event narrated, and allocate it a more comprehensive meaning that may include the entire humanity; cf. fn. 217.

²²⁰ Cf. Hayden White's understanding of Jameson's theory (1987: 154). Jameson speaks more precisely of "social" contradictions for his narrative theory is approached from a specifically marxist view point. The reality, therefore, to which he refers is in the first stance a socio-economic one. I apply Jameson's theory to a broader understanding of reality as the space that individuals inhabit which is also, but not exclusively, their cultural system.

²²¹ If ideology is viewed by Jameson as the device employed to overcome the "contradictions" and complexities of reality, then it resembles the function that Blumenberg attributes to myth. This analogy would speak for a functional affinity between myth and history, next to the formal affinity already shared in their quality of narrative modes.

intentional option for the history of his country, and is indirectly the encouragement of the author to his people to choose their own past, to locate themselves in history (a history spuriously claimed by foreign subjugation), and thus renew its meaning as well as their agency. The enactment of a national historical drama transforms, therefore, the stage in a space of freedom against the determinism of historical necessity.²²²

As it becomes clear, since *Ajace's* dramaturgical experience, Foscolo's retrospective gaze had shifted its perspective. The standpoint was no longer held from an atemporal past, with his back turned against the present whose terrors it was meant to exorcise – for "myth itself speaks of monsters that have been subdued, of power that has been refined" (Blumenberg 1985: 52). *Ricciarda* marks in this respect, if not a caesura (for Foscolo will return to myth in *The Graces* whose composition he had only interrupted to write his last drama), a suspension of the author's mythical experience. In contrast to *The Sepulchres* which had conciliated the history of Italy with the Greek myth of Maratona, or *Ajace's* mythical heroism which eventually was allotted through the burial its historical monument, the tragedy of *Ricciarda* stands out for being completely bereft of mythical references or allusions. If the Greek myth had been paradigmatic for the patriotic feelings (Terzoli 2006: 235) and absolute values (Gamberini 1982: 173) that had gone astray in an irretrievable past, the historical drama of *Ricciarda* becomes, in turn, representative of the irrepressible present conflicts, and derives its symbolic strength in the abuse of power and the disregard of justice it enacts on stage.

²²² The strife entertained in history between the "realm of Freedom" and the "realm of Necessity is addressed, following Marx's *Kapital*, by Jameson in the introduction to his essay (1981: 19). In his letter to Isabella Teotichi Albrizzi from June 1813, Foscolo underscores the accomplishment of a tragedy thoroughly "Italian" uncontaminated by Greek or Latin models: "vedrete che la Ricciarda non ha verso che non sia schiettamente italiano [sic], senza mistura alcuna, né abbellimento di modi greci e latini" (EP IV, 1315).

Foscolo's initial abjection against his times is converted into the imperative attention for a historical present caught between the disastrous calamities of the Russian campaign and the hopeful glimmers for independence feebly rekindled upon the victorious battle of Lützen.²²³ The present was overshadowed by the casualties of war, while the future adumbrated a political prospect yet hard to discern – anxieties that Foscolo translated on stage into the gloomy scenography of the palace's remote depths.

If myth had attempted to dispel the evils of history by essentially eluding it, through the reference to a dated past, Foscolo intended to stage a story set within a specific temporal contingency and culture that Italians could recognize as their own historical scenario in which they were acting as protagonists.²²⁴ The author's systematic interest in medieval history had matured during the year of his closer involvement with Machiavelli (1810-1811), whom he considered "il maggior storico che abbia avuto l'Italia" (EN VIII, p. 9).²²⁵ More

²²³ Foscolo began working at his tragedy in the fall of 1812 (cf. his letter to Pellico from October 4, 1812 [EN IV, 1232]), thus in the midst of the disastrous Russian Campaign. It was completed, after a longer interruption in March 1813 when he returned to his poem *The Graces*, at the beginning of June 1813. Hence by the time the Congress of Prague – in which Foscolo had relied his last hopes for a possible independence of the Italian Kingdom, only to be once more disappointed – would have been convoked. For a detailed genesis of the play, see the introduction by Lombardi (1994: 876-84), and Bezzola (EN II, p. XLIII-L)

²²⁴ It is Masiello, who in his systematic study on the usage of myth and the significance of history in Foscolo's poetics, speaks of the "evasive" role exerted by myth: "in cui necessariamente si realizza la liberazione dal presente tragico e si esprime una sofferta 'opposizione' [...] alla politica contemporanea ed all'assetto oppressivo e violento della società" (1984: 44).

²²⁵ In a letter to his friend Ugo Brunetti from March 13, 1811, Foscolo refers to a biography he asserts to have written on Machiavelli (cf. EP III, 1095). Whether the author ever wrote Machiavelli's vita or not as Fassò extensively proves in his introduction (EN VIII, p. XVI-XXVII), shall not concern us further. What should instead be noted is that his *Fragments on Machiavelli* dated back to the time of *Ajace* inaugurating the imminent abandonment of the mythical theme for a historical subject. Foscolo's incipient engagement with history dates back, however, to the turn of the century (1800-1802), more precisely to his comments on the *Revolution of Naples in the Years 1789, 1799*, published, in a later revised and expanded version, as *Account* only in England in 1821 (EN XIII.1, p. LXXIX-LXXXVI). Nonetheless, the novelty that distinguishes his *Fragments on Machiavelli* and *Ricciarda* is the attention that the author displays, not for a contemporary, but rather for a historical past which, in turn, finds its echo in the present. As a matter of fact, his recent interest in history derived its significance from a new relationship he entertained respectively for the past and the present. The author explains and justifies his shift in perspective in his discourses *On the Servitude of Italy* in which he

importantly, however, the Florentine Secretary – with whose tribulated political fate Foscolo could easily identify – became representative of a time in Italian history that was deemed by the author to be crucial for witnessing the suppression of national agency.²²⁶ The country that had once championed in Europe the process of civilization, submitted itself – lacerated at the end of the 16th century by inner political struggles and hostilities –to foreign regimes.²²⁷

appoints himself, as indirect answer to a rhetorical question, "storico dell'Italia presente" (EN VIII, p. 152): "Io, se fossi nato a' giorni più felici di Sparta, o di Roma, o della Repubblica di Venezia nel decimo secolo, quando i costumi correggevano la naturale tristizia dell'uomo, avrei predicato le massime di Platone; ma chi parla ad una nazione pari alla nostra, soggetta a' principj politici dell'Europa, è tenuto a consigliarla non secondo *l'immaginazione dell'ottimo*, bensì secondo lo stato tristissimo in cui giace, e mostrarle quella parte di *vero politico* che può sollevarla" (EN VIII, p. 196 my emphases). Foscolo's concern with and focus on coeval history can be detected already as early as 1802 in the *Letters of Ortis* written during and referring with emphasis to the French-Austrian *Campoformio Treaty*. The author of *Ricciarda*, however, addresses Italy's contemporary politics via history, to envision through the past a future program of national union and emancipation. This projection of the past into posterity is also articulated already in one of *Ortis*' letters, from november 12, where the protagonist formulates his discourse on tradition (cf. "Frattanto io mi vagheggiava nel lontano avvenire [...] [O 14-5]). This prospect, however, will lose its confidence in the second half of the novel as explicitly reported in the letter from December 4 ("Allora io guardai nel passato – allora io mi voltava avidamente nel futuro, ma io errava sempre nel vano e le mie braccia tornavano deluse senza pur mai stringere nulla" [O 133]), and as the protagonist's roaming exile will become allusive of this very loss of direction or destination. This pessimistic turn in the plot is the result of a profound political disillusion similar to the one Foscolo will experience in 1814 upon the Milan revolution and the last chance for independence gone wasted.

²²⁶ "Ma niuno negherà ch'ei nel tempo [stesso] non mirasse nel suo libro allo scopo di liberare la sua patria da' dittatori, e dagli usurpatori malfermi (?) che dissanguavano tutta l'Italia; ch'egli al fine della sua privata comodità non aggiungesse l'altro maggiore della pubblica indipendenza [...] e per cui sostenne la carcere, la tortura, l'esilio, la povertà e l'abbiezione" (EN VIII, p. 15). Foscolo's intention to study Machiavelli's work was, in fact, primarily triggered by his intent to rectify the less favorable image that Angelo Ridolfi published of the Florentine Secretary in November 1810 upon reading *The Prince*. Contradicting Ridolfi, Foscolo insists instead on proving the patriotic intent behind Machiavelli's political theory; cf. also Fassò (EN VIII, p. XIX-XX).

²²⁷ In one of discourses *Of the Servitude of Italy*, Foscolo divides the "History of the Italian Kingdom" in three eras, the second of which coinciding with the Middle Ages (from 1070 to 1530) he names the time of "Freedom", in contrast to the incipient age of "Savagery" and the last era of "Servitude" (EN VIII, p. 325). He describes the Age of Freedom as the one that witnessed the birth of laws and political liberty: "e ne venne la civilizzazione alla quale fu poi debitrice tutta l'Europa" (EN VIII, p. 326). Until the Church's ceaseless conflicts against the Holy Roman Empire, that had once fostered the abolishment of feudal and foreign oppression, transformed the country into a battlefield contended by European kings: "Così spirò ogni indipendenza italiana [...]. Quindi ha principio la terza epoca della storia italiana; ma d'allora in poi l'Italia non ebbe, nè poteva più avere, storia veruna" (EN VIII, p. 326). The demise of the Middle Ages thus marked for Foscolo the dissolution of Italian independence and national history altogether; on the political strength of Italy and its significance in the European context see also Ferrari's study on the Italian Risorgimento (1923: 16-7). Although there is no historical evidence for the tragedy's plot and protagonists, which Foscolo may have rather desumed from medieval literary texts as Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Lombardi proves how the author resorted, upon an intense period of historical research and readings animated by his Machiavellian studies, to an accurately documented

Against the backdrop of incessant contention of power by political and religious authorities, *Ricciarda* had found the setting that most closely mirrored the historical circumstances of 19th-century Italy: hence the author's personal designation of his tragedy's argument as "italiano" and "de' secoli ferrei".²²⁸ That the tragedy unfolds in the principality of Salerno, major stronghold of the Guelphs' faction (Lombardi 1994: 882), is directly allusive of the conflictual relations entertained in Medieval Italy between the pro-Papal division and the secular Ghibellines (cf. R II/3, v. 226). The political dispute is reproduced on stage by the tyrant's telling name Guelfo at war with his half-brother Averardo who, as sympathizing ghibelline, confronts the sovereign of Salerno with his critique against the Church.²²⁹

AVERARDO [...] Ben s'ode
 Il Pastor de' fedeli gridar: *Pace* –
 Ma frattanto, a calcar l'antico scettro
 Che a Cesare per tanto ordine d'anni
 Diedero i cieli, attizza i prenci: [...]. (R II/3, vv. 217-21)²³⁰

picture of medieval Italy (1994: 882-3); see also Fassò's introduction to Foscolo's *Fragments on Machiavelli* (EN VII, p. XXI).

²²⁸ Letter to Isabella Teotechi Albrizzi from Bellosguardo on June 8, 1813 (EP IV, 1315); the author describes *Ricciarda* in contrast presumably to another dramatic project, *Edipo*, on which he was allegedly working, but of which only sporadic fragments have been recovered.

²²⁹ On the characters' political identities, see Donadoni's reading of the play (1964: 410-1); cf also my comments at the end of fn. 213. In this respect, the choice as well as emphasis on the secular-papal struggle was motivated by the direct reference to Dante, epitome of the political exile whom he does not omit to mention next to Homer and Shakespeare as historical poets of their nation in the 4th Discourse of *Berenice's Lock* (1803): "e l'Alighieri cantò i tumulti d'Italia sul tramontare della barbarie, valoroso guerriero, ardente cittadino ed esule venerando" (EN VI, p. 308). That Dante, however, "Ghibellin fuggiasco" (S 174), as he is named in *The Sepulchres* (1807), was actually Guelph is known just as well as the fact that Foscolo identified him with Ghibelline ideology, as can be inferred by the frequent critique he voices throughout his work against the Church. On Foscolo's attempt to project his own image onto Dante, see Pasquini's insightful analyzes of (what he describes as) "dantismo foscoliano" in indicative instances of Foscolo's *oeuvre* and letters (2006: 461-76)

²³⁰ Averardo's critique resembles Foscolo's personal attack, in his essay *On the Servitude of Italy*, against the papal authority whom he deemed responsible in his discourse on "The History of the Italian Kingdom" for the country's ultimate loss of freedom: "La Chiesa di Roma dopo ch'ebbe per ben inteso interesse favorita la libertà, volle per interesse mal inteso ritorla a' popoli, e dominarli, non solo con l'opinione, ma con lo scettro che gl'imperadori le disputavano, [...]. Abbandonò le Repubbliche Italiane, sue naturali alleate, e si confederò con gli stranieri, che oppressero gli stati d'Italia [...]" (EN VIII, p. 326).

Against the war conducted between the "crown" and the "throne" ("in questa pugna fra la croce e il trono" [R II/3, v. 226]), Averardo solicits a project of national alliance and action:

AVERARDO [...] – Togli alla Guelfa setta,
 Che in te fida, l'ardire; e a Ghibellini
 Averardo il torrà. *Congiungete* e alfine
 Brandite sien da cittadine mani
 Le spade nostre; e in cittadini petti
 Trasfonderemo altro valore; altr'ira.
 E co' pochi magnanimi trarremo
 I molti e dubbii Itali prenci a farsi
 Non masnadieri, o partigiani, o sgherri,
 Ma *guerrieri d'Italia*. [...] (R II/3, vv. 236-45 my emphases)

Averardo's request to reconcile the belligerent factions and unite the Italian princes in defense of their country echoes the concern already addressd by the author in his first tragedy, *Tieste*, regarding the inner discordances that were affecting the country's political strength and risking to jeopardize its national redemption.²³¹ In line with the theme of fratricide conflicts, returns in the fate of Averardo, banished as Tieste by his tyrant brother, the motif of exile: "AVERARDO [...] Esul fuggiva/ Il signor mio, perché tu d'Asia in armi/ Minacciando venivi" (R II/3, vv. 157-9). In contrast to *Tieste*, the message of peace conveyed

²³¹ Averardo's demand to conjoin the national forces against the assertion of foreign interests' onto the country, hints to the renewed hopes that Foscolo had nurtured and relied into the hand of the Italian viceroy Beauharnais to unite the Italian Kingdom under his sovereignty upon requesting its independence at the Prague Congress. It was, as Averardo states, an uncertain endeavor, but worth to pursue ("AVERARDO [...] Ardua è l'impresa,/ E incerta forse; ma onorata almeno/ Fia la rovina; [...]") [R II/3, vv. 245-7]). Foscolo had forwarded already in May 1813 a coded message to the prince through his "Fragment from the Third Hymn" of *The Graces*, sent to Milan for approval by the censorship. In these verses appears as well the prince's wife in the act of offering a swan to thank the deities for her husband's safe return from the Russian campaign (cf. EN I, p. 1137, vv. 19-22). The public massacre, however, that followed the popular insurrection in Milan on April 20, 1814, had disconcerted the prince to the point that he decided to leave the Kingdom and return to his father-in-law in Bavaria; and the allied forces that had convoked the Prague Congress deemed the country, in view of the occurred event, yet immature to govern itself autonomously.

by Averardo, named significantly "l'orator di pace" (R II/1, v. 11), dominates in *Ricciarda* over the Jacobine impetus that still distinguished Foscolo's early play:²³²

AVERARDO [...] L'armi opponesti;
E tel chiedea con l'armi: e i figli tuoi
Cadder – *ma in campo*, ed han *sepulcro e fama*.
Vinse; e ancor regni: ecco ragion di *pace*." (R II/3, vv. 164-7)²³³

Following the recollection of the soldiers' graves who sacrificed their lives for the country, Averardo's concept of "peace" stands in relation with the notion of "[r]eligiosa pace" that Foscolo had articulated in *The Sepulchres*. It is the same "peace" that Guelfo doubts to be granted upon his death ("Vorrò dar pace ad altri, io che più averla/ Nemmen sotterra... potrò forse?" [R II/2, vv. 89-90]) for only "a' generosi/ Giusta di glorie dispensiera è morte" (S 220-1). The recurrent token of the tomb, in a tragedy whose action unfolds in the castle's subterranean vaults which hold the family's crypt, constitutes a poetic heritage of Foscolo's

²³² It is the same notion of "pacifica libertà" that Foscolo had articulated in his opening lecture from January 22, 1809 (EN VII, p. XIII) at Pavia *On the Origin and Office of Literature* in which he purports: "Aggiungi che come non a tutti la *natura* fu equa dispensatrice di forze, così non gli armò con pari vigor di ragione; e senza sì fatta disuguaglianza e cecità di giudizio, qual ben reale indurrebbe gli uomini a *legarsi in società* per combattersi? a insanguinarsi scambievolmente per possedere la terra abbondantissima a tutti? e qual più caro della *pacifica libertà*" (EN VII, 16-7 my emphases). Di Benedetto observes, since 1806, the emergence of a nonbelligerent disposition in Foscolo's writings upon gradually distancing himself from the Napoleonic politics and developing, after reading Homer, a preference for the victims over the victors – as the final verses of *The Sepulchres*, dedicate to Hector's death, the valorous Trojan prince who succumbed in defense of his fatherland, first demonstrated (1990: 229). The above-captioned quote however entails, in the juxtaposition of nature and society, two key concepts for the author's anthropological reflections; cf. e.g. his essay *On the Origin and Limits of Justice* (EN VII, p. 172-5). The instances are various and often related to his disquisitions on the history of humanity. These examples speak for a pessimism that Foscolo himself addressed as "Obbesiano" years later in his *Apologetic Letter* (EN XIII/2, p. 23). Certainly, the political disappointments, experienced in particular between 1811 and 1816, and his readings of Machiavelli may have contributed for a less idealized and more realistic demeanor.

²³³ On the concept of "peace", addressed with emphasis throughout the play, cf. also I/2 (v. 129), II/2 (vv. 56, 71-3), II/3 (vv. 154, 157, 177, 195, 229), IV/2 (v. 95), V/7 (v. 203). In these various instances, its overtly political connotation is often intertwined with the universal meaning of *pietas* as human value opposed to historical violence. See also Foscolo's letter to Pellico, to whom he describes *Ricciarda* as a tragedy of opposites: "terribile per contrasti di pietà e ferocia" (EP IV/1232). Salvini identifies in the antagonistic forces of "Distruzione" and "Conservazione" the dialectics that govern Foscolo's poetics (1995: 45), and which will find their "harmonious conciliation" eventually in the principles of Death and Life articulated by *The Graces* (50).

former patriotic poem.²³⁴ It is in these "paterni avelli" (R IV/4, v. 215), whose insistent presence in the play evokes *The Sepulchres*, in which history is preserved and can eventually be perpetuated: "AVERARDO [...]; e degli antichi al nome/ L'età future aggiugneranno il nostro" (R II/3, vv. 247-8). History can thus find its purpose and fulfillment in the future.

The lugubrious atmosphere hangs like a mournful omen over this tragedy so strikingly permeated by death. Foscolo's pronounced emphasis on a motif which – though addressed already in his mythical tragedy – exerts a more pervasive presence in his last drama, can be seen to mirror the bereavement he experienced upon the grievous exit of the Russian campaign, among whose victims Foscolo lamented the loss as well of close friends.²³⁵ With *Ricciarda*, the dread and demise perpetrated by history is no longer a myth,

²³⁴ The sepulchral motif is insistently evoked by means of explicit locutions and figurative imagery that are strongly reminiscent of Foscolo's poem, in particular when it comes to expressions that address the "sacrality" of the tomb, the image of graves comforted by mournings, or the idea of Ajax's "esule tomba" (II/1, v. 49) lying on distant shores; cf. e.g. I/2 (vv. 108-110), II/2 (vv. 17-8), III/2 (vv. 89-94), III/6 (vv. 183-4), V/3 (vv. 25-6). Foscolo ascribed eminent importance to Ricciarda's oath, which he deems the most memorable scene and "perno della sua tragedia", and that, in line with its significance, the author situates structurally "alla metà del terzo atto" (EN VIII, 374-5). In Ricciarda's oath one might easily be reminded of Teresa's, pressured by her tyrannic father to conjoin in marriage Odoardo. In contrast to the epistolary novel, however, in which the reader does not witness the oath, mentioned only *a posteriori* by Ortis ("Teresa ha giurato. – Oimè!" [O 121]), in the tragedy the oath is enacted: "Odi tu, o madre!/ Forse... col mio sospiro ultimo... il dico.../ Giuro: Ch'io non sarò moglie di Guido" (R II/6, vv. 171-3). The very choice for this scene, so pivotal to the author, of no other place than the castle's vaults next to the heroine's maternal grave is strongly evocative of Foscolo's verses in *The Sepulchres*: "Testimonianza a' fasti eran le tombe,/ Ed are a' figli; e uscian quindi i responsi/ De' domestici Lari, e fu temuto/ Su la polve degli avi il giuramento" (S 97-100 my emphases).

²³⁵ Cf. his already captioned letter from June 1813 to Albrizzi: "se sapeste quante perdite di amici, in poche settimane, io ho dovuto e devo piangere nel mio secreto senza poter nemmeno dolermi pubblicamente della loro morte! Molti ch'io aveva conosciuti militando, molti ch'io aveva per così dire educati ad amare la loro patria, molti co' quali io aveva assai volte confuse la gioia e le lagrime, mi sono stati tolti improvvisamente, e acerbissimamente nel fiore della loro gioventù" (EP IV, 1315). Foscolo, had begun to work on *Ricciarda* in the fall of 1812, which is to say right in the midst of the disastrous Russian campaign, only to reset his pen on the historical drama in January 1813 – after the end of the fatal campaign and upon receiving notice that his friend Benedetto Giovio had succumbed in Prussia to the injuries contracted by the Russian war. After interrupting again his tragedy in the spring of the same year, Foscolo decided to retreat to Bellosguardo and restore his work on the *The Graces*. In defense to the allegation moved against the author to have refrained from his political engagement by finding evasion in the idyllic setting of his Florentine villa, "provando di spargere lume e armonia di letteratura tra il fumo e il rimbombo delle artiglierie" (EN XIII/2, p. 110), the author defended years later in his *Apologetic Letter* (1825/26) the ideological message that his poem was meant to convey. That

but turns (through stage settings and scenery) into a tangible reality. The drama of ceaseless wars that Averardo unfolds to Guelfo is the scornful response to his rhetorical question "Ma a noi che pro chi vinca? infame danno/ Bensì a noi vien dal parteggiar da servi" (R II/3, vv. 224-5):

AVERARDO Per cui città a cittade, e prence a prence
 E castello a castello, e il padre al figlio
 Pace contende, e infiamma a guerra eterna
 L'odio degli avi, ed a' nepoti il nutre. (R II/3, vv. 227-30)

The unbroken chain of violence that invests generations and reaches so far back in time to join the mythical violence that Tantalus handed down to Atreus, and Agamemnon inherited in turn from his father, mirrors the author's increased historical pessimism.²³⁶ It is the

Vichian notion of human history driven by the law of force and fight ("[r]agion di guerra" [R

Foscolo's *Hymn to the Graces* ought to be read, instead, as a mythical camouflage and critique of the historical violence displayed by contemporary events has been also rectified and reiterated by most recent critical studies; among the conspicuous contributions in this respect, cf. for instance Palumbo (2010: 109-13), Del Vento who suggests an innovative reading of the poem in relation to *The Sepulchres* (2006: 483-89), and Di Benedetto (1990: 263-72).

²³⁶ In his last Pavia lecture *On the Origin and Limits of Justice*, held on June 6, 1809 (EN VII, p. XXIV), Foscolo traces the origin of fratricide violence in myth again, though this time in the Christian tradition of Cain and Abel, and the Romulus and Remus historical mythical account: "vidi che un fratello trucidò l'altro [...] e [vidi] quella spada del fratricidio tramandarsi di mano in mano per lungo ordine di re, di consoli, di dittatori, d'imperatori, conquistare la terra, e scrivere col sangue de' vinti le leggi più venerate da ogni nazione" (EN. VII, p. 168-9). Foscolo's view on human history had become bleaker with time. The social pessimism that had distinguished *Tieste's* critique against the Venetian oligarchy and the socio-political monopoly of power, had acquired already in Ajace pronouncedly anthropological traits, as it can be inferred from the protagonist's and Calchas' comments on human nature. By the time of *Ricciarda*, it had developed into a more radical historical pessimism that displayed the major contribution of Vico's thought. The yet Rousseauian juxtaposition of nature versus society, still evident in *Ortis's* letter from Ventimiglia (O 152), will soon be rejected in favor of a more contemptuous and comprehensively negative perspective on human nature altogether if in one of his Pavia lectures *On the Origin of Literature and Language* from 1809 Foscolo explicitly rejects Rousseau's social contract theory: "lo stato di natura e di società sono una cosa sola ed identica [...] le distinzioni di stato di natura e di società sono fantasmi platonici da lasciarsi a Rousseau ed a' suoi partigiani" (EN VII, p. 63). The belligerent conditions for which Foscolo had originally made responsible society, turned into an inherently human quality. Hobbes' notion of cruelty and competition as attributes inherent to human nature long before finding their manifestation in civilization, and Vico's theory of social history found a steadfast grip on Foscolo – although Hobbesian and Vichian traces of thought can be found already in *Ortis* (cf. above-captioned letter from Ventimiglia [O 158]). The author became particularly receptive for Vico's idea of violence as historical necessity – his inaugural lecture *On the Origin and Office of Literature* (1809) can be considered a *summa* of Vichian thought; for Vico's influence on Foscolo's poetics, see Masiello (1984: 13-34).

II/3, v. 168]) that Guelfo opposes to Averardo's "ragion di pace" ([R II/3, v. 167]) which ultimately coincides with the reason of state and the supremacy of power:

GUELFO [...] *Io patria*
Non ho che il trono, a cui nulla io prepongo
Che la vendetta. E a che parli d'eroi?
Tacer fia meglio degli antichi; [...]
 [...] *Io del futuro a me chiudo la porta:*
Io sol dell'oggi ho cura. (R II/3, vv. 250-7 my emphases)

In contrast to Averardo, Guelfo is confined to the immanence and immediacy of the present. His rejection of the past and his denial of its historical value for posterity situates itself at the antipode of Averardo's (alias Foscolo's) concept of history as cultural memory and as condition for national identity and assertion. Guelfo's fierce usurpation of power in the exclusive interest of the throne goes thus far as to inveigh against the sepulchres when he coerces Ricciarda to pursue her suitor among the graves:

GUELFO [...], *dèi farmi*
Scorta a trovarlo, a scoperchiar quell'arche,
A sovvertir le ceneri, e dall'ossa
Dissotterrarlo... (R V/5, vv. 131-4)

The threatened profanation of the tombs, as a symptom of Guelfo's disregard of the past, stands for a form of violence that has degenerated into irrational brutality and will escalate in the act of parricide. In the historical necessity of cyclical recurrence, Ricciarda's death is reminiscent of Iphigenia's sacrifice. Bereft of "cor" (R II/3 v. 263) and conscience, Guelfo is however the degraded version of Agamemnon's persona. Unlike the Mycenaean sovereign, his character has been deprived of any emotional capability towards his daughter as well as towards his country:

GUIDO *Amor d'Italia? A basso intento è velo*
Spesso: e tale oggimai s'è fatta Italia,

*Ch'io, non che dirmi suo campione, e inulto
 Lasciar per essa d'un mio figlio il sangue,
 Io sdegnerei di dominarla, ov'anche
 Sterminar potess'io, tutti i suoi mille
 Vili signori, e la piú vil sua plebe. (R II/3, vv. 202-8 my emphases)*

Foscolo's critique against the country's (ser)vile obedience is hard to overhear behind the character's harsh words. In contrast to Agamemnon, Guelfo's abjection against Italy is so exacerbated not to deem it even worth the sacrifice of one's children.²³⁷ Guelfo's anti-patriotic invective realizes its dramaturgical climax in the hyperbole of parricide. The rejection pronounced against his country ("Se grande Italia un tempo era, nol cerco./ Qual è la vedo, e la dispregio. Io patria/ non ho" [R II/3, vv. 249-51]) is metaphorically reproduced in his daughter's repudiation ("Tu donna,/ Meco rimembra ch'io on ho più figli" [R IV/4, vv. 249-50]). His abjured patriotism finds its reenactment in the myth of parricide.²³⁸

²³⁷ When Foscolo speaks of "figli(o)", he is referring metaphorically to the fatherland's "children", and is thus inveighing against the country, sending its soldiers to perish in war for an undue cause.

²³⁸ By legitimizing the violence inflicted on his daughter as "just" ("or che pur deggio/ Giustamente punirla" [R V/6, vv. 175-6]), Guelfo's action enacts, along with Atreus and Agamemnon, a concept of justice that Foscolo "deriva dalla forza", as a consequence of that same fratricide performed on Abel and Remus at the very origin of the Creation and Rome (EN VII, p. 169). The idea according to which "justice" goes inevitably along with "force" is a topic frequently addressed in Foscolo's political and fictional writings; it can be detected as early as in *Ortis*' letter from Ventimiglia: "I governi impongono giustizia: ma potrebbero eglino imporla se per regnare non l'avessero prima violata?" (O 158). And it will stay with the author until his late years of exile when in 1821 he will rework for publication *An Account of the Revolution of Naples during the Year 1798-99* and consider the idea of justice with the larger European picture of revolutionary actions that were taking place in different states in their pursuit of autonomy and national assertion (EN XIII.1, p. LXXXIII-LXXXIV). Thematized in several instances across the play, the notion of justice is enacted in its double connotation as articulated respectively by the two brothers. Whereas Guelfo stands for an idea of justice enforced by the interest of the state, Averardo speaks for its idealized notion that views justice in the service of freedom rather than force, as Foscolo puts it in his *Apologetic Letter*: "per mantenersi liberi, i popoli hanno da essere giusti" (EN XIII.2, p. 131). As an analysis on the various contexts in which the term is mentioned throughout the play would make evident, whereas Averardo represents the Republican idea of freedom that Foscolo desumed from Cicero – according to whom, as he quotes him indirectly in the first discourse *Of the Servitude of Italy* from his dialogue *On Duties*: "noi non abbiamo se non l'ombra della Giustizia" (EN VIII, p. 197) – Guelfo epitomizes the distorted and degenerated concept of omnipotent justice derived by its Christian acceptance which Foscolo describes in his *Apologetic Letter* as follows: "ma che a niuno, se non è forte, potrà mai venir fatto di essere giusto. Iddio arbitro d'ogni cosa regna giustissimo perché è onnipotente (EN XIII.2, p. 131-2). Although this point would deserve a more systematic attention, it suffices to say here that what Foscolo means with force in this passage is equivalent to

The father-daughter relation as exemplified, in particular, by Ricciarda's submission and sacrifice in the interest of her father's will, draws the heroine near the character of Teresa from Foscolo's *Ortis*.²³⁹ Akin to the epistolary novel, in this tragedy "tutta amore" (EP IV, p. 168) as the author described it in his epistle to Pellico (EP IV/1232), love and politics are significantly intertwined.²⁴⁰ Foscolo employs the private dimension in his tragedy to sharpen the contrast between the law of force and those absolute human values, embodied as they are by the ideals of disinterested and filial love as well as the devotion for the cultural past and the country.

It is significant, in this regard, that values of forgiveness and reconciliation with which the tragedy had started, are reiterated at the end again by the heroine upon her demise through her father's stabbing dagger: "Perdona... al padre... mio" (R V/7, v. 220).²⁴¹ Of all

strength, it does therefore not indicate coercion but rather the capability of the country to defend and liberate itself from foreign domination.

²³⁹ The father-daughter relationship can be correlated for its resemblance and relevance in articulating the critique and concept of the nation with the father-son binom mentioned in my earlier discussion of Kleist's plays. On the analogy of Ricciarda with Teresa see Donadoni who describes the protagonist as "una Teresa portata al massimo limite" (1964: 412). A comparison no less worth considering might be in relation with Tieste's beloved in the sequence Erope, Teresa, Ricciarda to contrastively analyze how differently they convey in their identity of contended female figures (the adulterous, the woman promised to another man, and the deceived bride), and under consideration of the specific historical circumstances in which the three works were written, Foscolo's idea of "terra prostituita."

²⁴⁰ Donadoni's comparison of Guido with Ortis (1964: 412), however, appears less justified than the analogy drawn between Ricciarda and Teresa. There is little left in Guido from Ortis' tribulated patriotism as well as of his political affair for as much as it is allegorically transfigured in his love for Teresa. What might, however, be worth examining is the definition of "viltà" as it is presented and articulated in both works in their peculiar relation to patriotic commitment and devotion. Arguing against Donadoni, Guido's character might, instead, be considered closer to Schiller's Don Carlos, equally self-absorbed and afflicted by his emotional distress as to become unable and unwilling to act. The force with which love nearly paralyzes the action of both characters, makes Guido and Don Carlos examples of inept heroes (cf. also Foscolo's opinion on Guido in his letters [EP IV/ 1368]). Foscolo's admiration for the German poet and playwright is attested in several instances of his epistolary (cf. e.g. EP IV/1212, 1222). In this case, the analogy with *Don Carlos* can be considered part of that "implicita gara con Schiller" that Binni ascribes to the author (1982: 149).

²⁴¹ In this moral imperative resides the "moral judgment" (1987: 21-2) that Hayden White ascribes to all historical narratives that are provided with closure. As historical tragedy, in contrast to *Tieste* and *Ajace* (ending

dramatic characters in the play, only one is destined to survive. In contrast to the old heroes and victims that belong to the mythical past of fratricide, parricide and inhuman violence, Averardo, "*eroe nuovo d'Italia*" (R III/6, v. 195 my emphasis), represents the new hero that will be borne out of history. As the initial letter of his name suggests, he is the alfa and stands for the beginning of Italian history. He survives, because he is the hero yet to come.²⁴²

either in the expectation of an outstanding divine punishment or in the unfulfilled surmise of being the cause for an undue death), on *Ricciarda's* stage all characters succumb to tragic death, the ending is complete. The exclusive survival of Averardo, in turn, suggests eventually the meaningful sequel of the (hi)story in the future.

²⁴² In the fictional character of Averardo, Foscolo had concentrated his hopeful expectation in the upcoming Congress of Prague (June-August 1813). That history will have its own actors, responsible for the tragic end of their national drama, became a reality that Foscolo recollected with bitterness in his discourses *On the Servitude of Italy*: "Gl'Italiani, quasi tutti concordi a bramare l'indipendenza, furono sì diffidenti tra loro, e sì discordi ne' mezzi, e sì poco deliberati nel proponimento di riacquistarla, che anzi hanno, e magistrati, e cittadini, e plebe, ed esercito, congiurato a riconfermare su la loro patria il servaggio" (EN VIII, p. 152). As to the "discordi mezzi" mentioned by the author, the allusion refers to the hostility entertained by Foscolo with Count Confalonieri, both eager to achieve the Kingdom's independence, albeit through the resort of different means. On April 23, 1814, misled by Metternich's manipulative politics, Confalonieri will sign the Kingdom's armistice with Austria and thus squander Italy's chance for national autonomy and freedom.

2.2.4 Summary

Drawing upon the narrative nature that constitutes and construes history, hence conjoining it to myth, this section developed further on the rhetorics that inform historical writing by resorting to Fredric Jameson's assumptions on the ideological substratum that subtends historical narratives and Homi Bhabha's linguistic approach to nations as metaphorical constructs. Addressed from this theoretical perspective, Kleist's and Foscolo's historical dramas are analyzed as enactments of national histories – in other words: as *narratives* of the nation. Both Jameson's and Bhabha's disquisitions provide valuable insights to the hermeneutic process involved in the interpretation of historical accounts and their subsequent rewriting as mythicized history, as counter-narratives that resist the hypostatizations of historical writings, or as historical allegory. The selected tragedies were intended to provide an indicative example of the three aforementioned alternative national narratives. In the *Herrmannsschlacht*, Kleist's monumentalization of German history is reviewed along the lines of Bhabha's notion of national hybridity as contended by heterogeneous ethnical identities and cultural identification which compete and are contained within an interstitial space of passage and passing where old supremacies are replaced by new national awareness. The resistance sustained by the German tribes in the historical battle of Teutoburg against the political absorption and acculturation of the Roman Empire exemplifies the national pedagogy supported by Kleist, and strengthened throughout his political prose and poetry.

Bhabha's theoretical premise of nations as linguistic products and fictional practices is illustrated by *Prince Homburg*'s subversive counter-narrative. Intentionally reading against the evidence provided by historical records, Kleist's drama aims at criticizing and challenging

the ideological constraints that dictate historical writing. The family-metaphor is the trope that connotes, as Benedict Anderson remarks, the narrative of national integration and cohesion. The tragedy exemplifies this concept of cultural collectivity and national communion by means of the father-son analogy enacted by Kleist through Homburg's relationship with his father figure, the Elector. The protagonist's individual option for death, at the end of the play, becomes representative of precisely that process of internalization and conversion deemed by Anderson indispensable for the constitution of a national *Geist* that for Kleist ought to be emulated and aspired to.

Jameson explains the temporal proximity that historical narratives may share with the historical present as indicative of the ideological subtext that informs them. Foscolo's *Ricciarda*, though an excerpt of fictionalized medieval history, is able to conjoin invention with immediate reality. As allegorical drama, the tragedy displays on stage the ideology enacted in the narrative, and thus establishes a concrete connection with the present and its historical contingency. The sepulchral imagery that sets the scene not only reasserts the motif of death that had inspired the earlier mythical works, but attests the author's patriotism that looked at the past as exemplary to the present.

2.3 Closing Remarks and Outlook

The theories employed thus far in my study have illustrated various ways to describe and distinguish mythical from historical narratives in the context of national constitution and construction. They have elucidated, through direct reference to and analysis of the plays, the alternative modes in which these narratives contribute to the fictionalization of the nation. The investigation conducted on the mythical plays, as a mode of knowledge to encounter and exorcise – according to Blumenberg – the terrifying reality, has drawn peculiar attention to the rhetoric of death, pivotal to both authors in reproducing and representing the violence in which human history finds itself inscribed, and in ultimately accounting for the pessimism that inspired Foscolo's as much as Kleist's poetics.²⁴³

This negatively connotated perspective takes the traits in Foscolo of a social pessimism which he derives from Rousseau's and Vico's philosophy, and displays strong resemblances with Hobbes' and Machiavelli's theories. For Kleist, instead, it turned more broadly into an existential and anthropological pessimism rooted in an acute epistemological scepticism. Both their social and historical forms of pessimism found, in agreement with Nietzsche's definition of tragedy as the dramatic genre inhabited by the Dionysian, on the dramatic stage their congenial space of expression.

Akin to the German language, which distinguishes between history ("Geschichte") and stories ("Geschichten") only through the morphological distinction between singular and

²⁴³ As to Foscolo's employment of myth and history in his tragedies, his mentor – the Italian dramatist Alfieri – undoubtedly exerted a major influence on his thinking and writing. Alfieri's rather "static" acceptance of history accounts for a pessimism that Foscolo inherited as much as his plea for freedom from tyranny which became a theme so dear to his disciple Ugo. In a future development and pursuit of this study, it might be interesting to investigate the place that Alfieri occupies in the context of the application of myth and history in his dramas, especially within the context of a contrastive analysis with Foscolo.

plural form, the Italian terms "storia" and "storie" suggest the same lexical coincidence as well as semantic contiguity. This terminological peculiarity shared by both languages helps to grasp the importance attributed to the creation and conservation of national literature as indispensable condition for the conception of national identity. Posed in these terms, the discourse of national culture, ultimately corresponded for both authors with a discourse of national history. The selective process of omissions and additions that historical narratives undergo, however, was described by Nietzsche as characteristic of the so-called "monumental method".²⁴⁴ As the forthcoming chapter shall illustrate, in Pellico's and Schiller's dramatic production, the patriotic fervor displayed in Foscolo's and Kleist's dramas will be mediated and mitigated by an emergent cosmopolitanism already detected *en passant* in the *Herrmann's Battle*.

While Bhabha dismisses as false holism the "impossibly romantic" (1990a: 1) idea of the nation, Germany and Italy stand out as symptomatic cases of the geopolitical hybridity and sociocultural heterogeneity that became the driving and, at the same time, defying force in their attempt to blend their originally fractured and fragmented national images into a cohesive picture of cultural identity. As territories contested by the French and Austrian-Hungarian empires, Germany and Italy acted as contending forces *within* the process of imperial assertion as well as *against* the politics of assimilation pursued by Napoleon and the Habsburgs, henceforth asserting their *own* national narratives.

It is the ideology inscribed and enacted in any narrative to which Jameson and Bhabha equally point. Despite the similarities subsisting between their theories, however,

²⁴⁴ The German philosopher adopted the river metaphor to visualize the consequences of historical construction: "Whole tracts of [the past] are forgotten and despised; they flow away like a dark, unbroken river, with only a few gaily colored islands of fact rising above it" (1964: 15-6).

there is a fundamental distinction that deserves attention. If Jameson argues that the ideological component involved in the creation of *historical* narratives is unconscious, Bhabha is convinced of quite the contrary and demonstrates its premise by unveiling the ambivalences that emerge beneath the rhetorics of *national* narratives. What the former considers to be a productive imaginative concept that allows the individuals to locate themselves within a collectivity, represents for the latter a strategy adopted by Western hegemonic discourse.

In other words, what for Bhabha represents, from the postcolonial perspective of nation formation, a distinctive rhetoric employed by Western narratives of supremacy, constitutes for Jameson's marxist aesthetics primarily a form of *action*. In more pointed terms, what Jameson conceives as "work", corresponds for Bhabha to "word" – i.e. to an eminently discursive construct articulated as highly ambivalent metaphorical trope. At the onset of the Italian "Risorgimento" and the aspiration to give birth to a "Third Germany" that would coexist next to, and thus resist, the Austrian-Prussian dualism, in the following chapter Pellico and Schiller will employ myths glorified by the past as a "means" – borrowing from Georges Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* – "of *acting on the present*" (1941: 135 my emphasis). Through its dramatization, history will turn for Schiller and Pellico into an aesthetic device that serves the purpose of "educating" their audience to *citoyennes*: that is to the modern citizen epitomizing the values of freedom, equality and brotherhood heralded by the French *philosophes* as natural and inviolable human rights.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ I shall return in more detail to the need and notion of national "education", as it was promoted by German philosopher and poet Johann Gottfried Herder, polemicist of cultural uniformity and pleader of its uniqueness, in the following chapter in conjunction with the didactic valence attributed to and attended by drama, and more

broadly by art as it was postulated through Schiller's aesthetics and the notion of *littérature engagée* propagated by the Italian Romantics.

III. SCHILLER'S AND PELLICO'S COSMOPOLITAN PATRIOTISM: THE MYTHS OF THE PAST AS METAPHORS OF THE PRESENT

In his permanently *in fieri* project on the Parisian arcades, Walter Benjamin annotates some of his most significant reflections on history. It is in this comprehensive work that he exemplifies what he defines in the fifth of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* the "true picture of the past" (1973: 255). This "image of the past" derives its value, as Benjamin explains, by being "seized" or *cited* by the present in a time of threat, acquiring a revolutionary potential that is reminiscent of Sorel's propagandistic conception of social myths.²⁴⁶ Proceeding from this notion of the past, and the images it conveys to the mind and memory of the contemporary viewer, Benjamin expounds in his *Arcades Project* the reasons as to why, for instance, the "French revolution viewed itself as *Rome reincarnate*" (1999: 263, my emphasis). As he puts it: for "Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the *time of the now* which he blasted out of the continuum of history" (1999: 263, my emphasis).

²⁴⁶ It is Joseph Mali who, in his incisive analysis of Benjamin's historical disquisitions, points to the closeness that the historical materialism upheld by the German thinker shared with Sorel's revolutionary socialism rather than with Karl Marx (2003: 280-1). Certainly, the ideologically manipulative potential that Sorel ascribed to political myths as catalyzing force capable to incite *action* in the present, echoes what Benjamin describes in the *Arcades* as the "higher grade of actuality" with which history is endowed once it is recognized and recovered by the present: "How it marks itself as higher actuality is determined by the *image* as which and in which it is comprehended. And this dialectical penetration and *actualization* of former contexts puts the truth of all *present action* to the test. Or rather, it serves to ignite the *explosive materials* that are latent in what has been [...]. To approach, in this way, 'what has been' means to treat it not historiographically [...], but *politically*, in political categories" (1992: 392, my emphases). Mali does not explicitly refer to this passage in Benjamin's *Arcades*, and prefers instead to quote from his *Theses*. It is, however, precisely in this quote that I see not only the continuity and consistency of thought that links the two thinkers, but also the affinity that Benjamin appears to share with the Sorelian notion of political myth as active and acting force in and upon the present. Following Benjamin's understanding of the past as the *politization* of history, in the following pages I shall restore this specific concept of the past and bring it in relation to another key notion for the analysis pursued in this chapter: the *aesthetization* of history.

This understanding of history in its presence and its present meaning had found ample treatment already in conjunction with Foscolo's and Kleist's reappropriation of the past within the context of their historical contingency. Their "historical myths", as Mali names them in his luminous study on *Mythistory*, fulfill the chief role of preserving and promoting the collective identity and integrity of specific social groups.²⁴⁷ In contrast to the former segment of my study, in the following section I shall illustrate how the historical narratives that Schiller and Pellico dramatized, were rivisted and reanacted no longer as national myths, but as *metaphors* of supranational ideals.²⁴⁸ That is to say that the narrative of history is read and reflected as symbolic of ideals that were shared by a community of forthcoming nations. These were tied by a European cosmopolitanism that claimed – in the midst of wars – a right to hospitality and peaceful coexistence.²⁴⁹ Notions such as fatherland, brotherhood, and peace

²⁴⁷ It is significant that Mali reports as evidence to his theory the epic of Arminius, protagonist of Kleist's *Herrmann's Battle*, established and employed to justify the legacy of the Aryan tribes (2003: 7). Before Mali, Cassirer had already pointed out the historical and cultural foundation in which mythology is rooted, contributing in turn to the constitution of history itself: "A mythology rooted in a specific society transmits a heritage of shared allusion and verbal experience *in time*, and so mythology helps to create a *cultural history*. As a mythology contains a great deal of legendary and traditional history, it also helps to foster the growth of what we should call *history*" (1982: 34, my emphases).

²⁴⁸ When speaking of history as myth, I intend history as *national* myth or, quoting Cassirer, as the "mythology of the nation": "It is not by its history that the mythology of a nation is determined but, conversely, its history is determined by its *mythology*" (1964: 5, my emphasis). I will point out later the relationship that links, on the basis of their iconic nature, myth to metaphor. Suffice to say, at this point, that it is by virtue of their mythical quality that the historical narratives selected and staged by Schiller and Pellico would possess metaphorical valence.

²⁴⁹ In his treatise *On Perpetual Peace* (1795), Kant had defined the cosmopolitan right as one "limited to the conditions of universal *hospitality*", where he intended with hospitality "the right of a foreigner not to be treated with hostility because he has arrived on the land of another" (1996: 328-9, emphasis in the original); cf. also *Kants Werke*, vol. 8, p. 357-8, henceforth quoted as "KW" followed by the volume and page number within parentheses. Two years later, in *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), Kant expanded upon "[t]his rational idea of a peaceful, even if not friendly, thoroughgoing community of all nations on the earth" by specifying that it was based on a "cosmopolitan right" or *ius cosmopoliticum*, which had "to do with the possible union of all nations" (1996: 489/ KW 6:353). As to the notion of cosmopolitanism, see Appiah's recent study and his extensive philosophical disquisitions in the introductory chapters (2006).

that this European family of prospective nations shared, were indicators of a patriotism whose main objective resided in one's country's defense rather than domination.²⁵⁰

The acceptance of history as metaphor, that is to say as a "literary, [...] fiction-making, operation" (White 1978: 85) allows for some additional preliminary considerations. In its quality of trope, the historical narrative conveys a message that transcends its literary meaning. It is precisely by reaching beyond its textual immanence and immediacy that it derives its motive and emotive force. Hayden White's definition of history as "extended metaphor" acutely conveys this idea of a "symbolic structure": "the historical narrative does not *reproduce* the events it describes; it tells us in what direction to *think* about the events and charges our thought about the events with different emotional valences" (1978: 91, emphases in the original). As I shall demonstrate, the loose recreation and rearrangement of historical events that Schiller and Pellico undertake in their dramas constitutes their attempt to redirect the attention to a poetic, rather than mimetic, truth as the one deemed more intimately human and thus universally valid. By doing so, they are able to promote the awareness for an ideological cause that reaches beyond their delimited geopolitical borders, and yet stresses its national valence.

More importantly, this narrative mode does not undermine the reliability of historical reports. On the contrary, as Benjamin points out: "[t]o articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was'" – from which eventually stemmed his critique against the shortcomings of historicism; instead: "[h]istorical materialism wishes to retain

²⁵⁰ In the same writing *On Perpetual Peace* (1795), Kant described the league of nations as one that "does not look at acquiring any power of a state but only to preserving and securing the *freedom* of a state itself and of other states in league with it". As he specified: "The practicability (objective reality) of this idea of a *federalism* [...] should gradually extend over all states and so lead to perpetual peace [...]" (1996: 327/ KW 8:356, emphases in the original).

that *image* of the past which unexpectedly *appears to man* singled out by history" (1973: 255, my emphasis). What Benjamin is underscoring in this passage is a perception of history that is essentially subjective and discontinuous, therefore questioning its alleged objectivity as claimed by historicists. This understanding that Benjamin had of history, though deemed less authoritative than historical sources, guaranteed a more authentic perspective.

It is precisely at the line of demarcation drawn between image and imagination, illustration and interpretation of historical reality that lies as well the crux of White's argument. As he specifies: "[t]he historical narrative does not *image* the things it indicates; it *calls to mind* images of the things it indicates, in the same way a metaphor does" (1978: 91, emphases in the original). The similarity discernible between White's notion of history and Benjamin's notion of the past is striking. The symbolic imagery, upon which both theories rely, implies in the first stance the conception of reality accessible as a legible and decipherable textual entity.²⁵¹ To the extent that every act of signification demands an act of translation, metaphors account – in Ernst Cassirer's definition of metaphor as "genuine 'translation'" (1953: 86-7) – as the actual practice of conceptual transfer. In the second stance, it infers the same iconographic attribute that links metaphor to myth – the latter described by

²⁵¹ It is, in this respect, indicative that the metaphor of the "book of nature", which was a well-established simile since the Middle Ages (see Curtius [1965: 325-28]), experienced a strong revival in the 19th century, especially as theorized and thematized by German Romantics Schelling and Novalis through their notion of the hieroglyphic and therefore figurative, i.e. poetic and pictorial, language in which the book of nature was thought to be written. Novalis's "Märchen", rich of metaliterary reflections, portray the image of a world *as* book whose language his characters strive to decipher – setting it up against the relation more commonly established of the book (that is of literature) *to* the world. More importantly, Gadamer identifies in the Romantics and their hermeneutics the roots for a new understanding of history and "historical reality itself [as] a *text* that has to be understood", while he attributes to Dilthey the merit of "consciously tak[ing] up *romantic hermeneutics* and expand[ing] it into a historical method" (1975: 174 my emphases). It is precisely this kind of "romantic hermeneutics", that views the world and its history as symbolically mediated, which constitutes the paradigm of history writing in Romantic historiography, and the principle of White's conceptualization of historical narratives as metaphors.

Sorel no other than a "*body of images* [...] capable of evoking as an undivided whole the mass of *sentiments*" (1941: 130-31, my emphases).²⁵² In both myth and metaphor, the emblematic as well as the emotional component are therefore tightly interwoven. In their quality of stories, *mythoi* are literary devices: as such they can function as metaphorical narratives of what remains otherwise logically inexplicable.²⁵³

Once the old myths had been shattered – as Foscolo and Kleist illustrated – through the secularization and demythization of history, the premises for a "new mythology" were posited. The German Romantics described this new mythology as one in which the sacred and divine were no longer located in the world, that is outside the individual, but *within* the human subject who, as such, would turn into the absolute agent of history, constantly striving, in virtue of his metaphysical attributes, towards an ideal state of personal perfection – achievable by means of aesthetic refinement. As specified in the manuscript *The Oldest Program toward a System of German Idealism* (1796/97):

Endl. kommen d. Ideen von einer moral. Welt, Gottheit, Unsterblichkeit – Umsturz alles (Aberglaubens) Aberglauben, Verfolgung des Priesterthums, das neuerdings Vernunft heuchelt, durch d. Vernunft selbst. – (Die) absolute Freiheit aller Geister,

²⁵² Sorel's *Reflections* revolve around the myths of Socialism that act as motor and motive of action; in its quality of myth, history displays a similar objective to the extent that it derives its validity from the same functional, rather than factual nature.

²⁵³ The "intellectual link between language and myth is metaphor," writes Cassirer (1953: 84). This inference becomes more evident if one calls to mind, for instance, Freud's use of Greek myths as metaphors employed for his psychoanalytic theories; or the biblical myths whose "narrative framework", as Frye observes, "is a part of its emphasis *on the shape of history*" (1982: 198, my emphasis). Not only does Frye institute a meaningful link between myth and history, in the incipient pages of his work he also equates mythology and the historical narratives with the "earliest forms of descriptive techniques in writing", defining literature and its "function of re-creating the *metaphorical use* of language" as the "direct descendant of mythology" (1982: 34, my emphasis).

die d. intellektuelle Welt in sich tragen, u. weder Gott noch Unsterblichkeit *ausser sich* suchen dürfen. (Schelling 1975: 111, emphasis in the original)²⁵⁴

In this endeavor, primary value was attributed to *art* intended as the new "sensuous religion" ("sinnliche Religion") able to both restore the individual's balance between intuitive and intellectual faculties, and renew the social order under the banner of an integrated human sensibility: "Monotheismus der Vern. des Herzens, Polytheismus der Einbildungskraft u. der Kunst, dies ist, was wir bedürfen!" (Schelling 1975: 111).²⁵⁵ The increased attention for the human subject in his quality of protagonist and promoter of history – a role that the eponymic titles of these character dramas underscore – posed the accent on the individual's struggle to reintegrate reason and feelings, and on his consequent pursuit of freedom from any kind of heteronomy as autonomous and self-determining being.

As indicative of the actions involved in this human quest, the historical narratives staged by Schiller and Pellico are apt to transcend their place and time in the past, and transfer as metaphors their meaning to the present and posterity as well as to the whole of humankind. Hyposticized from historical contingency, their dramas acquire therefore metahistorical status, standing for and signifying ideals advocated as ubiquitous and universal. Akin to the German Romantics who demanded the replacement of ancient myths through a new "religion of art" (*Kunstreligion*), history acquires – by means of Schiller's

²⁵⁴ "Finally come the ideas of a moral world, divinity, immortality – the overthrow of all {superstition} belief in a hinterhaven, the prosecution by reason itself of that hypocritical priesthood that has recently begun to ape reason. – {the} absolute freedom of all spirits who bear the intellectual world within themselves and who dare not seek either God or immortality *outside themselves*" (Schelling 2005: 24, emphasis in the original); words in plain and/or fancy brackets had been crossed out in the original manuscript.

²⁵⁵ "Monotheism of reason and of the heart, polytheism of the imagination and art, that is what we need!" (Schelling 2005: 25). As we shall see, this aesthetic notion and norm will find its way in Schiller's poetics and anthropological theory.

aestheticization of politics, and Pellico's Christian faith – a new transcended status.²⁵⁶ In
 sinthony with the Romantics' ambition of founding a new mythology that had to be rooted, as
 the old one, in humankind – understood as a transnational fellowship – Schiller's and
 Pellico's "new mythology" aimed at the autonomy, equality and unity of the people. As a
 matter of fact, the term "people" indicated – in its respective translation of *Volk* and *popolo* –
 the members of all national communities. It is in *The Oldest Program toward a System of
 German Idealism* (1796/ 97) that this "idea of humankind" (*Idee der Menschheit*) is first
 postulated and promoted as synonymous of freedom: an individual freedom epitomized in the
 wholeness and harmony of both emotional and intellectual sphere.²⁵⁷ The requisite for
 instituting a new mythology became indispensable to convey and communicate these ideas of
 humanity and freedom "aesthetically", and render them in turn comprehensible to everyone,
 which is to say to the people or *Volk*:

Ehe wir die Ideen ästhetisch d.h. mythologisch machen, haben sie für das *Volk* kein
 Interesse [...]. So müssen endl. aufgeklärte u. Unaufgeklärte sich d. Hand reichen, die
 Myth. muß philosophisch werden, und das Volk vernünftig, u.d. Phil. muß

²⁵⁶ I borrow the notion of "Ästhetisierung der Politik" from Berghahn (1975: 411) who employs it in his study to indicate Schiller's plea for a cultural evolution in lieu of a political revolution to be carried out in Germany and Europe. I will use this term to refer more broadly to Schiller's poetics of the sublime which, as a consequence of his historical pessimism, ought to complement (if not supplement) his poetics of beauty. I will specify in detail the rational behind these theories in my forthcoming analysis of his plays.

²⁵⁷ See Schelling: "Die **Idee der Menschheit** voran – will ich zeigen, daß es keine Idee vom *Staat* gibt, weil der Staat etwas *mechanisches* ist, so wenig als es eine Idee von einer *Maschine* gibt. Nur was Gegenstand der Freiheit ist, heist *Idee*. **Wir müssen** also auch **über den Staat hinaus!**" (1975: 110, emphases in the original, bold added). Schelling's plea to move beyond the institution of the state which did not render justice to the idea of a free humankind spoke for a notion of humanity that was meant to be all-inclusive. As to the authorship of *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*, it must be said that although critics agree that it was written by the hand of Hegel around 1796 and 1797 (Frank/ Kurz 1975: 25), there is no doubt that the German philosopher shared in this short, but significant writing the thoughts of his student roommates Schelling and Hölderlin at the "Tübinger Stift." Krell describes the manuscript as "ubiquitous" for it can be found in any complete collection of works of either Hegel, Schelling or Hölderlin: "The fragment served as the basis of a discussion among friends. It grew out of their discussions and was intended to stimulate further discussion" (2005: 16-7).

mythologisch werden, um die Philosophen sinnl. zu machen. Dann herrscht *ewige Einheit* unter uns" (Schelling 1975: 112, emphasis in the original).²⁵⁸

No longer philosophy, but poetry was accorded henceforth the highest rank and held supremacy over all other disciplines: "die Dichtkunst allein wird alle übrigen Wissenschaften u. Künste überleben" (Schelling 1975: 111). The aspiration, as reported in the quote, to "everlasting unity" ("ewige Einheit"), was achievable only through an "aesthetic act" ("ästhetischer Akt").²⁵⁹ Through this aesthetic undertaking, the new mythology aimed at guaranteeing the integrity and unity of the individual and his collectivity – intended on a larger scale as both his community and the whole of humankind – which represented, in turn, the *conditio sine qua non* for the constitution of a prospective national alliance and unification. Along the same lines, Pellico will undertake a resemantization of his notion of nation, shifting from its individualistic conceptualization as "fatherland" (*patria*) to the comprehensive denotation of "people" (*popolo*). In the prepolitical configuration that both Germany and Italy shared, literature became – as Foscolo had already reiterated, and Herder before him had asserted in his collection of popular poetry – fundamental for the constitution of such a national consciousness. As Schelling concludes his *Oldest Program* (1796/ 97):

²⁵⁸ "Until we make the ideas aesthetic, i.e., mythological, they will have no interest for the *people* [...]. Thus the enlightened and unenlightened must at long last clasp hands; mythology must become philosophical, and the people rational, while philosophy must become mythological, in order to make the philosophers sensuous. Then eternal unity will prevail among us" (Schelling 2005: 25-6, emphasis in the original).

²⁵⁹ In *The Oldest Program* (1796/ 97) beauty is described as the highest of all ideas that the new mythology purported to encompass. For it is in the idea of beauty that reason could accomplish its aesthetic act of unifying and harmonizing sensuous and sensible faculties: "Zuletzt die Idee, die alle vereinigt, die Idee der *Schönheit*, das Wort in höherem platonischem Sinne genommen. Ich bin nun überzeugt, daß der höchste Akt der Vernunft, der, indem sie alle Ideen umfaßt, ein **ästhe(tis)tischer Akt** ist, und daß *Wahrheit und Güte, nur in der Schönheit* verschwistert sind –" (Schelling 1975: 111, emphases in the original, bold added); cf. English translation: "And at the very end, the idea that unifies all, the idea of *beauty*, the word taken in its higher, Platonic sense. For I am convinced that the supreme act of reason, because it embraces all ideas, is an **aesthetic act**; and that only in *beauty* are *truth and goodness* akin" (Krell 2005: 24, emphasis in the original, bold added).

Nimmer der verachtende Blick, nimmer das blinde Zittern des Volks vor seinen Weisen u. Priestern. Dann erst erwartet uns *gleiche* Ausbildung *aller* Kräfte, des Einzelnen sowohl als aller Individuen. Keine Kraft wird mehr unterdrückt werden, dann herrscht allgemeine Freiheit und Gleichheit der Geister! (1975: 112, emphases in the original).

Through their synthesis, poetry and nation would condition each other, coincide in terms of relevance, and eventually collapse into one meaning.

It becomes clear, at this point, that along with the aesthetization of history went inevitably its politization. Viewed and validated for and within its political content and context, history served as instrument apt to convey the aesthetic education of men to national citizens. The expectation according to which literature ought to perform the pedagogical role of raising the people into becoming a national entity, was shared by German and Italian intellectuals alike. It is significant that, in his disquisitions on the "history" and "ideology" of *The Nation Form*, Etienne Balibar considers this objective to be crucial in informing the people's national consciousness and identity. Balibar elucidates in length the preeminent function performed by "schooling" as the "principal institution" responsible for "produc[ing]" their "ethnicity" (1991: 98). Borrowing from his insights, in this chapter I will attempt to define more closely the concept of "ethnicity" as it was conceived by Schiller and Pellico during the specific *prenational* moment in which their historical realities were inscribed.²⁶⁰ I shall, therefore, display how their political aspirations were intended to be led under the aegis of an eminently literary and cultural transformation.

²⁶⁰ In his interesting study, Whaley objects against the anachronistic tendency in contemporary studies to apply modern theories on nationalism to a time in history that preceded the actual formation of nation-states. He argues essentially that the idea of national identity had a different meaning from the notion of nation on which modern national approaches rely (2010: 203-9). According to Whaley, this "pre-modern nationalism" must be distinguished from "modern nationalism" which set on only in 1789, i.e. *after* the French Revolution, as the consequence of a thoroughly new perception of time and space (204).

Read as metaphors exemplifying cosmopolitan values that reached beyond the circumscribed borders of one's nation – historical narratives were, consequently, acknowledged in their quality of *other* histories. The "past is another country" (1997: 233) writes Hobsbawm, denoting an understanding of history as *alterity*. To recognize one's history behind the history of others accounts for a process of individualization in which adopting the Otherness of the foreign results indispensable to the acquisition of selfhood and national identity. This type of patriotism did not favor one nation over others, but advocated the independence of all nations and approved of their individual cultural significance rather than their supremacy. It was the so-called "cosmopolitan patriotism" which distinguished the rise of national awareness and nationhood in the Romantics, dictating in turn both Schiller's and Pellico's political creed and poetics.²⁶¹ It was an attitude that confirmed and conformed

²⁶¹ As Thielking puts it: "Insgesamt erweist sich die Epoche der Romantik als seine Schlüsselstelle zwischen Kosmopolitismus und Nationalismus" (2000: 41). The expression "cosmopolitan patriotism" was coined by Hans Peter Herrmann in his illuminating study *Fatherland: Patriotism and Nationalism in the Eighteenth Century* (1996: 16). Herrmann's essay has the merit to illustrate the ideological contradictions that came along with the anything but unambiguous conflation in 18th-century Germany of enlightened cosmopolitanism and patriotic ideals. I prefer to use the expression of "European" patriotism to underscore the, at times, explicitly europhilic connotations that the term "cosmopolitanism" implied for Western thinkers and writers during the 18th and 19th century. In his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity (Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* [1792-1797]), the Weimar philosopher Gottfried Herder had addressed his mistrust towards a cosmopolitanism that he considered devoid, voicing his harsh critique against an ambition that he unmasked as being essentially eurocentric: "Von den Spanischen Grausamkeiten, vom Geiz der Engländer, vom der kalten Frechheit der Holländer, von denen man im Taumel des Eroberungswahnes Heldengedichte schrieb, sind in unsrer Zeit Bücher geschrieben, die ihnen so wenig Ehre bringen, daß vielmehr, wenn ein Europäischer Gesamtgeist anderswo als in Büchern lebte, wir uns des *Verbrechens beleidigter Menschheit* fast vor allen Völkern der Erde schämen müßten. Nenne man das Land, wohin Europäer kamen, und sich nicht durch Beeinträchtigungen, durch ungerechte Kriege, Geiz, Betrug, Unterdrückung, durch Krankheiten und schädliche Gaben an der unbewehrten, zutrauenden Menschheit, vielleicht auf alle Aeonen hinab, versündigt haben! Nicht der weise, sondern der *anmaßende, zudringliche, übervorteilende* Theil der Erde muß unser Welttheil heißen; er hat nicht kultiviert, sondern die Keime eigener Kultur der Völker, wo und wie er nur konnte, zerstört" (1991: 672, X/114, emphases in the original). It is precisely this claim of cultural superiority that did not spare even the most cosmopolitan among Herder's contemporary intellectuals such as Schiller who, only two years after the first *Don Carlos*' publication – a play that heralded the idea of world citizenship – distinguished in his inaugural Jena lecture from 1789, the Europeans from the "wilds" ("Wilden") who resided "in fernen Meeren und auf entlegenen Küsten", and who delivered a picture of human "childhood" ("das Bild, das uns diese Völker von unserer Kindheit geben!") that he described as "beschämend und traurig" (*Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte* [NA XVII.1/364]). Fichte, on his side, who in his *Patriotic Dialogues* from

to the cultural and literary exchange that de Staël's *cosmopolitisme littéraire* had initiated, encouraging Pellico to reach beyond his own cultural confines.²⁶² In contrast to Foscolo and Kleist, in fact, who did not know of each other, Pellico was well-acquainted with German literature and literates, and a fervid admirer of Schiller whose works he acknowledged in his

1807, pleaded for the irrefutable conciliation of nationalism and cosmopolitanism (1846: 228-9; see also Thielking [2000: 39-40]), had in his earlier *Characteristics of the Present Age* (*Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* [1804]) designated all Europeans as "one people" and Europe as the "true fatherland" ("da die christlichen Europäer im Wesen alle nur Ein Volk sind, das gemeinsame Europa für das *Eine wahre Vaterland* anerkennen" [1846: 204, my emphasis]). Similarly concerned about the politics of conquest and cessions wafting through Europe, the Italian patriot and poet Giovanni Berchet annotated in a warning against the British government's act of selling the Greek city of Parga to the Turks in 1819: "Les peuples de l'Europe ne sont ni ne peuvent être sérieusement ennemis les uns des autres, et moins que jamais aujourd'hui qu'ils se trouvent presque tous dans un état de souffrance, où la douleur concourt avec la raison et les lumières à développer parmi eux *ce sentiment de nationalité européenne* qui commence à les rapprocher." (1911: 4, my emphasis). In my forthcoming investigations, I will seek to illustrate how it was precisely this "feeling of European nationality" which underscored Schiller's and Pellico's cosmopolitan patriotism and manifested itself ideologically in their dramas, without being necessarily exempt from contradictions.

²⁶² It was, in fact, in the first stance a cosmopolitanism that originated on the mutual basis of a cultural and literary exchange, which aimed at the progress of the whole of humankind. De Staël who, together with Schlegel, had been in Milan in 1815 received great attention, both in terms of acceptance and adversion, from the local intelligentsia. Zamboni, who sets the year of 1816 as the time that inaugurated Italian Romanticism, remarks that this date coincided with the appearance of de Staël's article *De l'esprit des traductions* (1953: 7). Published in the Italian "Journal of Literature, Sciences and Arts", the so-called "Biblioteca Italiana" (*Biblioteca Italiana ossia Giornale di Letteratura Scienze ed Arti*), de Staël's essay incited local intellectuals to translate the works of British and German authors, and elude their alleged literary regression: "Il importe aux progrès de la pensée, dans la belle Italie, de regarder souvent au-delà des Alpes, non pour emprunter, mais pour connoître; *non pour imiter*, mais pour s'affranchir de certaines formes convenues [...]" (1821: 395, my emphasis); for the Italian transl. see Mme. de Staël "Sulla maniera e l'utilità delle traduzioni", *Discussioni e polemiche sul romanticismo* (1816-1826), pp. 3-9. Before de Staël, Herder had already articulated her admonition against emulation for a nation which had remained politically and, therefore, culturally conservative when, upon reaching the coast of England, he wrote in his *Letters* (1793-1797): "Der poetische Himmel Britanniens hat mich erschreckt. Wo sind unsre *Shakespeare*, unsre *Swifts*, *Addisons*, *Fieldings*, *Sterne*? [...] Wir wachten auf, da es allenthalben Mittag war und bei einigen Nationen sich gar schon die Sonne neigte. Kurz, *wir kamen zu spät*. Und weil wir so spät kamen, *ahmten wir nach*: denn wir fanden viel Vortreffliches nachzuahmen. [...] Was tut [die Muse] in Deutschland? Sie *ahmt nacht*. *Nachahmung* wäre also ihr Charakter, eben weil sie zu spät kam. Die Originalformen waren alle verbraucht und vergeben." (1991: 549, X/100, emphases in the original). Influenced by de Staël and intrigued by Schiller's work, in a review of *Maria Stuart* published in 1819 in the "Conciliatore", Pellico similarly encouraged his compatriots to desist from neoclassical imitation and take an example from foreign literature: "Non solo non è vero che per giungere al bello si debba porre servilmente il piede sovra orme già segnate; ma è anzi irrefragabile che ogni soggetto che un poeta assume a trattare deve essere condotto con leggi particolarmente proprie" (1964: 293). For these writers, transforming their national literature represented the prerequisite for the cultural and political emancipation of the country. As literary journal, "Il Conciliatore" aimed at promoting through the renewal and resonance of Italian literature the "Risorgimento" of Italian society. Once more, aesthetic and political practices constituted an inseparable alliance.

journal reviews and whom he recollected in a letter to his brother as the German poet who had once inflamed, next to Shakespeare, his heart.²⁶³

Given these theoretical considerations, in the following analysis I will depart from an understanding of history both as *metaphor* and as *alterity* to demonstrate how Schiller and Pellico employed historical narratives on stage as aesthetic devices, and deployed them in the pursuit of their political and pedagogical objectives. My investigation will be structured in three subsequent moments: in each one, I will juxtapose two plays respectively by each author. In contrast to the previous chapter, the selection, sequence and survey of these works will not follow a chronological, but rather a thematic criterion. Each pair of dramas will revolve around a specific understanding and use of history. The juxtaposition of their plays with the political and philosophical writings of their contemporaries such as Kant, Wieland, Herder, Fichte and Mazzini – to name a few – will, in turn, contribute to elucidate and reassess the ideological premises of their cosmopolitan *Weltanschauung*.

Schiller's republican plea, as thematized in *Don Carlos* (1787/ 1801), shall introduce next to Pellico's *Leoniero da Dertona* (1822-1830) the initial segment of this chapter. It will outline key concepts and questions concerning 18th-century cosmopolitanism and patriotism by clarifying the notion of fatherland and the connotation of nation as family, hence

²⁶³ In a letter to Luigi dated December 11, 1815, Pellico compared the experience of reading foreign literature, shared with his brother in their early youth, to a "widening of their horizons": "Ti ricordi l'effetto che produsse in noi la lettura di Shakespear e di Schiller, come l'orizzonte si facea più vasto davanti a noi? [...] Quando lessi la Letteratura del Mezzogiorno di Sismondi, e il Corso Drammatico di Schlegel, mi riaccesi dello stesso foco che Shakespear e Schiller m'aveano messo nel cuore"; *Lettere milanesi* (henceforth "LM"), p. 29. The readings by the Swiss critic Sismondi and the German writer Schlegel, mentioned in this brief epistolary excerpt confirm Pellico's interest for and influence exerted on his *forma mentis* by foreign literature. Pellico, who had met Mme. de Staël during his tutoring years at the house of Count Porro Lambertenghi, became familiar with Shakespeare's work no other but through de Staël's *De la littérature* (1799) (who dedicates the entire chapter XIII to *Des Tragédies de Shakespear*), and equally became acquainted with Schiller through her writing *De l'Allemagne* (1810/13); on the reception of Schiller's *oeuvre* in Italy, see Bevilacqua (2007: 42-56).

preparing the ground for the analysis of their forthcoming plays. The study will thus proceed with Schiller's tragedy of the Scottish queen *Maria Stuart* (1801) sentenced to death by her sister Elisabeth. Portrayed in the last days of struggle with her conviction and her conscience as a murderer, Maria Stuart's adultery and subsequent apotheosis will be aligned to *Francesca da Rimini*, heroine of Pellico's eponymous tragedy from 1815. Both tragedies will account, in their common act of fratricide and strife of power within families, for the authors' historical pessimism and their practices with historical facts and fiction. The third and final section will examine the notions of religious patriotism and national sacrifice as they are enacted in the Romantic dramas of Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* (1801), and Pellico's *Eufemio da Messina* (1820). The common denominator to all six tragedies, on the basis of which they are treated in this section together, resides in their quality of political family dramas – where the notion of nation as family constituted, as we shall see, an essential key concept of 18th-century cosmopolitan patriotism.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ In his lectures on the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* – given at the university of Königsberg already in 1773, but published only in 1798 – Kant had provided a definition of "nation" that linked the notion of "people" with that of family: "By the word *people* (*populus*) is meant a *multitude* of human beings united in a region, in so far as they constitute a *whole*. This multitude [...] that recognizes itself as united into a civil whole through common ancestry, is called a *nation* (*gens*)" (2006: 213/ KW 7:311, emphasis in the original). As he had previously specified in his *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797): "in an intellectual sense and from the perspective of rights, since they are born of the same mother (the republic) they [*sc.* the natives of the country] constitute as it were one *family* (*gens, natio*), whose members (citizens of the state) are of equally high birth and do not mix with those who may live near them in a state of nature [...]" (1996: 482/ KW 6:343, my emphasis). According to Kant, only the people who acknowledged themselves as representing one civil unity and having one common ancestry could represent a nation, that is a family in the very etymology of the word, and were thus deemed co-citizens.

3.1.1. *Dom Carlos, Infant von Spanien* (1787/ 1801)²⁶⁵

In the preamble to his prospective literary journal *Rheinische Thalia*, Schiller declared in November 1784 to write as "Weltbürger, der keinem Fürsten dient", and set forth specifying: "Frühe verlor ich *mein Vaterland*, um es gegen *die große Welt* auszutauschen" (NA XXII/ 93, my emphases).²⁶⁶ The antithetical juxtaposition of "the great world" which had replaced the poet's lost "fatherland" instantly introduces the envisioned readership to a turning point in his life and literary production.²⁶⁷ In fact, only a few months later, in March 1785, the journal's inaugural issue publishes the first act of "die Tragödie Dom Karlos" (NA VI/ 343), and its readers witness Posa's début as "ein Abgeordneter der ganzen Menschheit" (NA VI/ 362).²⁶⁸ In his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1809), August Wilhelm

²⁶⁵ Schiller's drama first appeared with this title in the original *Thalia* issue of 1785, and as complete print edition in 1787. Upon Wieland's advice, Schiller later changed the Portuguese spelling of the name into the Spanish notation from Dom to Don Carlos.

²⁶⁶ Schiller, Johann Christoph Friedrich von. "Rheinische Thalia und Thalia: Ankündigung Rheinische Thalia" dated November 11, 1784. Schiller's adoption of the German word "Weltbürger" ("world citizen") is reminiscent of Christoph Martin Wieland's earlier German translation of the originally Greek term "cosmopolitan", first coined by the Hellenic school of cynicism and, not coincidentally, adopted by Wieland in his essay on the reknown cynic philosopher *Diogenes of Sinope* (1768): "Der Weltbürger allein ist einer reinen, unparteiischen, durch keine unechte Zusätze verfälschten Zuneigung zu allen Menschen fähig. *Ungeschwächt durch Privatneigung* schlägt sein warmes Herz desto stärker bei jeder Aufforderung zu einer Handlung der *Menschlichkeit und Güte*", *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 19, p. 81, my emphases; henceforth quoted as "SW" followed by the volume and page number within parentheses. Wieland's definition of "world citizen" was charged with eminently philanthropic and humanitarian attributes; Schiller will explicitly thematize in his drama this moral question of altruism and selflessness which Wieland posited as the world citizen's values.

²⁶⁷ Schiller's reference is to his arrest in 1782 by Duke Karl Eugen of Württemberg upon staging and attending incognito on January 13 at the Mannheim National Theater his earlier drama *Die Räuber*; on September 22 of the same year, Schiller managed to escape from Stuttgart to Mannheim. In the same announcement to the first issue of his *Thalia*, he proclaimed "keine andere Fesseln zu tragen als den Anspruch der *Welt* – an keinen andern Thron mehr zu appellieren als an die *menschliche Seele*" (NA XXII/ 94-5, my emphases). The exclusive appeal to the world ("Welt") and the human soul ("menschliche Seele") addresses two key concepts that will play a paramount role in his political and anthropological thought.

²⁶⁸ See act I, scene 2, verse 361 of this *Thalia* fragment. Upon publishing the play's first act in the inaugurating edition of 1785, the subsequent two acts appeared respectively in the issues of February 1786 and January 1787. The drama was completed at the beginning of April and first published as book at the end of June 1787 (see Luserke-Jaqui 2005: 609). Schiller distanced himself from his play a decade later in 1797 upon his publisher's

Schlegel ascribed to Schiller's play the merit to have prompted the inception of a new era in his aesthetic and anthropological thought: "Das Werk welches diese neue Epoche bezeichnet, ist *Don Carlos*". It is, in fact, in this drama that Schiller first articulated the tenets that will ground his ideal of human nature and social constitution: "seine teuer errungenen Gedanken über die menschliche Natur und die gesellschaftliche Verfassung waren dem Dichter so wert, daß er sie ausführlich darlegte" (Schlegel 1967: 281).

Premiered on August 29, 1787 at the Hamburg theater where it was very well received, Schiller's drama joined the cosmopolitan debate that was being conducted on the intellectual scenario since the mid seventeenth hundreds.²⁶⁹ His subsequent *Letters on Don*

suggestion to reprint *Don Carlos* in an edition de luxe. As a matter of fact, he diminished its value as a yet immature work of his early literary production in a response from October 23, 1797 to his editor Göschen who had compared Schiller's drama with Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*. To Göschen's laudatory comment, Schiller replied: "Gerade die Reife, welche dem Carlos fehlt, hat der Nathan" (NA XXIX/ 152); despite his reluctance, the de-luxe edition will be printed in 1804. In 1801 Schiller published a new edition, abridged of about 830 verses from its first edition of 1787. A slightly further revised first act appeared in 1802, only to reduce the play of additional 82 verses in a later collection of dramas that Schiller had planned to publish, this time through the editor Cotta, in 1805. The volume, however, which was going to feature *Don Carlos* together with *The Maid of Orleans*, was not printed until after his death in the same year; see Luserke-Jaqui (2005: 93-4). For a more detailed history of the complex editorial review process of *Don Carlos*, see also Bockmann's and Kluge's "Druckgeschichte" (NA VII.2/ 109-18).

²⁶⁹ Although German cosmopolitan ideology distinguished itself from other theories of world citizenship for its peculiar status and mission, which I shall address in major depth in my forthcoming analysis, cosmopolitanism was not an exclusive German phenomenon, but a manifestation which invested all 18th-century Europe. In Germany, however, next to those intellectuals who defended the creed and cause of cosmopolitanism, there were also voices who disputed its legacy; Thielking (2000) provides a close-up study of the various acceptations of the "worldcitizenry" in Germany since the 18th century. In *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), the German theologian Herder, for instance, sarcastically questions the cosmopolitanism preached by Europe's enlightened intellectuals: "Hoch sehen wir also über die Erde! gewißermaasse alle Völker und Welttheile unter unserm Schatten, und wenn ein Sturm zwei kleine Zweige in Europa schüttelt, wie bebt und blutet die ganze Welt! Wenn ist je die ganze Erde an so wenig vereinigten Fäden so allgemein zusammen gegangen, als jetzt? Wenn hat man mehr Macht und Maschienen gehabt, mit einem Druck, mit einem Fingerregen ganze Nationen zu erschüttern?", *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. V, p. 546; all other references to the Suphan edition of Herder's complete works will be cited as "SW" with the volume and page number within parentheses. Herder's invective is directed against a false cosmopolitan philanthropy that he unveiled as ferocious colonial politics: "Und wie scheint dies immer fortzugehen! Wo kommen nicht Europäische Kolonien hin, und werden hinkommen! Überall werden die Wilden, je mehr sie unsern Brandtwein und Üppigkeit lieb gewinnen, auch unsrer Belehrung reif! Nähern sich, zumal durch Brandtwein und Üppigkeit, überall unsrer Kultur – werden bald, hilf Gott! alle Menschen wie wir seyn! gute, starke, glückliche Menschen!" (SW V/ 546). Herder will never desist from his critique against the cosmopolitan ideology that was debated

Carlos (1788) written in response to the critiques advanced against the alleged lack of dramatic unity and the contradictions displayed by the main character, bear testimony of the author's intentions and ideology:²⁷⁰

Der Zeitpunkt, wo [dieser Charakter] sich bildet, ist allgemein Gärung der Köpfe, Kampf der Vorurteile mit der Vernunft, Anarchie der Meinungen, Morgendämmerung der Wahrheit – von jeher die Geburtsstunde außerordentlicher Menschen. [...] Sagen Sie selbst, mein Freund – das kühnste Ideal einer *Menschenrepublik*, allgemeiner Duldung und Gewissensfreiheit, wo konnte es besser und wo natürlicher zur Welt geboren werden als in der Nähe Philipps II. und seiner Inquisition? (NA XXII/ 140-1, 2, my emphasis)

with vigor by his contemporaries, and will in fact restore it throughout his later writings. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1785), for instance, he opposed the concrete familiar affection nurtured by the non-European indigenous with the abstractions upheld by the European cosmopolitan who, in contrast, resulted infatuated with an ideal which in theory encompassed the whole of humanity, but in practical terms remained devoid of concrete meaning: "Der Wilde, der sich, der sein Weib und Kind mit ruhiger Freude liebt und für seinen Stamm, wie für sein Leben, mit beschränkter Wirksamkeit glühet, ist, wie mich dünkt, ein wahreres Wesen als jener *gebildete Schatte*, der für den Schatten seines ganzen Geschlechts d. i. für *einen Namen*, in Liebe entzückt ist. In seiner armen Hütte hat jener für jeden Fremden Raum, den er mit gleichgültiger Gutmüthigkeit als seinen Bruder aufnimmt und ihn nicht einmal, wo er hersei? fraget. Das verschwemmte Herz des müßigen Kosmopoliten ist eine Hütte für Niemand" (SW XIII/ Bk. II.VIII.5/ 339, my emphases). Schiller himself ascribed in a letter to Goethe from January 26, 1798, the propensity of humans to strive for perfectibility exclusively to Europeans: "Es ist doch wirklich unbegreiflich, daß die belebende Kraft im Menschen nur in einem so kleinen Theil der Welt wirksam ist, und jene ungeheueren Völkermassen für die menschliche Pefectibilität ganz und gar nicht zählen. Besonders merkwürdig ist es mir, daß es jenen Nationen u überhaupt allen NichtEuropaeern auf der Erde nicht sowohl an moralischen als an aesthetischen Anlagen gänzlich fehlt" (NA XIX/ 198, 196.). With his distinction of "European" vs. "non European", Schiller clearly distanced himself from Wieland's original definition of the cosmopolitan thinker – as he had provided it in his essay on *Das Geheimniß des Kosmopoliten-Ordens* (1788) – where he argued that cosmopolitans viewed instead all worldwide ethnicities as one major family and people: "Die Kosmopoliten führen den Namen der Weltbürger in der eigentlichsten und eminentesten Bedeutung. Denn sie betrachten *alle* Völker des Erdbodens als eben so viele Zweige *einer einzigen Familie* und das Universum als einen Staat, worin sie mit unzähligen andern vernünftigen Wesen Bürger sind, um unter allgemeinen Naturgesetzen die Vollkommenheit des Ganzen zu befördern, indem jedes nach seiner besondern Art und Weise für seinen eigenen Wohlstand geschäftig ist" (SW XXX/ 406, my emphases). Kant will expand upon Wieland's notion of one universal family of people through his "idea of a world republic" ("Idee einer Weltrepublik") in his essay *Toward perpetual peace* from 1795 (1996: 328/ KW 8:357). Finally, in his dialogue on *Der Patriotismus und sein Gegentheil* (1807), the German philosopher Fichte will attempt to conciliate patriotism with cosmopolitanism during a time in history when the term patriotism was experiencing a gradual politicization which charged it with initially subtle, and subsequently more pervasive nationalistic connotations; on the development of Fichte's thought, see also Meinecke's comprehensive chapter on "Fichte und die Idee des Nationalstaates in den Jahren 1806-1813" (1962: 84-112).

²⁷⁰ Schiller's twelve letters appeared for the first time in Wieland's journal *Der Teutsche Merkur*, in the last quarter issue of December 1788.

In this "republic of people" ("Menschenrepublik"), which distinguishes itself for its freedom of thought and conscience, the cosmopolitan zeal acts as *movens* of Posa's heroism. He heralds a republican "Patriotismus" that Schiller advocated in the already mentioned introduction to his *Thalia* as "*allgemeines Beste*" (NA XXII/ 93, my emphasis) intended to serve the advancement of humanity and the common good.²⁷¹ In the course of the 19th century, when the term "patriotism" began, under the shove of nationalistic fervor, to alter its meaning much ink was spilt on Schiller's alleged patriotic stance, and many voices were raised to herald him as pioneer of national freedom. Upon renewing their attention towards Schiller's notoriety as poet and prophet of the nation, 20th-century scholars strove to remove the nationalistic hallow with which his laurel head had been crowned, and rectify his image.²⁷²

In the following analysis of the tragedy, I seek to reassess Schiller's first glorified and later execrated patriotism in the light of contemporary investigations on nationalism and cosmopolitanism. I shall provide evidence of their close juxtaposition in the play by comparing the first edition from 1787, and the last edition from 1805 based on the originally abridged version from 1801 – that is following Schiller's initial rejection of the play in 1797.²⁷³ As I shall demonstrate, this year sanctioned, in fact, under the heave of French expansionism a significant shift in the poet's political perspective and a decisive caesura in

²⁷¹ This was the acceptance of patriotism at Schiller's time. In a contemporary article by C.L. von Beyer, for instance, we can read: "Was den Patriotismus zur Tugend erhebt, das ist die Theilnehmung an dem Wohl der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, in der wir leben. Die Quelle dieses Patriotismus ist folglich *Menschenliebe* und der Gegenstand desselben *Menschenwohl*" (1795: 238-9, my emphases).

²⁷² According to Berghahn, the nationalistic exhalation and euphoria that had surrounded the poet of Weimar classicism came to acquire a legendary status which he named and described in his study as "Klassik Legende" (1971: 50-71).

²⁷³ On the editorial history of the play and its progressive amendments, see fn. 268.

his historical thinking. In this endeavor, I will depart from a closer philological interpretation of the terms "father" and "fatherland" in *Don Carlos* with particular attention to the thematically and structurally central scene 10 of act III, in which the crux and climax of the dramatic development is concentrated. With this goal in mind, I shall resort as well to Schiller's aesthetic and political writings to expand upon key concepts that are emphatically addressed in his play, and thus constitute a constant of his *forma mentis*.

To begin with, I suggest a rereading of Schiller's drama through the lense of 18th-century "cosmopolitan patriotism" (Herrmann 1996: 16) upon providing a preliminary explanation of the significance and thus choice of the term. In the conflation of two mutually exclusive concepts, the term coined by Hermann constitutes a rhetorical trope also known as oxymoron. The German linguist and literary theorist Harald Weinrich describes oxymora as "audacious metaphors" ("kühne Metaphern") (1976: 305) due to the distinctive trait they bear of eliciting a sense of perplexity and uneasiness which leads to the amendment of established meanings.²⁷⁴ In its valence of bold metaphor, the notion of "cosmopolitan patriotism"

²⁷⁴ "Sie lenken die Gedanken, zeigen neue Wege, verfremden das Bekannte": with these words Weinrich explains the inherent logic of metaphors, and describes "near metaphors" ("Nahmetapher") – thus called for the image they evoke diverges only slightly from what we experience in reality – as being particularly audacious in their alienating effect. Positing as example Celan's *Death Fuge*, Weinrich demonstrates how the metaphor of "black milk" ("schwarze Milch") differs in a minimal degree (that is in its color) from empirical evidence: "Diese Metapher ist so kühn, nicht weil sie so weit von den alltäglichen Beobachtungen abweicht, sondern weil sie so gering abweicht. Sie trägt uns nicht in einen ganz anderen Bereich, sondern nur einen kleinen Schritt weiter zu einer anderen Farbe. Diese Nähe ist es, die uns keine Ruhe lässt und uns die Frage nach Richtig oder Falsch eingibt. [...] Es irritiert, daß sie dann nicht vereinbar sind" (1976: 305). On the contrary, the metaphor "sad milk" ("traurige Milch") triggers an image which displays a more conspicuous contradiction for it attributes an (unusually) emotional quality to milk. In contrast to this – as he names it – "commonplace metaphor" ("alltägliche Metapher"), which combine a signifier and a signified from a tangible and an intangible sphere of experience, bold metaphors instead rely on a minimal lexical discrepancy or "image range" ("Bildspanne") between vehicle (image donor or signifier) and tenor (image recipient or signified). As Weinrich puts it: "Eine kleine Bildspanne hingegen erzwingt unsere Aufmerksamkeit für diese Widersprüchlichkeit und verleiht der Metapher den Charakter der Kühnheit" (306). Oxymora or "near metaphors" exert an audacious impact to the degree that they result both astonishing and alienating ("befremdend und verfremdend") (306). In the same manner, the locution "cosmopolitan patriotism" juxtaposes two terms which stem from cognate semantic fields, and thus provoke through their lexical proximity a disruptive linguistic effect urging us to

prompts us, consequently, to reassess the semantics of its lexical constituents, and reread the tragedy by historically contextualizing their ideological valence – as both, Schiller's cosmopolitan striving and his national solicitude, equally contend their place and prominence in the play.

After confronting the king of Spain with a plea and panegyric on freedom as the individual's sacred right ("sein geheiligt Recht" [NA VII.1/ III.10, l. 3190]), and opposing the magnitude and magnificence of God's free creation ("Sehen Sie sich um/ In seiner herrlichen Natur! Auf Freyheit/ Ist sie gegründet – und wie reich ist sie/ durch Freyheit! [...] [NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3217-20]) with the petty and pitiful realm of Philipp's empire ("[...] Ihre Schöpfung,/ Wie eng und arm! [...] [NA 7.1/ III.10, ll. 3223-4]), Posa exhorts the king to restore human dignity in order for his reign to reinforce its power and reestablish its peace:

POSA Wenn nur der Mensch, sich selbst zurückgegeben,
zu seines Werths Gefühl erwacht – der Freiheit
erhabne, stolze Tugenden gedeihen –
wenn in dem Herzen wieder sich empört
die Römerwallung, Nationalstolz,
das Vaterland in jedem Bürger prangt,
dem Vaterlande jeder Bürger stirbt –
dann, Sire, wenn Sie zum glücklichsten der Welt
Ihr eignes Königreich gemacht – dann reift
Ihr großer Plan – dann müssen Sie – dann ist
es Ihre Pflicht, die Welt zu unterwerfen.
(NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3909-12, my emphases)

In this passage, excerpted from the first 1787 book edition, the italics indicate the lines that were expunged in the subsequently amended and considerably abridged edition from 1801 – later 1805. Although Schiller's decision to shorten the original text may have been dictated

revisit and review their meanings from an alternative – in this case diachronic – perspective that elucidates their semantic value within their specific historical timeframe.

by practical dramaturgical adaptations of the play (NA XLII/ 262), it remains nonetheless indicative that he opted to obliterate certain verses rather than others.²⁷⁵

As the above-cited passage entails multiple references to Schiller's aesthetic-political and anthropological precepts, it requires a closer and more systematic scrutiny. I shall, therefore, introduce my analysis by directing the focus first on the lines that the author selected to omit, clarifying the concept of fatherland through a historical contextualization of the notion of patriotism. I will hence proceed to specify the relationship that ties the citizens to their fatherland, and the responsibility charged upon their sovereign in the enlightened pursuit of common happiness and humanity. This last point shall, finally, direct my investigation into the cosmopolitan question and controversy that emerges in conjunction with Schiller's patriotic expectations and in relation to the play's alleged contradictions.

The omitted verses confront us instantly with the challenge of providing an unequivocal interpretation of the term "fatherland" at a time when the republican associations evoked by the notion of nation – as it had been propagated by the French revolutionaries with their imagery and ideology desumed from the Roman Republic era – was yet reminiscent of negative connotations that tied the past to its present. As a matter of fact, while it was

²⁷⁵ See Schiller's own comment in his letter to the publisher Göschen from May 10, 1797: "Doch behalte ich mir vor, wenn ich es einmal zum einem Theaterstück machen sollte, wodurch es um mehr als die Hälfte verkürzt werden müßte [...]" (NA XXIX/ 76, 77.). In his book review of *Don Carlos*, published in the 1787 September issue of *Der teutsche Merkur*, Wieland had already expressed his criticism against the tragedy's length, comparing Schiller's work instead to a dramatic novel ("einen dramatischen Roman") inappropriate to be performed: "denn daß ein Drama von beynahe 32 Bogen vom Verfasser selbst mehr zum Lesen oder Vorlesen als für wirkliche Vorstellung auf der Bühne bestimmt sey, kann wohl keine Frage seyn" (NA VII.2/ 517). Schiller however, who had reluctantly agreed to restage the play in Lauchstädt upon Goethe's request in 1802, was already working at an abridged edition in 1799 as we learn from a letter with which his publisher Göschen urged the author to forward him a copy of his reviewed manuscript: "Sie werden mich sehr verbinden wenn Sie den Don Carlos bald revidiren wollten. Da sie ihn für Cotta bearbeiten; so möcht ich doch gerne eine hübsche Ausgabe von der ersten Bearbeitung veranstalten" (NA XXXVIII/ 184). In particular scene 10 of act III, which in the original 1787 edition included 543 verses was reduced by one third with the omission of 380 verses in the revised 1801 edition (NA VII.2/ 327).

unlikely for contemporary German city-states – threatened and troubled by French imperialism – to well receive their national ideals, the very Latin roots of the term "patria" could not but remind them of their former Roman invaders whom Arminius, commemorated in the annales of German history as the national hero of the legendary Hermann's battle, had in the 9th century eventually contended and subjugated.²⁷⁶ Not only were Germans averse to

²⁷⁶ Cf. also Fichte's seventh *Address to the German Nation* from 1808 – that is, following the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in 1806 – in which the author incites the German people to take example from the chieftain Arminius and preserve their Germanic integrity and identity: "Freiheit war ihnen, dass sie eben Deutsche blieben [...]: Sklaverei hießen ihnen alle jene Segnungen, die ihnen die Römer antrugen, weil sie dabei etwas Anderes, denn Deutsche, weil sie halbe Römer werden müssten. Es verstehe sich von selbst, setzten sie voraus, dass jeder, eher er dies werde, lieber sterbe, und dass ein wahrhafter Deutscher nur könne leben wollen, um eben Deutscher zu seyn und zu bleiben, und die Seinigen zu eben solchen zu bilden", *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 389; henceforth cited as "SW" followed by the volume and page number. What may read as a nationalistic discourse, was instead yet perceived as patriotic outcry for national perpetuation – rather than national predominance – against foreign oppression. As Prignitz observes, when Fichte held his addresses in Berlin between 1807 and 1808, he was particularly keen to overcome the universalistic pursuit of a transnational European coalition, defending instead the survival and independence of his country (1981: 75). Generally, the demarcation line drawn between patriotism and cosmopolitanism vs. nationalism was anything but uncommon. Fichte himself distinguishes in his earlier *Ideas on the Inner Organization of the University of Erlangen* (1805/06) the "dull" or provincial patriotism from "der sich selbst klare Patriotismus, welcher mit Weltbürgersinn, und deutschem NationalSinne sich sehr wohl vereinigen läßt" (1993: 366, my emphases). Often cosmopolitanism presupposed patriotism and viceversa. In his article von 1795, Beyer argues for instance that patriotism is a derivative of cosmopolitanism: "Der Patriotismus hat in der That nur in so fern einen wirklichen Werth, kann nur in so fern als Tugend angesehen werden, in so fern er eine Folge, Wirkung und besondere Aeüßerung des Kosmopolitismus ist. Denn unmöglich kann ja wohl derjenige, in dem würdigen Sinn dieses Worts Patriot genannt werden, der bloß darum sein Vaterland liebt, weil er darin gebohren ward, oder, weil er sich an das Klima, an die Lebensart in demselben gewöhnt hat" (228). Fichte himself had declared in his *Patriotic Dialogues* (1807): "daß in der Wirklichkeit der Kosmopolitismus nothwendig Patriotismus werden müsse. [...] Und so wird dann jeglicher Kosmopolit ganz nothwendig, vermittelst seiner Beschränkung durch die Nation, Patriot; und jeder, der in seiner Nation der kräftigste und regsamste Patriot wäre, ist eben darum der regsamste Weltbürger, indem der letzte Zweck aller Nationalbildung doch immer der ist, daß die Bildung sich verbreite über das Geschlecht" (1846: 229). It was precisely the primacy ascribed to humanity and its education ("Bildung") on which the essential claim and concern of enlightened cosmopolitanism ultimately resided. In a letter to A. W. Schlegel from Nov. 30, 1797, the German poet Novalis was equating germanhood with cosmopolitanism: "Deutschheit ist Kosmopolitismus mit der kräftigsten Individualität gemischt" (1880: 41). Kant similarly described, in his *Reflektionen zur Anthropologie* (1798), his country as "das Land der Weltbürger": "[Der Deutsche] Lernt alle Sprachen und übersetzt aus allen. Bey ihm ist jeder Fremde wie zu Hause" (KW 15:590, 1352.). Contrary to what he held to be a natural and necessary sentiment that drove national competition forward, he explicitly defied "nationalistic insanity": "Weil es eine absicht der Vorsehung ist, das Völker nicht zusammenfließen, sondern [...] unter einander in conflicte seyn, so ist der Nationalstoltz und Nationalhaß zu trennung der Nationen nothwendig. [...] Die vernunft giebt uns andererseits das Gesetz, das, weil instincte blind seyn, sie die Thierheit an uns zwar dirigiren, aber durch Maximen der Vernunft müssen [...] ersetzt werden. Um deswillen ist dieser *nationalwahn* auszurotten, an dessen stelle *patriotism und cosmopolitism* treten muß" (KW 15:590-1, 1353., my emphases). Although cosmopolitan and patriotic ideals were, in teory, deemed compatible, in pratice they did not always

the etymological republican idea of patriotism (Viroli 1995: 111-3), they were equally alien to the conception of *terra patria* (land of the fathers), yet struggling – as they found themselves – for a clear definition and demarcation of their very German *patria*.²⁷⁷

Wieland – who in his report to the Weimar Duke in 1785 had blamed Schiller for missing in his play the realism from which a historical drama could not exempt, while its first act abounded already of excessive and ecstatic imagination ("zu feurige und zum

find common ground. As Höyng highlights in his extensive study, in 18th-century German drama "friedlich-kosmopolitische und aggressive Elemente koexistierten" (2003: 147-8). In his introduction to *Machtphantasie Deutschland*, Herrmann equally specifies that it was impossible to draw a clear line of demarcation between a peaceful form of patriotism during the 18th century, and an overtly nationalistic discourse that began to emerge around 1800: "Bereits in den vierziger Jahren, mitten in der freiheitssüchtigen, vernunftorientierten, 'hellen' Aufklärung, wurden auch 'dunkle', irrationale und machtorientierte Selbstbehauptungswünsche und militante Aggressionsphantasien zu Papier gebracht" (1996: 12).

²⁷⁷ On the etymological implications of "terra patria" in relation to its tradition in classical thought, see Viroli (1995: 18-40). Whereas in Schiller's later drama *Wilhelm Tell* (1804), the baron of Attinghausen encourages his compatriots to resist the Habsburgs' territorial claims over the Swiss cantons, and exhorts them to join the cause of their fatherland ("An's Vaterland, an's teure, schließ dich an,/ Das halte fest mit deinem ganzen Herzen" [NA X/II.1, ll. 922-3]), such instigation could not find yet a compelling echo among Schiller's German compatriots. This fact accounts, among others, for the reason why his dramas revolve around foreign, rather than local history. In 1793, Wieland had openly questioned in his essay *On German Patriotism* – quoting Horace's *Carmina* (III/ 2): "Dulce et decorum est pro Patria mori!" – the possibility to literally "transplant" the attributes that the ancients had associated with their *res publica* onto German ground: "daß diese altgriechischen Tugenden oder Gefühle so leicht auf Deutschen Grund und Boden verpflanzt werden könnten, oder, falls man es ja versuchen wollte, sonderliche Früchte tragen würden" (SW XXXI/ 247). In contrast to the Germans' acceptance of patriotism, the Italians were, for obvious reasons, less resentful of its Roman and republican etymology. This will be particularly true for their national activist Giuseppe Mazzini who, despite his admiration towards thinkers as Herder, Fichte and A. W. Schlegel, disagreed with their reluctance to charge their patriotism with republican values (Viroli 1995: 144-5). Although Mazzini was ultimately right in his judgement, both Fichte and A. W. Schlegel did not reject *tout court* the universalistic ideals of the Enlightenment and attempted to conciliate their patriotism with a European cosmopolitanism. Whereas I shall dwell in more detail on Fichte in the later analysis of Schiller's play, I would like to exemplify this point through a brief quote from the *Lectures on Fine Art and Literature* that A. W. Schlegel held from 1801 to 1804 at the Berlin university, although published only posthum in 1884: "Es ist auf nichts geringeres angelegt, als die Vorzüge der verschiedensten Nationalitäten zu vereinigen, sich in alle hinein zu denken und hinein zu fühlen, und so einen *kosmopolitischen Mittelpunkt* für den menschlichen Geist zu stiften. *Universalität, Kosmopolitismus* ist die wahre *Deutsche Eigenthümlichkeit*. Was uns so lange im äußern Glanze gegen die einseitige, beschränkte, aber eben darum entschiedene Wirksamkeit andere Nationen hat zurückstehen lassen: der *Mangel einer Richtung*, welcher, in ein Positives verwandelt, zur *Allseitigkeit der Richtungen* wird: muß in der Folge die *Überlegenheit* auf unsere Seite bringen" (1884c: 33). What this passage concisely illustrates is the notion of "Kulturation" or cultural nation from which Germany derived not only its national identity, but also its sense of cultural uniqueness over the rest of Europe, whose "cosmopolitan epicenter" it occupied in the claim of a universal German singularity. I shall elucidate this central idea of cosmopolitan or cultural patriotism on the following pages by resorting to Schiller's own writings.

Ausschweiffen geneigte Einbildung" [NA VII.1/ 504]) – wrote in his 1793 essay *On German Patriotism: observations, questions and doubts*:

Ich habe seit einigen Jahren so viel Schönes von Deutschem Patriotismus und Deutschen Patrioten rühmen gehört, und die Anzahl der wackern Leute, die sich für diese *Modetugend* erklären und nützlichen Gebrauch von ihr machen, nimmt von Tag zu Tage so sehr überhand, daß ich – wäre es auch nur um nicht zuletzt allein zu bleiben – wohl wünschen möchte, auch ein Deutscher Patriot zu werden. An gutem Willen mangelt es mir ganz und gar nicht: nur habe ich es bisher noch nicht so weit bringen können, mir von dem, *was man einen Deutschen Patrioten nennt, und den Pflichten desselben, und wie diese Pflichten mit einigem Erfolg in Ausübung zu bringen und mit denjenigen zu vereinigen seyn möchten, die ich* (vielleicht aus einem Vorurtheil der Erziehung) *an den übrigen Völkern – schuldig zu seyn vermeine – einen deutlichen und rechtgläubigen Begriff zu machen.*" (1857: 246-7, my emphases)

The question, already addressed in its indicative title, that Wieland poses in his essay – composed precisely during the years that elapsed between the two editions of *Don Carlos* – distinctly articulates the urgency to provide an unequivocal and orthodox conception ("einen deutlichen und rechtgläubigen Begriff") of German patriotism ("Deutscher Patriotismus") which he abates to the ephemeral status of a "virtuous trend" ("Modetugend") of his times. More so – as Wieland sets forth in his argument – in the endeavor to conciliate German patriotism with the patriotic claims upheld by other countries, conforming this way to the expectations of the competing cosmopolitan perspective and propensity of his contemporaries.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ It is also true, as Sahmland observes, that despite the initial ideological consonance shared by patriotic and cosmopolitan advocates alike, the patriots began as early as 1786 – as Sahmland infers from an article published in Wieland's *Teutscher Merkur*, by an author, however, other than the journal's editor – to strive for the autonomy and authority of their political rationale (1990: 252). Correlated to the problem of a more precise conceptualization of "patriotism" was also the fact that the same attribute of "German" was a relatively recent coinage, as Wieland still remarks in his essay, whose significance was yet to be established: "In meiner Kindheit wurde mir zwar viel von allerlei Pflichten vorgesagt; aber von der Pflicht, ein Deutscher Patriot zu seyn, war damals so wenig die Rede, daß ich mich nicht entsinnen kann, das Wort *Deutsch* (*Deutschheit war noch ein völlig unbekanntes Wort*) jemals ehrenhalber nennen gehört zu haben" (SW XXXI/247, my emphases). Even in the early years of the 19th-century, when German patriotism began to be charged with stronger individualistic and national feelings (Viroli 1995: 112), one of the most fervid nationalist German writers, Ernst Moritz Arndt, still wondered in a poem from 1813 what belonged to and how far did the

In the subsequent politization of German patriotism, the chief question remained whether the idea of "fatherland" was associated with a republican or a monarchic notion of the state.²⁷⁹ Despite the charge upheld by Wieland against Schiller's tendency to

borderlines of his German fatherland actually reach: "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?/ So nenne mir das große Land!/ So weit die deutsche Zunge klingt,/ Und Gott im Himmel Lieder singt,/ Das soll es sein!/ Das wackrer Deutscher, nenne dein!" (1865: 234, my emphasis). The importance attributed by Arndt to the German language echoes Herder's theory on the paramount role exerted by every national language in promoting and preserving a nation's peculiar identity: "Nationalsprache in jeder Nation [...] die Sprache wird ein Proteus auf der runden Oberfläche der Erde" (SW V/ 127). This tenet postulated by Herder in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772), followed by the later declaration he made in the 57th epistle of his fifth collection of *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797), according to which German is the language of reason, strength and truth ("eine Sprache der Vernunft, der Kraft und Wahrheit"), encouraged German intellectuals to adhere to his linguistic theory which became decisive in defining their patriotic thought in the 19th-century; *Herder Werke*, vol. 6, p. 237, all other references to this edition of Herder's complete works, will be cited as "HW" with the volume and page number within parentheses. Similarly Fichte had praised German in the fifth of his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) as the protolanguage: "Zum Behuf einer Schilderung der Eigenthümlichkeit der Deutschen ist der Grundunterschied zwischen diesen und den andern Völkern germanischer Abkunft angegeben worden: dass die erstern in dem ununterbrochenen Fortflusse einer aus wirklichem Leben sich fortentwickelnden *Ursprache* geblieben, die letztern aber eine ihnen fremde Sprache angenommen, die unter ihrem Einflusse ertödtet worden" (SW VII/ 328).

²⁷⁹ This was true for both German and Italian intellectuals. Vico had as early as in the first edition of his *New Science* expressed his mistrust towards the republican patriotism heralded by the ancient Romans who, de facto, promoted the power of the *patricians* (as Vico, with his philological zeal, inferred from its etymology) rather than the people; only later – as he specifies – did it acquire the republican value that aimed at upholding the citizens' interests: "Così sono state finora guardate le azioni degli antichi eroi dagli uomini di menti spiegate, che vennero appresso dopo i filosofi; quelle, che in lor ragione non si facevano dagli eroi degli antichi tempi che per troppo affetto particolare che avevano alle proprie sovranità, conservate loro sopra le loro famiglie dalla loro *patria*; che perciò fu così appellata, sottinteso *Res*, cioè *interesse dei Padri*, come poi negli Stati popolari fu detta *Respublica*, quasi *RESPUBLICA*, *interesse di tutto il popolo*"; cf. "Principi della virtù eroica", *Principi di una Scienza Nuova*, bk. II, ch. 22 (1725: 105). On a same note, Herder distinguished in his essay *Haben wir noch jetzt das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten?* (1765) between the "untamed audacity" which had characterized the ancients' sense of freedom with the more moderate "freedom of conscience" of his contemporaries: "[...] haben wir ein Vaterland, dessen süßer Zuname Freiheit ist? Ja! nur wir denken bei dem Worte Freiheit anders, als die Alten. Bei ihnen war die Freiheit eine *ungezähmte Frechheit*, ein *Erkühnen*, *selbst das Rad des Staats lenken zu wollen*, ein *Eigensinn*, nur seine Namen über sich zu leiden. Zu unsern Zeiten sind alle Staaten in ein Gleichgewicht gesunken; was sich nicht selbst Schutz ist, braucht *Schutzherren*, braucht *Väter*: der Charakter unseres Volks ist nicht mehr die dreuste Wildheit der Alten; sondern eine *feinere und mäßigere Freiheit*, die *Freiheit des Gewissens*, ein ehrlicher Mann und ein Christ seyn zu dürfen, die Freiheit, unter dem Schatten des Thrones seine Hütte und Weinstock in Ruhe genießen zu können, und die Frucht seines Schweißes zu besitzen; die Freiheit, der Schöpfer seines Glückes und seiner Bequemlichkeit, der Freund seiner Vertrauten, und der Vater und Bestimmer seiner Kinder seyn zu können, dies ist die Freiheit, die *gemäßigte Freiheit*, die sich heut zu Tage jeder Patriot wünschet, sie ist das Kleinod, das Riga aus den Händen seiner gerechtesten Monarchen so vorzüglich, und mit aller Dankbarkeit genießt" (SW I/ 23-4, my emphases). It is clear that, in this yet early writing, Herder still sides with the monarchy, deprecating the ancients' liberal notion of freedom, whereas Vico defended against the Roman patricians the republican state form. Both comments and critiques corroborate the ambiguities intrinsic to and involved with any attempt to provide a univocal and universal definition of "patriotism" between the 18th- and 19th-century.

fictionalization, it results evident that the play's original verses ("wenn in dem Herzen wieder sich empört/ die Römerwallung, Nationalstolz" [NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3909-10]) reflect, on the contrary, the type of patriotism that was *en vogue* at his time. Posa appeals to a "national pride" ("Nationalstolz") which was evocative of a history that had featured the Roman rage and ardor ("die Römerwallung") yet alive in the memory of Schiller's compatriots.²⁸⁰ The freedom that the dramatic character upholds in this passage is one from imperialism and invasion, the liberation of the Netherlands from the domination and despotism of the Spanish empire.²⁸¹

In the following two lines: "das Vaterland in jedem Bürger prangt,/ dem Vaterlande jeder Bürger stirbt" (NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3911-2), the word "fatherland" is mentioned in concomitance and correlation with the notion of "citizen", both compenetrated each other and

²⁸⁰ It must be pointed out, however, that Wieland's criticism referred exclusively to the 1st act of the play which Schiller had read out before the Weimar Duke Karl August during a visit at the Darmstädter Hof on December 26, 1784. The duke had requested Wieland to provide him with a written assessment of the play, and Wieland commented on the yet incipient and fragmentary version of *Don Carlos*, as it had been published by the *Thalia*, in his letter to the duke from May 8, 1785. As a matter of fact, the last issued *Thalia* fragment did not include yet the 10th scene, and ended with scene 9 of act III. Wieland's second review of *Don Carlos* complete first printed edition from 1787 will be decisively more favorable and praise the drama "als eine ausserordentliche Erscheinung an unserm litterarischen Himmel [...], welche die Aufmerksamkeit aller Liebhaber der Dichtkunst und Schaubühne verdient" (NA VII.1/ 518).

²⁸¹ As proclaimed by king Philipp's repressive legate, the duke of Alba: "- Dieß Schwert/ Schrieb fremden Völkern spanische Gesetze,/ Es blitzte dem Gekreuzigten voran,/ Und zeichnete dem Samenkorn des Glaubens/ Auf diesem Welttheil blut'ge Furchen vor:/ Gott richtete im Himmel, ich auf Erden –" (NA VII.1/ II.5, ll. 1425-30). See also Müller-Seidel who remarks that *Don Carlos* is the first play in which Schiller brings on stage the theme of imperialistic expansionism and subjugation to foreign rulers, a topic which he will readdress more systematically in his subsequent *History of the Revolt of the United Netherlands Against Spanish Rule* (1788) (2009: 103-4). More importantly, however, in the context of this analysis and the above-captioned verses, is that in his *History* Schiller explicitly associates the 16th-century Spanish empire's expansion in the Netherlands with the medieval Roman invasion of the German tribes, thus justifying the choice of his historical subject: "Derselbe Erobererstolz, derselbe Schwung der Nation in dem Spanier des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts und in dem Römer des ersten, dieselbe Tapferkeit und Mannszucht in beider Heeren, dasselbe Schrecken vor ihrem Schlachtenzug" (NA XVII.2/ 22).

coexist in unison and unity.²⁸² The fatherland, as the verses translate, shines forth in the citizen's heart and his willingness to perish for his country. Schiller emphasizes the relevance of the citizens' identification and assimilation with their fatherland over their alienation. These lines, which the author decided to later expunge, reproduce almost *verbatim* the Horatian patriotic parlance according to which it is sweet and befitting to die for one's country: it is the same patriotic conception that Wieland will address as arguable in his essay *On Patriotism* (1793).

Following Schiller's quote, "Bürger" and "Vaterland" meet ideally in a form of government that, in the second of his *Letters on Don Carlos* (1788) he would name the "human republic" ("Menschenrepublik") (NA XXII/ 141, 2).²⁸³ Only two years later, in *The*

²⁸² Cf. also Böckmann's and Kluge's comment to this passage in the context of Rousseau's social contract theory (NA VII.2/ 335).

²⁸³ As he sets forth in the same letter: "Alle Grundsätze und Lieblingsgefühle des Marquis drehen sich um republikanische Tugend. Selbst seine Aufopferung für seinen Freund beweist dieses, denn *Aufopferungsfähigkeit ist der Inbegriff aller republikanischen Tugenden*" (NA XXII/ 141, 2, my emphasis). The indirect allusion – as the reference to the act of self-sacrifice, epitome of all republican virtues, suggests – to Cato's suicide in defense of republican freedom upon losing his war against Caesar, further corroborates the republican tradition in which Schiller's patriotism is rooted. This becomes evident already in his former *Fiesko* drama, which he explicitly subtitled in its first printed edition from April 1783 *Ein republikanisches Trauerspiel*. Schiller began writing *Die Verschwörung des Fiesko zu Genua* only a few months after *The Robbers* had been staged, and his consequent 14-days arrest by the Duke of Württemberg who also prohibited him to write until he eventually fled from his hometown. In light of the politically repressive sequence of events which witnessed the arduous commencement of his work, the drama's subtitle and its references to the ideals upheld appear biographically justified. Although in the subsequent and second authorized edition written in July 1783 for a performance at the Mannheim theater in 1784, Schiller will eventually abbreviate the title to *Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Akten* and considerably change the play's ending, the republican theme is still upheld by the triumphing Genoese Republic ("FIESKO: Seid frei, Genueser! *er zerbricht das Zepter, und wirft die Stücke unter das Volk* Und die monarchische Gewalt vergehe mit ihren Zeichen!" [NA IV/ 229]); for the editorial history of the play, see Roßbach (2005: 53-4); see also Phelps (1974) who in his article contests Schiller's alleged republicanism in the play. Kant will expand more systematically upon the republican values of "Freiheit" (freedom), "Gleichheit" (equality) and "Selbstständigkeit" (independence) in his writing *Über den Gemeinspruch* (1793) in which he will name them the a-priori principles "nach denen allein eine Staatserichtung reinen Vernunftprinzipien des äußeren Menschenrechts überhaupt gemäß möglich ist" (KW 8:290, 2); cf. English transl. *On the Common Saying* (1996: 291). In his later essay *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795, he will define "the republican constitution [as] the only one that is completely compatible with the right of human beings": "Nun ist die republikanische Verfassung die einzige, welche dem Recht der Menschen vollkommen angemessen [...] ist" (1968: 366); cf. English transl. *Toward perpetual peace* (1996: 335). As a

Legislation of Lykurgus and Solon (1790), Schiller will exemplify this ideal of republican constitution through Solon's Athenian political system:

Wenn man aber auf der anderen Seite bedenkt, wie gut auch der gemeinste Athenienser mit dem gemeinen Wesen bekannt war, wie mächtig der *Nationalgeist* in ihm wirkte, wie sehr der Gesetzgeber dafür gesorgt hatte, daß *dem Bürger das Vaterland über alles ging*, so wird man einen besseren Begriff von dem politischen Verstand des atheniensischen Pöbels bekommen und sich wenigstens hüten, von dem gemeinen Volk bey uns voreilig auf jenes zu schließen (NA XVII.2/ 440).²⁸⁴

In this kind of republican or civic patriotism, the notion of *res publica* coincided with that of *civitas*. The citizens' identification with the cause and commonwealth of their country ("dem Bürger das Vaterland über alles ging") was seen as derivative of a "national spirit"

("Nationalgeist") that the rightful, republican legislator ("Gesetzgeber") had the ability to stir

matter of fact, the debate revolving around the republican theory, as it had been handed down by the classics, was anything but uncommon in the 18th century French (Montesquieu and Rousseau) and German (Herder) thinkers. Schiller's stance in this respect will, however, slightly though substantially diverge from his predecessors and contemporaries. If the classical republican tradition, in fact, heralded the eminent and exclusive well-being of the *res publica* and its *civitas*, Schiller's concern will remain more inclusive and, in accordance with his aesthetic-anthropological tenets, strive for the progress and profit of humanity.

²⁸⁴ In contrast to Lykurgus's Sparta, Solon's Athens represented for Schiller the ideal republican government: the spirit of a sound and trustworthy statecraft ("der Geist der gesunden und ächten Staatskunst" [NA XVII.1/ 440]). Schiller, who borrowed the Sparta-Athens contrast from the *Vitae parallelae* of his admired master Plutarch (Alt 2000: I/ 619), found this comparison between the two republican cities of Greek antiquity extensively articulated again in Rousseau's *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750); there is also evidence that he may have learnt of Rousseau's cultural critical discourse from the German historian Johann Christoph Gatterer in his work *Weltgeschichte in ihrem ganzen Umfange* (1785), and Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-85) (Nilges 2011: 214); for a more systematic and extensive comparison between Rousseau's and Schiller's thought, in particular with regard to the anthropological question of cultural critique and human alienation, see Berief's study (1991); on the Sparta-Athens antithesis in German literature between 18th- and 19th-century, see Bauer (1998). It must be underscored, however, as Schmidt remarks in his study (2005: 110-22), that contrary to his contemporaries (Rousseau included, next to Herder and Helvétius) who praised the restrictive and reductively patriotic education imparted upon their citizens by Sparta, Schiller pleaded instead for a legislation that would guarantee individual freedom of thought and action: "Schön und trefflich war es von Solon, daß er Achtung hatte für die menschliche Natur, und nie den Menschen dem Staat, nie den Zweck dem Mittel aufopferte, sondern den Staat dem Menschen dienen ließ" (NA XVII.1/ 440). The highest merit that Schiller attributed to Solon's legislation consisted in having achieved the "happy medium" between democratic anarchy and despotic absolutism: "Zwischen beyden eine glückliche Mitte zu treffen, ist das schwerste Problem, das die kommenden Jahrhunderten erst auflösen sollen" (NA XVII.1/ 440). As Schiller argued in conclusion to his quote, the freedom of objection and protest enjoyed by the Athenian plebs could not be directly applied to the German "common people" ("dem gemeinen Volk bey uns") for the Athenians' freedom was the expression of a free and full participation of the citizens' to their political life under the legislator's consent and control.

and strengthen. It is precisely this love for the country that was deemed capable of inciting the members of its community to defy the threats of tyranny and the humiliation of foreign oppression (Viroli 1995: 32).²⁸⁵

In his eighth *Letter on Don Carlos* (1788), Schiller justifies his choice for the Netherlands' liberation from the Spanish crown as proof of the republican revival that recent history had witnessed:

Alles fand ich mir, wie durch einen dienstbaren Geist, dabei in die Hände gearbeitet; Freiheitssinn mit Despotismus im Kampfe, die Fesseln der Dummheit zerbrochen, tausendjährige Vorurteile erschüttert, eine Nation, die ihre Menschenrechte wieder fodert, *republikanische Tugenden* in Ausübung gebracht, hellere Begriffe im Umlauf, *die Köpfe in Gärung, die Gemüter von einem begeisterten Interesse gehoben* – (NA IV/ 44-5, my emphases).²⁸⁶

These are the "republican virtues" which had animated Posa's ideological ardor and audaciousness, and driven him to his subsequent act of hybris : "eine *wagende Kühnheit*, die ein heroischer Zweck allein einzuflößen imstand ist" (NA IV/ 33, emphasis in the original) –

²⁸⁵ In his extensive and masterful interpretation of the history and hermeneutics of patriotism from its earliest ancient origin to its ideological resemanticization throughout Europe until the 20th century, Viroli ties the republican patriotism to the classical notions of *pietas* and *caritas* – "respect" and "compassion" as he translates both terms (1995: 19). These ethical values are at the basis of Schiller's very notion of humanity ("reinerer sanfterer Humanität") as the supreme manifestation of freedom in a state's highest prime: "die höchstmögliche Freiheit der Individuen bei des Staats höchster Blüte, kurz, über den vollendetsten Zustand der Menschheit" (NA XXII/ 162, 8). Schiller notion of humanity, as desumed from his 8th *Letter on Don Carlos*, was exemplified in turn through the employment of similar attributes ("weichmüthig und sanft") by Solon's government: "Der Athenienser hingegen [sc. der Spartaner] war *weichmüthig* und *sanft* im Umgang, höflich aufgeweckt im Gespräch, leutselig gegen den Geringen, gastfrey und gefällig gegen den Fremden" (NA XVII.1/ 441, my emphases).

²⁸⁶ In his report to the Duke of Weimar from May 1787, Wieland had actually blamed Schiller for selecting a historical event so close to the present, thus compromising the treatment of certain themes (that would have been more appropriately confined to a remote and perhaps even mythical past), contravening the laws of probability and propriety or credibility and convenience: "wenn die Geschichte, woraus er den Stoff seines Stückes genommen, etliche tausend Jahre älter wäre: aber, so nahe wie sie uns liegt, machen Zeit und Ort die Bearbeitung einer incestuosen Liebe um so schwerer, weil der Dichter, durch viel bestimmtere Formen, durch weit strengere *Gesetze des Wahrscheinlichen, Schiklichen und Anständigen* gebunden, sich immer zwischen der Gefahr zu viel oder zu wenig zu thun, wie zwischen Scylla und Charybdis fortreiben muß" (NA VII.2/ 503, my emphases).

as Schiller points out in his third *Letter on Don Carlos*. In this historical event of republican revolt and rivendication, Schiller had recognized the very link which tied the Netherlands' past to the present of his country and whose example, in his writing on the *History of the Netherlands' Revolt* (1788) he incited explicitly to follow: "Die Kraft also, womit es [*sc.* das Volk] handelte, ist *unter uns* nicht verschwunden; der glückliche Erfolg, der sein Wagestück krönte, ist auch *uns* nicht versagt, wenn die Zeitläufe wiederkehren und *ähnliche Anlässe uns zu ähnlichen Thaten rufen*" (NA XVII.1/ 11, my emphases).²⁸⁷

The question then arises as to what may have induced Schiller to exclude his original verses in the play's abridged edition from 1801. The dramatic action, after all, still evolved under the banner of the republican values of freedom, equality and independence.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Safranski observes how in its second edition from 1801, thus following the events of the French revolution, Schiller will eliminate this yet optimistic statement from his essay (2004: 276).

²⁸⁸ In 1788, Schiller had announced already in the first of his *Letters on Don Carlos* that a change of perspective had affected both his thinking and the drama's storyline which, as he admitted, had turned "foreign" to him: "Das Stück ist mir fremder geworden". As he sets forth explaining: "St. Reals Novelle, vielleicht auch meine eigene Äußerungen darüber im ersten Stück der Thalia, mögen dem Leser einen Standpunkt angewiesen haben, aus dem es jetzt nicht mehr betrachtet werden kann. Während der Zeit nämlich, daß ich ausarbeitete, welches mancher Unterbrechungen wegen eine ziemlich lange Zeit war, hat sich – *in mir selbst vieles verändert*. An den verschiedenen Schicksalen, die während dieser Zeit über *meine Art, zu denken und zu empfinden*, ergangen sind, mußte notwendig auch dieses Werk teilnehmen. Was mich zu Anfang vorzüglich in demselben gefesselt hat, tat diese Wirkung in der Folge schon schwächer und am Ende nur kaum noch. Neue Ideen, die indes bei mir aufkamen, verdrängten die frühern; Karlos selbst war in meiner Gunst gefallen, vielleicht aus keinem andern Grunde, als weil ich ihm in Jahren zu weit *vorausgesprungen* war, und aus der entgegengesetzten Ursache hatte Marquis Posa seinen Platz eingenommen. So kam es denn, daß ich zu dem vierten und fünften Akte ein ganz anderes Herz mitbrachte" (NA XXII/ 138). Schiller – who had considered dramatizing the history of Don Carlos as early as 1782, cf. his letter from July 15 to the director of the Mannheim national theater Dalberg ("Die Geschichte des Spaniers Dom Carlos verdingt allerdings den Pinsel eines Dramatikers, und ist vielleicht eines von den nächsten Sujets das ich bearbeiten werde" [NA XXIII/ 38, 24.] – concedes that his drama had been subject to various developments since the very first stages of its conception when the poet had initially read the *Histoire de Dom Carlos* by the French historian Cesar Vichard de Saint-Réal (NA VII.2/ 473-81), and had been inspired by the character "eines feurigen, grosen und empfindenden Jünglings [...] – einer Königin die durch den Zwang ihrer Empfindung bei allen Vortheilen ihres Schicksals verunglückt, – eines eifersüchtigen Vaters und Gemals – eines grausamen heuchlerischen Inquisitors, und barbarischen Herzogs von Alba und so fort [...]" (cf. letter to his friend and later brother-in-law Reinwald from March 27, 1783 [NA XXIII/ 74-5, 55.]). Schiller's increased interest towards Posa rather than Don Carlos – who had acted as absolute protagonist in the first three *Thalia* acts, and whom he now deemed an anachronistic figure for his time, presumably for having him portrayed too much to his own liking ("Karlos hat [...] von Shakespears Hamlet die Seele – Blut und Nerven

Schiller's civic patriotism, however, appeared increasingly overshadowed by a new ideological discourse: that of cultural nationalism.²⁸⁹ A brief view at the historical vicissitudes that had unfolded between 1787 and 1801 shall account for a more plausible reason in this shift of perspective. The French reign of terror that Schiller witnessed in 1793/94 had certainly exerted a chief impact on his future literary and philosophical production as he firmly commented in his *Augustenburger Briefen* to the eponymous duke on July 13, 1793:

Es waren also nicht freye Menschen, die der Staat unterdrückt hatte, nein, es waren bloß *wilde Thiere*, die er an heilsamen Ketten legte. Hätte der Staat die Menschheit wirklich unterdrückt, wie man ihm Schuld gibt, so müßte man Menschheit sehen, nachdem er zertrümmert worden ist.(NA XXVI/ 263, 184., my emphasis)²⁹⁰

von Leisewitz Julius, und den Puls von mir"; cf. letter to his friend and later brother-in-law Reinwald from April 14, 1783 [NA XXIII/ 81, 58.] – is certainly not insignificant. It proves an equally major shift of focus in the dramatic development from personal sentiments of friendship – which had been so dear to Schiller (cf. NA XXIII/ 78-9, 58.) – to the love of mankind, from the private to the political sphere. This is explicitly reiterated in the play's final act by the king's own words: "[...] Der Freundschaft arme Flamme/ Füllt eines Posa Herz nicht aus. Das schlug/ Der ganzen Menschheit. Seine Neigung war/ Die Welt mit allen kommenden Geschlechtern" (NA VII.1/ V.9, ll. 5060-3). As we know already, Schiller had resumed the completion of his work, after the first three *Thalia* fragments, at the presently examined 10th scene of the 3rd act (cf. fn. 280), i.e. Posa's encounter with Philipp II, which constitutes the tragedy's highpoint.

²⁸⁹ On the difference between patriotism and nationalism, cf. Viroli's remark: "The crucial distinction lies in the priority or the emphasis: for the patriots, the primary value is the republic and the free way of life that the republic permits; for the nationalists, the primary values are the *spiritual and cultural unity* of the people" (1995:2, my emphasis). In *The Legislation of Lykurgus and Solon* (1790), Schiller had already mentioned the national spirit ("Nationalgeist") in relation to the conception of fatherland and its perpetuation through the citizens' patriotic, i.e. civic engagement. The idea of a cultural nation will develop more clearly in his later writings, in particular, in his lyrical fragment *Deutsche Größe* which – as I shall demonstrate – marks the turning point of Schiller's stance. Although it remains unclear whether the poem was written in 1797 or 1801, both dates represent significant caesura in Schiller's view point: from the temporary rejection of his play in 1797 to the major revisions undertaken in 1801.

²⁹⁰ In an earlier letter to Körner from December 21, 1792, Schiller had already criticized the intransigent politics of "diese richtungslosen Köpfe" (NA XXVI/ 172, 146.) – as he described the deputies of the French National Assembly – firmly decided to defend king Ludwig XVI with a written apology. Yet confident of a reasonable dialogue, he held: "Kaum kann ich der Versuchung widerstehen, mich in die Streitsache wegen des Königs einzumischen, und ein Memoire darüber zu schreiben. [...] Vielleicht rätst Du mir an zu schweigen, aber ich glaube, daß man bei solchen Anlässen nicht indolent und unthätig bleiben darf. [...] Es gibt Zeiten, wo man öffentlich sprechen muß, weil Empfänglichkeit dafür da ist, und solche Zeiten scheint mir die jetzige zu sein" (NA XXVI/ 171-2, 146.). Soon disappointed, however, in his optimistic prospect upon the king's execution on January 21, 1793, Schiller would eventually in his disapproval of the savagery of the masses turn away from the

Schiller recognized the execrable perils that lurked behind unleashed republican frenzy, and gradually distanced himself from its subversive radicalism.²⁹¹ From 1792 until 1795/97, Schiller had begun to assiduously read Kant, and the degree to which his writings influenced his thought is most clearly attested by the three major aesthetic works that were composed in this short time frame: *On Grace and Dignity* (1793), *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), and *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795/96).²⁹² The subsequent years featured the ominous outbreak and outcome of the coalition wars: from the Peace of Campo Formio (October 14, 1797) to the Treaty of Lunéville (February 9, 1801), ratifying the expansion of France's dominions and borders to the Rhine.²⁹³ Schiller's refusal in 1797 to reprint *Don Carlos* deemed henceforth immature, and the alienation he experienced towards his early work speak for major developments in his aesthetic-political thought during this

Convention. On the analogy of humans to beasts and their need to subdue them to a master to prevent their freedom from being abused, see Kant's *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784), which had been Schiller's first reading by the Königsberg philosopher: "der Mensch ist ein Thier, das, wenn es unter andern seiner Gattung lebt, einen Herrn nöthig hat. Denn er mißbraucht gewiß seine Freiheit in Ansehung anderer Seinesgleichen; und ob er gleich als vernünftiges Geschöpf ein Gesetz wünscht, welches der Freiheit Aller Schranken setze: so verleitet ihn doch seine selbstsüchtige thierische Neigung, wo er darf, sich selbst auszunehmen. Er bedarf also einen Herrn, der ihm den eigenen Willen breche und ihn nöthige, einem allgemeingültigen Willen, dabei jeder frei sein kann, zu gehorchen" (KW 8:23, 6).

²⁹¹ In a letter that Charlotte von Stein, literate lady-in-waiting at the Duchess Anna Amalia and close friend of both Schiller and Goethe, wrote to Schiller's wife Charlotte on December 6, 1793, a few months after the Parisian terrifying events, she confirmed with satisfaction the poet's conversion to a more conservative stance after the cataclysmic developments that followed the French revolution: "Ist denn Schiller wohl jetzt ganz über die französische Revolution bekehrt, und darf ich wohl jetzt den Nationalconvent Räuber nennen, ohne daß er sich wie schon einmal darüber entsetze?"; qtd. in Düntzer (1874: 384). Schiller's republicanism, as Safranski remarks, was "im Sinne Montesquieus, was bedeutet: Herrschaft der auf Menschenrechte gegründeten Gesetze statt persönlicher Willkür und Pöbelherrschaft unter dem Deckmantel der Demokratie" (2004: 363).

²⁹² In the above-captioned letter to Körner, which begins with a lengthy disquisition on the conception of beauty, Schiller had already openly declared his adherence to and agreement with Kant's thought and theory: "Übrigens rede ich hier mehr als Kantianer" (NA XXVI/ 178).

²⁹³ On the surge of patriotic feelings that followed these historical events, see Prignitz (1981: 66-87).

time interval, of which eventually his poem *Deutsche GröÙe* from 1801 bears partial (due the incompleteness in which it was handed down to posterity) yet pronounced, evidence.²⁹⁴

Despite the transformation that Schiller's poetics and philosophical thinking underwent, his most eminent and mainly unaltered concern remained anthropological. Since his dissertation *On the Relation Between Man's Animal and Spiritual Nature* (1780), Schiller's chief interest in the human subject, his theory of the individual as composite being ("das unseelige Mittelding von Vieh und Engel" [NA XX.1/ 47]), and his embracement of the ideal of man as "whole" ("ganzer Mensch") had persistently prescribed his work. His conception of "Humanität", understood as the sum of all attributes and attitudes that account for humanness ("Menschlichkeit"), possessed for Schiller universal relevance.²⁹⁵ It was

²⁹⁴ The letter that Schiller directed to Götschen, expressing his resistance to republish the play, is from October 23, 1797, that is only a week after the Campoformio Treaty was signed; cf. the play's editorial history in fn. 268. Already in 1794, while Schiller was considering to write his next historical dramatic project on *Wallenstein* (1800), which the author predicted already to be a comprehensive undertaking, he sceptically remarked to Körner: "Ich wage an diese Unternehmung 7 biß 8 Monate von meinem Leben, das ich Ursache habe sehr zu rath zu halten, und setze mich der Gefahr aus, ein verunglücktes Produkt zu erzeugen. Was ich je im Dramatischen zur Welt gebracht, ist nicht sehr geschickt mir Mut zu machen, und ein Machwerk wie der Carlos *eckelte* mich nunmehr an, wie sehr gern ich es auch jener Epoche meines Geistes zu verzeyhen geneigt bin" (letter dated September 4 [NA XXVII/ 38, 29., my emphasis]). The disgust that the Spanish tragedy literally evoked to the author denounces the play as a failed dramatic work, and turns altogether into Schiller's denial of an entire literary era.

²⁹⁵ On the difficulty to provide a more precise definition of "humanity", see Herder's comment in his *Ideas* (1784/85): "Ich wünschte, daß ich in das Wort Humanität *alles* fassen könnte, was ich bisher über des Menschen *edle Bildung zur Vernunft und Freiheit, zu feinern Sinnen und Trieben*, zur zartesten und stärksten Gesundheit, zur Erfüllung und Beherrschung der Erde gesagt habe" (SW XIII/ Bk. I.IV.6/ 154, my emphases). Herder attributes an extensive meaning to his notion of "Humanität". Restrictive as it would be to circumscribe it to a philanthropic notion (Adler 2009: 94-5), it represented instead an "all-inclusive, general and optimistic formula of Weimar humanism" (Berlin 2000: 218). As such, it displayed visible similarities with Schiller's acceptance of humanity as denoting the completeness and soundness of the human subject in all of his sensual and spiritual capabilities, his drives and intellect. Despite, in fact, his notorious admiration for Kant, Schiller's anthropological ideal was – akin to Herder – a critical one in the sense that it strived to overcome the originally Kantian, and subsequently Fichtian, dichotomy of mind and matter. As a result thereof, in the mid-nineties, Schiller distinguished in the 4th letter of his *Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795) – in the same years while he was reading and studying Kant – the real man ("wirklichen Menschen") from the ideal one ("Idealmenschen") towards which to strive: "Jeder individuelle Mensch [...] trägt, der Anlage und Bestimmung nach, einen reinen idealischen Menschen in sich, mit dessen unveränderlichen Einheit in allen seinen Abwechslungen übereinzustimmen die große Aufgabe seines Daseins ist", *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, p. 577; henceforth quoted as

rooted in the individual's freedom to self-determination and acquisition of all of his human capabilities: a well-rounded sense of "humanness" which could be achieved exclusively via the arts for only the aesthetic education had the ability to endow the individual with the beautiful and noble soul ("schöne Seele") required to mediate the sensual with the rational drive.²⁹⁶ The aesthetically educated human soul was, in fact, able to ensure the individual's complete integration and expression of feeling and thought, sensation and contemplation,

"SW" followed by the volume and page number). In his differentiation between the real man and its ideal complement, Schiller did not expect the latter to evolve outright from the former as he specifies in a footnote to his 13th letter: "Man macht sich freilich seine gesellschaftlichen Pflichten ungemein leicht, wenn man den *wirklichen* Menschen, der unsre Hülfe auffordert, in Gedanken den *Idealmenschen* unterschiebt, der sich wahrscheinlich selbst helfen könnte" (SW V/ 611, 13, emphases in the original). On the contrary, in direct critique against Fichte's self-sufficient and self-producing "I", which in its idealism displayed a clear indebtedness to Kant's critical philosophy, Schiller claimed, still in his 4th letter, the integration of natural and rational character: "Einheit fordert zwar Vernunft, die Natur aber Mannigfaltigkeit, und von beiden Legislationen wird der Mensch in Anspruch genommen. [...] Daher wird es jederzeit von einer noch mangelhaften *Bildung* zeugen, wenn der sittliche Charakter nur mit Aufopferung des natürlichen sich behaupten kann" (SW V/ 577, 4, my emphasis). As Schiller considered beauty to be the mediator between nature and reason, the aesthetic education ("Bildung") of man constituted an indispensable condition for the individual to achieve his objective of a whole humanity. As to the individual's education to humanity, cf. also Herder's understanding of *Humanität* in the 27th epistle that introduces his third collection of *Letters* (1793-1797): "Humanität ist der Charakter unsres Geschlechts; er ist uns aber nur in Anlagen angeboren, und *muß uns eigentlich angebildet werden*. Wir bringen ihn nicht fertig auf die Welt mit; auf der Welt aber soll er das Ziel unsres Bestrebens, die Summe unsrer Übungen, unser Wert sein" (HW VII/ III.27, 148, my emphases). Akin to Herder, Schiller viewed the qualitative concept of "humanity" as a potential, however immature, of which all human beings disposed and which they ought to develop over time.

²⁹⁶ In his essay *On Grace and Dignity* (1793), Schiller defined the "beautiful soul" as the result of the perfect accord between duty and desire, will and emotions; I will exemplify this concept in more detail in relation to Schiller's heroines Maria Stuart and Jean d'Arc, juxtaposing them to their male counterpart Posa (cf. fn. 486). In this context, and for the further understanding of the value and function fulfilled by beauty and art, it must be added that Schiller expanded upon this aesthetic notion in his *Letters* (1795) by distinguishing, within the real man, between the individual ("Individuum") who enjoys immanent pleasures, and the character ("Persönlichkeit") which allows man to partake, in his quality of human being, to intellectual gratification. As Schiller specified in the 27th epistle, only Beauty ("Schönheit") is able to conjoin in one unity the empirical "individual" with the universal "character" of the human species ("Gattung"): "Die Freuden der Sinne genießen wir bloß als *Individuen*, ohne daß die Gattung, die in uns wohnt, daran Anteil nähme; wir können also unsre sinnlichen Freuden nicht zu allgemeinen erweitern, weil wir unser Individuum nicht allgemein machen können. Die Freuden der Erkenntnis genießen wir bloß als *Gattung* und indem wir jede Spur des Individuums sorgfältig aus unserm Urteil entfernen [...]. Das *Schöne* allein genießen wir als *Individuum* und *Gattung* zugleich, d.h. als Repräsentanten der Gattung" (SW V/ 667-8, 27, my emphases).

matter and form without being subject and submitted to their constraint.²⁹⁷ The attainment of this aesthetic, and thus authentic freedom rendered the human being, in turn, the guarantor of his own felicity. This personal independence and happiness presumed, nonetheless, as its direct derivative a correspondence of the same claims on the collective and cosmopolitan level. As Posa explains to the king: "Wenn nun der Mensch, sich selbst zurück gegeben,/ Zu seines Werths Gefühl erwacht", and "der Freyheit/ Erhabne, stolze Tugenden gedeihen—" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3247-9), is the individual also able to recognize himself in the humanity specific to his species, and thus solidarize with the rest of humankind. This is the very message that count Lerma imparts to prince Carlos after Posa's death:

²⁹⁷ Posa provides an evident example of Schiller's notion of "composite being" ("Mischwesen) as he will fail to mediate his individual interest with his ideals. By subordinating his friendship to his feelings, Posa will, in fact, instrumentalize Don Carlos' sentiments towards Elisabeth for his own benefit, prompting the queen to convince the prince to intervene in defense of the Netherlands and reestablish the country's freedom: "Ich sah sie keimen diese Liebe, sah/ Der Leidenschaften unglücklichste/ In seinem Herzen Wurzel fassen – Damals/ Stand es in meiner Macht, sie zu bekämpfen./ Ich that es nicht. Ich nährte diese Liebe,/ die mir nicht unglücklich war. Die Welt/ Kann anders richten. Ich bereue nicht" (NA VII.1/ IV.21, ll. 4327-33). On an opposite note, as we shall see with the example provided by Leoniero da Dertona, the protagonist of Pellico's eponymous tragedy, his death will occur out of love for his country and thus in conformity with the ideal to save his hometown from despotic violence. Posa's death, in contrast, will be his *ultima ratio* available to save Don Carlos from being sentenced ("Du bist/ Gerettet, Karl – bist frey –" [NA VII.1/ V.3, ll. 4594-5]) upon realizing that he will no longer be able to carry out his plan, and will need the prince to do so in his place. As a matter of fact, in his last encounter with the Queen, Posa declares himself guilty for having chosen himself over the king's son to pursue his ideals: "[...] Es hätte/ *Bey mir gestanden* einen neuen Morgen/ Herauf zu führen über diese Reiche./ Der König schenkte mir sein Herz. Er nannte/ Mich *seinen Sohn* – [...]/ Den König geb' ich auf. Was kann ich auch/ Dem König seyn? [...]/ – Europa's/ Verhängnis reift in meinem großen Freunde!/ Auf ihn verweis' ich Spanien – [...]/ - Doch weh'!/ Weh mir und ihm, wenn ich bereuen sollte,/ Vielleicht das Schlimmere *gewählt!*" (NA VII.1/ IV.21, ll. 4301-5, 4317-24). As Schiller himself observes in his 7th letter on *Don Carlos*, Posa had originally chosen himself in place of the prince, and thus betrayed their friendship: "erkennt man offenbar, daß das Interesse der Freundschaft einem höheren nachsteht, und daß ihr nur durch dieses letztere ihre Richtung bestimmt wird" (NA XXII/ 160, 7). Although Schiller's passage reads more like a defense of than a recrimination against Posa, this is due to the fact that the main objective pursued by Schiller in his *Letters* – as his friend Körner remarked towards the poet on August 11, 1788 after reading them – was "to save his ideals": "Du gibst Dein Kunstwerk preis und willst nur Deine Ideale retten, in die Du verliebt bist" (NA VII.2/ 43). The determination which drives forth Posa's unwillingness to compromise at any price his ideals – reminiscent of the same emotional impetus and enthusiastic intransigence that had animated the actions of his predecessor Karl Moor in *The Robbers* (1781) – reflects the Sturm-and-Drang pathos of a yet young poet. As we shall see already in *Maria Stuart* (1800) and *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), Schiller's adhesion to an aesthetically more harmonic style will mark his transition to Weimar classicism. In contrast to Posa, the heroism of both female protagonists will, in turn, be sublimated by their strive to an eminently inner freedom, which – as Schiller will argue – only the arts can achieve and accomplish.

LERMA [...] Seyen Sie
 Ein *Mensch* auf König Philipps Thron. Sie haben
 Auch *Leiden kennen lernen*. Unternehmen Sie
 Nichts blut'ges gegen Ihren Vater! Ja
 Nichts blutiges, mein Prinz! [...]
 (NA VII.1/ II. 4947-51, my emphases).²⁹⁸

It is significant that Schiller left these verses intact. By omitting, in contrast, his original reference to the republican nationalism evocative of the devastating inhumanity displayed by the French revolutionaries, he consequently shifted his stress on the pedagogical value of the arts – and thus of *culture* – in educating the people, in the first stance, to full-fledged human beings and citizens.²⁹⁹ Hence, when Posa declares towards the king: "— Ich liebe/ Die Menschheit, und in Monarchien darf/ Ich niemand lieben als mich selbst" (NA VII.1/ III.10, II. 3037-9), he is asserting the priority of humankind over the monarchy. As a matter of fact, Posa's patriotism is employed, in this context, as overt antonym to despotism.³⁰⁰ This becomes particularly clear if compared with the 1787 edition, in which the following verses were later expunged:

²⁹⁸ For Herder this attitude corresponded to what he named "sensus humanitatis", which he identified with the "Sinn und Mitgefühl für die gesamte Menschheit" (SW VII/ 742).

²⁹⁹ If *The Maid of Orleans* (1801) displays a revolutionary ferocity and fury still evocative of the French *terreur*, Schiller's heroine is able to preserve her humanity by giving proof of a thoroughly human soul ("menschliche Seele"), which will find its hypostatization in her martyrdom. Moreover, what distinguishes Jean d'Arc from the violence of French radicalists is that it was directed against the British crown. Jean d'Arc does not fight a civil war: but a national one directed against the foreign foe. As in *Don Carlos*, the theme in Schiller's following tragedy will be the usurpation of power and the undertaking to restore a legitimate national authority. Contrary to *Don Carlos*, however, Schiller shifts the location of his dramatic action onto a victimized country: – medieval France which, in contrast to medieval Spain, stood instead for the oppressed rather than the oppressor – thus deliberately stressing the tragedy's national cause. It is important to emphasize at this point, and for the understanding of my forthcoming argument, that Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* postulate primarily a theory of *culture* rather than of the arts. I borrow this assumption from Borchmeyer who interprets the notion of Schiller's culture as an "Ästhetik der Bildung" (1994: 286). I would like, however, to take Borchmeyer's thesis a step further and suggest that Schiller's pedagogical project shall be understood as the people's education to a culture that in his later works will insistently claim – as I shall illustrate – its *national* primacy.

³⁰⁰ This acceptance of patriotism was anything but uncommon in 18th-century Germany. In his essay *On the common saying* (1793), for instance, Kant postulated a precise distinction of patriotism from despotism by

POSA Der Staat,
 dem ich sie [*sc.* die Pflichten] schuldig war, ist nicht mehr. Ehmals
 gab's einen Herrn, *weil ihn Gesetze brauchten*;
 jetzt giebt's Gesetze, *weil der Herr sie braucht*.
 (NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3614-7, my emphases)

Launched against the king's monopoly and manipulation of power, Posa's invective deplores his alienation towards a state whose legislation no longer serves the preeminent interests of its citizens, but the political expedients of the sovereign.³⁰¹ By denying his people their

elucidating the notion of "father" in its double acceptance of "paternalistic" ("väterlich") and "patriotic" ("vaterländisch"). Whereas he described the paternalistic government ("[e]ine Regierung, die auf dem Prinzip des Wohlwollens gegen das Volk als eines Vaters gegen seine Kinder errichtet wäre [...], wo also die Unterthanen gegen *unmündige Kinder*, die nicht unterscheiden können, was ihnen wahrhaftig nützlich oder schädlich ist, sich bloß passiv zu verhalten genöthigt sind") as the "most execrable despotism conceivable" ("der größte denkbare Despotismus"), he pleads instead for a patriotic government: "Nicht eine *väterliche*, sondern eine *vaterländische* Regierung (*imperium non paternale, sed patrioticum*) ist diejenige, welche allein für *Menschen, die der Rechte fähig sind*, zugleich in Beziehung auf das Wohlwollen des Beherrschers gedacht werden kann" (1968: 90-1, my emphases); cf. English transl. (1996: 291). It is precisely with this patriotic expectation that Posa greets, at his arrival at the Spanish court in Aranjuez, his country as "fatherland": "Den ich noch nie mit so gerechtem Stolze/ Mein Vaterland genannt als jetzt—" (NA VII.1/ I.4, ll. 484-5). It is with this same patriotic emotion that the king bids him farewell as "son" upon his death: "Ich habe' ihn lieb gehabt, sehr lieb. Er war/ Mir theuer wie ein Sohn. In diesem Jüngling/ Ging mir ein *neuer, schön'rer Morgen* auf" (NA VII.1/ V.9, ll. 5050-2). The father-son relationship that king Philipp establishes with Posa is a patriotic one based on service rather than submission to the country as he previously acknowledged towards the Marquis: "Nein, Marquis! Ihr tut mir zu viel. Ich will/ Nicht Nero seyn. Ich will es nicht seyn – will/ Es gegen euch nicht seyn. Nicht alle/ Glückseligkeit soll unter mir verdorren" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3273-6). This patriotic relationship can be juxtaposed, in striking contrast, to the paternalistic kind that the king shared instead with the prince whom he treats literally as his underage child ("unmündiges Kind") or minor subject by dismissing his request to be sent to the Belgian duchy of Brabant in lieu of duke Alba: "Solche Kranke/ Wie du, mein Sohn, verlangen gute Pflege,/ Und wohnen unterm Aug' des Artzs. Du bleibst/ In Spanien; der Herzog geht nach Flandern" (NA VII.1/ II.2, ll. 1229-32); on the distinction between "subjects" and "citizens" in Schiller's drama in relation to Rousseau's definition of "sujets" and "citoyens", see Böckmann's and Kluge's comments to the play (NA VII.2/ 1986: 335).

³⁰¹ In the context of his political discourse, Schiller's concern was primarily ethical and aimed at ensuring that laws and morals ("Gesetze und Sitten") were never disjointed, as it had been common practice among ancient Greek legislators: "Es ist ein Vorzug, den die alten Gesetzgeber vor den neuern haben, daß sie ihre Menschen den Gesetzen zubilden, die sie ihnen ertheilen, daß sie auch die Sittlichkeit, den Charakter, den gesellschaftlichen Umgang mitnehmen, und den *Bürger* nie von dem *Menschen* trennen wie wir" (NA XVII.1/ 437, my emphases). The ethical challenge, which according to Schiller was exemplary met by Solon's legislative system, thus consisted in never divorcing the citizen ("Bürger") from his humanity ("Menschen") by preserving his inviolable rights intact. King Philipp, in contrast, explicitly admits his disregard and disrespect towards any ethical, natural or contractual claim: "*Ich kenne/ Mich selbst nicht mehr* – ich ehre keine Sitte/ Und keine Stimme der Natur und keinen/ Vertrag der Nationen mehr—" (NA VII.1/ IV.9, ll. 3788-91, my emphasis). Yet, this moment of confession is introduced by a significant act of introspection which ascribes the despot human traits. Whether or not, in fact, his scruples of conscience were dictated by a feeling of contrition, the king laments a sense of personal alienation – unable as he is to no longer recognize himself. This condition implies

human right to self-determination, Philipp II deprived them of their very humanity: " POSA
 Der Mensch ist mehr, als Sie von ihm gehalten./ Des langen Schlummers Bande wird er
 brechen,/ Und wieder fordern sein geheiligt Recht" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3188-90).³⁰² The
 restitution of human dignity ("Menschenwürde") that the king had despised ("POSA Ich höre,
 Sire, wie klein,/ Wie niedrig Sie von *Menschenwürde* denken" [NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3091-2,
 my emphasis) turns thus into the premise and promise of human happiness
 ("Menschenglück"):

POSA [...] – Ich wiederhol' es. Geben Sie,
 Was Sie uns nahmen, wieder. *Lassen Sie*,
 Großmütig wie der Starke, Menschenglück
 Aus Ihrem Füllhorn strömen – *Geister reifen*
 In Ihrem Weltgebäude. Geben Sie,
 Was Sie uns nahmen wieder. [...]
 (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3195-200, my emphases)

"Let minds mature" is Posa's bidding to the king which culminates in his subsequent
 exhortation to bestow upon his citizens "Gedankenfreyheit" (NA VII.1/ III.10, l. 3216). It is
 precisely this "freedom of thought" that Schiller had acclaimed in Solon's exemplary laws,
 "an denen sich der Geist der Bürger frey und leicht nach allen Richtungen bewegte, und nie
 empfand, daß sie ihn lenkten" (NA XVII.1/ 440), and that he abhorred for being
 instrumentalized by the Spanish king:

the awareness of having lost touch with his inner self, i.e. with his humane side. Such an act of introspection, which may arrive unexpected from a king whom Schiller himself described in the *History of the Revolt of the Netherlands* as the opposite of humanity ("Philipp der zweite war in allem, was menschlich ist, das Gegenbild seines Vaters" [NA XVII.1/ 47]), reflects the author's chief philosophical question of what drives forth human history: a *movens* that lies for Schiller within the human soul or "menschliche Seele". For this same reason he ascribed Philipp II feelings by far more human than the actual historical figure. This poetic intention reflected once more his keen anthropological interest which dictated, as I shall demonstrate more in depth in his following tragedies, also his historical theory and practice.

³⁰² The untouchable human right to self-determination is reiterated by Schiller in his essay *On the Legislation of Lykurgus and Solon* (1790): "Das edelste Vorrecht der Menschlichen Natur ist, sich selbst zu bestimmen, und das Gute um des Guten willen thun" (NA XVII.1/ 438).

POSA [...] Menschen
 sind Ihnen *brauchbar*, weiter nichts; so wenig
 als *Ohr* und *Auge* für sich selbst vorhanden.
 Nur für die Krone zählen sie. In ihr
 ging *ihres Wesens* Eigenthum, *ihr Selbst*
 und *ihres Willens* hohes Vorrecht unter.
 Zu einer Pflanze fiel der Geist. [...] (NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3629-35)

These verses, cited from the first published manuscript in 1787, reiterate Schiller's stronger indictment of despotism in this original edition, reinforcing in contrast the civic relevance and role of patriotism. As a matter of fact, in this former version, references to the state's exploitation of its citizens are more insistent. Disowned of their being ("ihres Wesens Eigenthum"), their self ("Selbst"), and chief prerogative of their will ("ihres Willens hohes Vorrecht"), the citizens are valued by the crown only in terms of their utility – as the attribute "brauchbar" underscores. This is the same mechanistic notion of the state that Herder had fiercely condemned for it dismembered and dehumanized its members to will-less means.³⁰³

³⁰³ In contrast to Wieland's and later Kant's institutional conceptualization of the state ("Staat") and of its members as citizens ("Staatsbürger"), Herder will fiercely defy the assimilation of the nation with the notion of the state – let alone different nations under the aegis of one state. For he viewed the state, as he wrote in his *Ideas* (1784/85) – as a machinery ("eine Maschine [...], die nur der Gedanke Eines regieret" [SW XIII/ Bk. II.VIII.5/ 340]) that reduced its citizen to an "unthinking member" ("gedankenloses Glied" [340]), and restricted the nation's natural and organic unfolding. Herder appears to borrow this understanding of the state as a political machinery from Rousseau's reflections on "The Sovereign" ("Du Souverain") in ch. VII, bk. I of his *Social Contract*: "Afin donc que le pacte social ne foit pas un vain formulaire, il [sc. le souverain] renferme tacitement cet engagement qui seul peut donner de la force aux autres, que quiconque resusera d'obéir à la volonté générale, y sera contraint par tout le corps: ce qui ne signifie autre chose sinon qu'on le forcera d'être libre: car telle est la condition qui donnant chaque *Citoyen* à la Patrie le garantit de toute dépendance personnelle; condition qui fait l'artifice & le jeu de la *machine politique*, & qui seule rend légitimes les engagements civils, lesquels sans cela seraient absurdes, tyranniques, & *sujet* aux plus énormes abus" (1766: 28-9, my emphases); as to Herder's kinship of thought with the French philosopher, see Barnard's innovative contribution to this topic (1988: 285-321). Herder's critique will return in Schiller's contractual theory, who was more evidently influenced by Rousseau's writings; see Böckmann's and Kluge's commentary to his play (NA VII.2/ 276-357). As a matter of fact, in six verses later excerpted from the above-captioned quote – inserted precisely between originally lines 3557 (indicated in the quote by an asterisk) and 3563 – Schiller compares the Spanish kingdom to a machine: "nur meinen Kopf im Rathe. Was ich leiste,/ gehört dem Thron. Die Schönheit meines Werks,/ das Selbstgefühl, die Wollust des Erfinders/ fließt in den königlichen Schatz. Von diesem/ werd' ich besoldet mit *Maschinenglück*/ und, wie *Maschinen brauchen*, unterhalten" (NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3557-62, my emphases). Next to the image of the machine, Schiller employs the simile of the musician who, as the king with his subjects, plucks the strings to his own will ("—Da Sie den Menschen/ Zu Ihrem Saitenspiel herunter stürzten" [NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3119-21]), or of the chisel as the sculptor's work tool ("[...] Können Sie/ In Ihrer

contrast to a despotic regime, the ideal state is devoted instead to edify and educate its citizens, and is epitomized for Schiller by Solon's legislation: "Er [sc. Solon] begriff daß Gesetze nur *Dinerinnen der Bildung* sind" (NA XVII.1/ 439).

Upon admonishing the Spanish sovereign of abusing his legislative power (cf. ll. 3616-7 above), the Marquis directs a rethorical question to Philipp II, disputing the very existence of his fatherland: "*Dem Vaterlande? – Wo ist das? Ich weiß/ von keinem Vaterlande. Spanien/ geht keinen Spanier mehr an. [...]*" (NA VI/ III.10, ll. 3620-22, my emphases). The patriotic theme addressed in these verses, which were also no longer included in the 1801 edition, are reminiscent of Schiller's introduction to the first *Thalia* issue, in which the poet laments the loss of his fatherland. More strikingly, however, is that Schiller employs the same rhetoric in a distich from his later *Xenien* collection (1797) entitled *Das deutsche Reich*: "Deutschland? aber wo liegt es? Ich weiß das Land nicht zu

Against the individuals' mutilation and their reduction to lifeless members of a mechanical existence, it was deemed imperative – as Schiller had specified in the preceding 5th letter: "den Menschen endlich als *Selbstzweck* zu ehren und *wahre Freiheit* zur Grundlage der politischen Verbindung zu machen" (SW VI/ 580, 5, my emphases). Kant had three years earlier postulated already this axiom in his *Groundwork of The Metaphysics of Moral* (1785) by claiming: "der Mensch, und überhaupt jedes vernünftige Wesen, existirt als *Zweck an sich selbst* nicht bloß als Mittel zum beliebigen Gebrauche für diesen oder jenen Willen, sondern muß in allen seinen sowohl auf sich selbst, als auch *auf andere vernünftige Wesen* gerichteten Handlungen jederzeit zugleich als Zweck betrachtet werden" (KW 4:428); cf. English transl. (1996: 79). The notion of man as an end in itself ("Zweck an sich selbst") and of the citizens as the crown's scope, rather than means, who have no other obligation but to act as such towards their rational fellow citizens ("auf andere vernünftige Wesen gerichteten Handlungen"), is addressed in Posa's very admonition to the king: "[...] Der Bürger/ Sei wiederum, was er zuvor gewesen,/ Der Krone Zweck – ihn binde keine Pflicht,/ Als seiner Brüder gleich ehrwürd'ge Rechte" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3243-6). This is precisely what Kant will reiterate in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) – which significantly appeared only one year after the play's first publication: "In der ganzen Schöpfung kann alles, was man will, und worüber man etwas vermag, auch bloß als Mittel gebraucht werden; nur der Mensch und mit ihm jedes vernünftige Geschöpf ist Zweck an sich selbst" (KW 4:87); cf. English transl. (1996: 210). In his *Legislation* essay on Lykurgus and Solon from 1790, Schiller will eventually reiterate these political and anthropological tenets which he had mentioned already in his earlier works such as the state's only end to ensure the development and progress of all of its citizens' strength: "Der Staat selbst ist niemals Zweck, er ist nur wichtig als eine Bedingung unter welcher der Zweck der Menschheit erfüllt werden kann, und dieser Zweck der Menschheit ist kein anderer, als Ausbildung aller Kräfte des Menschen, Fortschreitung" (SW VI/ 423). Although Schiller will begin to study Kant's writings in depth only in the second half of the 1790ies, it speaks for itself that he was already acquainted with Kant's thought whose authority was widely known among intellectuals since the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781.

finden" (NA I/320, 95).³⁰⁵ The double question form which casts doubt upon the country's identity and location, followed by a response statement which equally negates the speaker's acquaintance with such land, are parallel recurrences in the play and the poem. The main difference consists in that Schiller substitutes Posa's yet general appellative of "fatherland" – which the theater audience was free to interpret as they wished, besides its implicit reference to Spain – with the proper name of Germany ("Deutschland").³⁰⁶

The tragedy, which Schiller had originally defined "ein Familiengemählde", portrays a father-son conflict that was rooted both in his biography and the history of his time.³⁰⁷ In

³⁰⁵ Written between the end of 1795 and 1796 (for more details, see Beetz [2005: 273]), and published by the literary *Musenalmanach* in 1797, the *Xenien* (from the Greek ξένιος – guest) were the product of a collaborative political-literary project undertaken jointly by Goethe and Schiller to defend themselves from the critiques with which their recent writings had been received by their contemporaries. It consists of a satirical collection of personified distichs traveling to a book fair in the German city of Leipzig where they were considering to introduce their newest work to the public. Stopped, however, at the customs border, they are requested to reveal the content of their suitcases, and provide evidence of their integrity. The travellers eventually manage to cross the custom limit, and thus export their culture beyond their local borders – which may as well be interpreted as an early allusion to the role of cultural innovation and leadership throughout Europe with which German intellectuals would soon endow their literary nation. Ammon (2005) offers a thorough and complete study of Goethe's and Schiller's literary project as well as its reception by their contemporaries until today.

³⁰⁶ There was undoubtedly a yet locally circumscribed understanding of fatherland among German intellectuals given the geographical fragmentation in city-states. Schiller himself identified with the term fatherland the specific principality of Württemberg as many of his letters attest; cf. e.g. letters from Jena to his publisher Cotta on Febr. 20, 1795 ("Uebrigens läugne ich nicht, daß es mir sauer geworden ist, durch Ablehnung des mir geschehenen Antrags zum zweytenmal auf mein Vaterland Verzicht zu thun" [NA XXVII/ 148, 112.]), again from Jena on July 22, 1796 to Cotta ("Seyen Sie doch so gut mir selbst oder durch jemand anders zu schreiben, wie es jetzt um unser Vaterland steht" [NA XXVIII/ 267, 208.]), and once more to Cotta from Jena on Aug. 15, 1796 ("Dem Himmel sey Dank, daß die Nachrichten aus dem lieben Vaterland noch so erträglich lauten" [NA XXVIII/ 284, 225.]); then from Weimar to Cotta on Aug. 29, 1800 ("Möchten Sie uns bald mit erwünschten Friedensnachrichten vom Vaterland erfreuen!" [NA XXX/ 190, 230.]), and again to Cotta from Weimar on Oct. 27, 1803 ("Auch ist ein solches immer eine Quelle von Verdruß und welches den überwollenden Menschen im Vaterland immer einen Vorwand darbieten wird, Sie zu incommodieren" [NA XXXII/ 82, 94.]).

³⁰⁷ Cf. Schiller's letter to Dalberg, from June 7, 1784: "Carlos würde nichts weniger seyn, als ein politisches Stük – sondern eigentlich ein Familiengemählde in einem fürstlichen Hauße, und die schreckliche Situzion eines Vaters, der mit seinem eigenen Sohn so unglücklich eifert, die die schrecklichere Situzion eines Sohns, der bei allen Ansprüchen auf das gröste Königreich der Welt ohne Hoffnung liebt, und endlich aufgeopfert wird, müßten denke ich höchst intereßant ausfallen. Alles was die Empfindung empört, würde ich ohnehin mit gröster Sorgfalt vermeiden" (NA XXIII/ 144, 98.). The fact that Schiller described his tragedy as a family rather than a political drama goes back to a time that preceded his alleged change of perspective and preference, as he would

what follows, I intend to highlight how the dysfunctional family picture, around which the dramatic narrative evolves, portrays metaphorically the political circumstances in which Schiller lived.³⁰⁸ As a matter of fact, the initial avoidance and eventual rejection that Don Carlos experiences with his father the king, finds its correlative in Schiller's personal and historical reality. It alludes to the repudiation that the poet himself had suffered from his own "father" Karl Eugen, Duke of Württemberg, who – as he had explicitly asserted in his forward to the *Rheinische Thalia* – "bis dahin mein Vater war" (NA XXII/ 94).³⁰⁹ The historical events that followed the treaties of Campo Formio and Luneville in 1797, and the political calamities that derived from the coalition wars foresaw a national loss which would end with the final erosion of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 – an outcome that Schiller did no longer witness, but which his tragedy had ominously presaged.³¹⁰ The father-son

explain in 1788 in his future *Letters on Don Carlos* – which is to say prior to the addition of the 4th and 5th acts and the actual completion of the play. There is no doubt, however, that the cautionary remark with which the author assures the national theater director of Mannheim to avoid addressing any subjects on stage which would have displeased or antagonized the audience, can be accounted as a preventive action on Schiller's side who, still stigmatized by his recent arrest and exile from Stuttgart, preferred to clear out in advance any subversive suspicions. In 1788, after his drama had been successfully staged, Schiller could assert and approve of the play's political focus which, nonetheless, his *Letters* would yet and overall address with discretion.

³⁰⁸ The association of the notion of nation with that of family is obviously implied by the very conception of fatherland. Following this patriotic semantics, the same cosmopolitan idea of a European community of nations that Schiller would still optimistically uphold in his Jena lecture in May 1789 – a few months prior to storming the Parisian bastille – was viewed as an extended family: "Die europäische Staatengesellschaft scheint in eine große Familie verwandelt" (NA XVII/ 367).

³⁰⁹ Schiller had already thematized the father-son conflict in his first play *The Robbers* (1781), which had eventually "costed" him his "family and fatherland" ("Die Räuber kosteten mir Familie und Vaterland" (NA XXII/ 94)). As in *The Robbers*, in *Don Carlos* the father is contended between two sons: the biological one in the figure of the prince, and the fostered "Posa"; contrary to the brothers in *The Robbers*, the Marquis and the prince are not antagonistically disposed. The father-son/ daughter theme will return as major motif in *The Maid of Orleans* (1801).

³¹⁰ The dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire had, however, already started in the early 18th century as the Austrian Habsburgs and the Prussian Hohenzollern dynasties consolidated their powers. It was particularly driven forth between 1756 and 1763 by the Seven Year's War, until the Treaty of Basel in 1795 decided upon its territorial contention and subdivision between a northern peace and a southern war zone (Schmidt 2002: 15). The downfall of the Empire led to a reconsolidation of the notion of German nation which had established itself

relationship constitutes, in this respect, a major and meaningful theme in the play. From the very first act, Don Carlos laments to his friend Posa the loss of his natural father ("Ich weiß ja nicht was Vater heißt—" (NA VII.1/ I.2, l. 193) to a tyrannical and sanguinary figure that he depicts as the king:

KARLOS Ich hasse meinen Vater nicht – doch Schauer
 Und Missethätters-Bangigkeit ergreifen
 Bey diesem fürchterlichen Nahmen mich.
 Kann ich dafür, wenn eine *knechtische*
 Erziehung schon in meinem jungen Herzen
 Der Liebe zarten Keim zertrat? [...].
 (NA VII.1/ I.2, ll. 306-11, my emphasis)

The rhetorical question that follows the recollection of the menial education ("knechtische Erziehung") to which the prince was exposed: "Wenn ich den Vater je in ihm verlernte,/ Was würde mir der König seyn?" (NA VII.1/ I.2, ll. 356-7) unmistakably identifies the king with a father role. The rejection that Don Carlos blames against Philipp II ("Warum von ihrem Herzen mich so lange/ Verstoßen, Vater? Was hab' ich getan?" [NA VII.1/ II.2, ll. 1044-5]), and his reiterated request for reconciliation ("KARLOS Mein Vater!/ Versöhnung! [...]/ Versöhnung!"/ [...] "Jetzt oder nie – Versöhnung, Vater!" [NA VII.1/ II.2, ll. 1065-6, and l. 1070]), culminates upon Posa's execution in the son's personal denial of the king-father:

KARLOS O die hier versammelt steht, und vor Entsetzen
 Und vor Bewunderung verstummt – verdammet
 Den Jüngling nicht, der diese Sprache gegen
 Den Vater und den König führt – Seht hieher!
 Für mich ist er gestorben! [...].
 (NA VII.1/ V.4, ll. 4834-8, my emphasis)

The notion of father is anon inseparably linked to that of the sovereign: this is a key aspect that defines for Schiller both the dramatic and the historical reality. By repudiating the king

since the sixteen hundreds; see also Meinecke's chapter on "Nation and Nationalstaat seit dem Siebenjährigen Kriege" (1962: 27-39).

and threatening him to death, prince Carlos does not only act against a law of nature which prescribes the very father-and-son relationship:

KÖNIG [...] – Sind wir
Nicht Sohn und Vater? Ich will doch erwarten,
Zu welcher Schandthat die Natur –

KARLOS Natur?
Ich weiß von keiner. Mord ist jetzt die Losung. (NA VII.1/ V.4, ll. 4763-6)

but, consequently, violates a universal law that holds humanity together: "KARLOS Der Menschheit Bande sind entzwei. Du selbst/ Hast sie zerrissen, Sire, in deinen Reichen" (NA VII.1/ V.4, ll. 4767-8). It is in this fundamental conception of *Humanität* that Schiller's patriotism found its point of convergence and coalescence with his cosmopolitan ideals.³¹¹

Nevertheless, if Schiller's notion of humanity was universal, his patriotism remained yet local and circumscribed to his own principality.

³¹¹ As Meinecke remarks in his chapter on "Allgemeines über Nation, Nationalstaat und Weltbürgertum": "Eine schöne feinere und von den Trägern deutscher Bildung immer hochgehaltene Meinung ist die, daß das wahre, das beste deutsche Nationalgefühl auch das weltbürgerliche Ideal einer *übernationalen Humanität* mit einschließe, daß es 'undeutsch, bloß Deutsch zu sein'" (1962: 24, my emphasis). No one more poignantly than Mazzini articulated this idea when he identified himself as Italian and European at once. In an open letter from 30 March 1861 and published in his Milanese journal *Unità Italiana* on 31 April 1861, written in response to three Germans who had negatively replied to his admonition to defend the Serbian national cause against the territorial claims of the Austro-Hungarian empire for whose troops the Germans had been enrolled next to the Croats who had been forced by the Habsburgs to fight against their homeland, Mazzini maintained: "Voi movete dalla teorica degli interessi; io da quella dei principi, senza i quali non sono interessi permanentemente possibili. Voi non siete evidentemente Alemanni, che nel senso puramente materiale e locale della parola; io sono *Italiano*, ma *uomo ed Europeo* ad un tempo. Adoro la mia Patria perchè adoro la Patria; la nostra libertà, perchè io credo nella Libertà; i nostri diritti, perchè credo nel Diritto. La Nazionalità per me è santa, perchè io vedo in essa lo stromento del lavoro *pel bene di tutti, pel progresso di tutti*: le condizioni geografiche, le tradizioni storiche, la lingua, le tendenze speciali, non ne sono per me che gl'indizi; ma la missione ch'essa esercita, o è chiamata a esercitare, ne è il battesimo e la consecrazione. La Nazione deve essere per *l'Umanità*, ciò che la famiglia è, o dovrebbe essere, per la Patria" (1886: 270, my emphases). Of Posa's cosmopolitan patriotism, Mazzini wrote in 1830, in his essay *Del drama storico*: "il suo cuore palpita per un mondo intero, e il suo amore circonda la umanità con tutte le razze future" (1906: 313). This is precisely the kind of "self-definition" that transcends national particularism, and which Nussbaum employs in her notorious article to exemplify the individual's "allegiance to what is [in the originally Kantian notion of the term] morally good – and that which, being good, I can commend as such to all human beings" (1996: 5).

What is the remedy that Schiller ultimately suggests? As he will write in his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795): "um jenes *politische* Problem in der Erfahrung zu lösen, [muß man] durch das *ästhetische* den Weg nehmen, weil es die *Schönheit* ist, durch welche man zur *Freiheit* wandert" (SW V/ 573, 2, my emphases). Schiller's aesthetic theory conjoins anthropological with political concern, his cosmopolitan idealism with his provincial patriotism. In other words, the answer to the political question resides for Schiller in the aesthetic realm of culture and art, where beauty and knowledge (or truth for the matter – as all knowledge resides in truth) reign: "Nur durch das Morgenthor des Schönen/ Drangst du in der Erkenntniß Land" (NA II.1/ 384, ll. 34-5).³¹² This aesthetic education consented the human intellect to liberate itself from the constraints dictated by individual drives and interests, and hence attain freedom.³¹³ Aesthetics – or culture – is, therefore, the path that leads to freedom *through* freedom whose offspring is ultimately beauty: "denn die Kunst ist eine Tochter der Freyheit, und von der Notwendigkeit der *Geister*, nicht von der Notdurft der Materie will sie ihre Vorschrift empfangen" (SW V/ 572, 2, my emphasis). The pursuit of this intellectual and individual freedom implies the choice of free will in place of duty-bound coercion: "[...] und Freude wäre mir/ Und eigne Wahl, was mir nur Plicht seyn sollte" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3032-3) is Posa's dictum. For only under this condition can the subject be granted the status of both human and citizen. This anthropological claim would, in turn, unite the whole

³¹² Qtd. from Schiller's poem *Die Künstler* (1789).

³¹³ That is "Gedankenfreyheit" (NA VII.1/ III.10, l. 3216) from the previously cited strophe on p. 35. Later, in his *Legislation of Lykurgus and Solon* (1790), Schiller will reassert with emphasis the progress of human mind as the state's ultimate goal: "daß Fortschreitung des Geistes das Ziel des Staats seyn soll" (NA XVII.1/ 425). Posa's freedom of thought resembles Fichte's notion of "innere Freiheit" (inner or spiritual freedom). Schiller, who had in fact initially admired Fichte's work, grew increasingly mistrustful of his philosophy the more individualistic it became, consequently distancing himself intentionally from Kant who had been his former mentor.

of humanity under the common banner of personal and collective freedom: "was Einer im Reiche der Wahrheit erwirbt, hat er Allen erworben" (NA XVII.2/ 363).³¹⁴

Ten years after the tragedy was first staged, Schiller concluded the previously mentioned Xenion entitled *Deutsche Größe* with the remark: "Wo das gelehrte beginnt, hört das politische auf" (NA I/ 320, 95). The claim that the political (Germany) ended where the educated nation set on, found its sequel in the immediately following distich *Deutscher Nationalcharakter* under the statement: "Zur Nation euch zu bilden, ihr hoffet es, Deutsche, vergebens,/ Bildet, ihr könnt es, dafür freyer zu Menschen euch aus" (NA I/ 321, 96, my emphases). Both Xenien advocate the aesthetic principle of cultural education prior to and in place of political edification.

In the same year of 1801, when Schiller decided to abridge his tragedy, he also authored his fragmentary poem *Deutsche Grösse*.³¹⁵ Often quoted to give proof of Schiller's patriotism, this work draws its relevance from the distinction made by the poet between German "Reich" (or empire) and German nation.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ Qtd. from Schiller's inaugural lecture at the University of Jena *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* (1789).

³¹⁵ The title is actually a later addition by Bernhard Suphan in his first edition of the poem in 1902. Although some critics have supported the thesis that the poem dates back to the year 1797, more recent study confirmed the later date of 1801 – based on a letter that Schiller directed to his publisher Cotta on February 26 of that same year, in which he informed him that he would start working on it that very summer (NA II.2B/ 257); see also Sauder's comments (2005: 295). Both years (1797 and/or 1801), nevertheless, represent important reference dates for Schiller's thought. For more details on the poem's four different stages of development and Schiller's three manuscripts, which attest its complex composition, see Wittkop (2005: 32-9); a detailed analysis of the poem is provided by Kaufmann's extensive study and its comparison with other poems and tragedies by Schiller (1992: 37-86).

³¹⁶ Since 1500, the German nation had begun to establish, under the political ageis of the Holy Roman Empire, its identity as an ethnical and linguistic community which traced its origins back to the Germanic tribes (Schmidt 2002: 14-5). It renewed its meaning in the 18th century when Austria and Prussia grew increasingly powerful, expanding their territorial claims and leading to the onset of a gradual dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire which inevitably affected the German Reich. In 1793, however, Wieland's comments attest that the same notion of the German nation was yet in an early stage of development: "Nun ist zwar an dem, daß es mir

Deutsches Reich und deutsche Nation
 sind zweierlei Dinge. Die Majestät
 des Deutschen ruhte nie auf dem
 Haupt s. Fürsten. Abgesondert von
 dem politischen hat der Deutsche sich
 einen eignen Werth gegründet und
 wenn auch das Imperium unterginge,
 so bliebe die *deutsche Würde* unangefochten.
 Sie ist eine *sittliche Größe*, sie wohnt in der *Kultur* u:
 im *Charakter der Nation*, der von ihren
 politischen Schicksalen unabhängig ist. (NA II.1/ 431, ll. 13-25, my emphases)

The poem associates the German "Reich" with a political entity, whereas it aligns the German nation with an eminently and exclusively cultural identity; as Schiller sets forth a few lines later: "[...] indem/ das politische Reich wankt hat sich/ das Geistige immer fester und vollkommener gebildet" (NA II.1/ 431, ll. 32-4). This intellectual property ("das Geistige") is representative of German dignity ("deutsche Würde") which endures intact the empire's downfall. As a matter of fact, Schiller adds on associating German dignity with "sittliche Größe". In what precisely does this ethical ("sittliche") greatness consist? The etymology of the Greek term ἦθος refers to the very idea of culture.³¹⁷ In his poem, Schiller equates this concept explicitly with the German nation's culture ("Kultur") and character ("Charakter"). This "sittliche Größe" or literally "cultural greatness", which results immune to political

bei zunehmenden Alter und Verstande an Gelegenheit nicht fehlt, das Deutsche Reich, zu welchem (wie ich endlich zu merken anfing) auch meine werthe *Vaterstadt* gerechnet wird, nach seiner ältesten, spätern, neuern und neuesten Verfassung, und die Deutsche Nation, nach allem was sich zu ihrem Vortheil und Nachtheil sagen lässt, etwas näher kennen zu lernen" (1857: 247). As it can be inferred from Wieland's testimonial, the notion of "fatherland" was yet one tied to a territorially delimited area, normally identified with the one's city state or principality.

³¹⁷ This original denotation is retained in the meaning with which the adjective "sittlich" was used at Schiller's time. The Grimm brothers report in their dictionary for "sittlich" the synonym of "moralisch" (DWB 1266, online version from 06/24/2013), where "moralisch" was used "im Gegensatz zu physisch" (DWB 2527, online version from 06/24/2013) that is with reference to the intellectual human faculties. In this sense, "sittliche Größe" would indicate the magnificence of German culture in terms of its literary production.

crises and is ultimately distinctive of German grandeur, is therefore chiefly apt to preserve and promote national identity.

The combination of cosmopolitan aspirations and patriotic ambitions turns Schiller's aesthetics into a pedagogical project of *national* cultural education. This is precisely what Etienne Balibar identifies, as explained in the introduction to this chapter, with the individual's institution as "homo nationalis" (1991: 93). This process, in turn, implies the production of a "fictive ethnicity": "*as if* they [*sc.* the populations] formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture and interests which transcends individuals and social conditions" (1991: 96, emphasis in the original). Balibar goes on specifying that this fictive ethnicity draws heavily upon language for – as he holds:

The language community [...] connects individuals up with an origin which may at any moment be actualized and which has as its content the *common act* of their own exchanges, of their discursive communication, using the instruments of spoken language and the whole, constantly self-renewing mass of written and recorded texts. (1996: 97, emphasis in the original)

We have already mentioned the relevance and rank ascribed to German language by Herder, and Ernst Moritz Arndt.³¹⁸ On the same line, Schiller postulated its perfection and predominance in *Deutsche Grösse*:

Das köstliche Gut der deutschen Sprache
die alles ausdrückt, das tiefste und
das flüchtigste, den Geist, die Seele,
die voll Sinn ist.
Unsre Sprache wird die Welt
beherrschen. (NA II.1/ 432, ll. 15-20, my emphasis).

³¹⁸ Cf. fn. 278. In the fifth collection of his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797), Herder made explicitly clear: "Wer die Sprache seiner Nation verachtet, [...] wird ihres Geistes [...] gefährlichster Mörder. Wer die Sprache eines Volks emporhebt, [...] der hilft das weiteste und schönste Publikum [...] in sich vereinigen und fester gründen" (HW VII/ 57., 305).

If language, following Balibar, is *de facto* part of a nation's literary records and repertoire, the linguistic leadership advocated by Schiller in the strophe, as the German verb "beherrschen" suggests, goes along with its cultural commission:

Das ist nicht des Deutschen Größe
 Obzusiegen mit dem Schwert,
 In das *Geisterreich* zu dringen
 Vorurtheile zu besiegen,
 Männlich mit dem Wahn zu kriegen
 Das ist s. Eifers werth. (NA II.1/ 435, ll. 8-13, my emphasis)

In the original passage excerpted from *Don Carlos* – from which this analysis and argument had initially departed – Posa concludes his address to the king, following directly the four patriotic verses which would no longer be included in 1801, with the outcry:

POSA Dann, Sire, wenn Sie zum glücklichsten der Welt
 Ihr eignes Königreich gemacht – dann reift
 Ihr großer Plan – dann *müssen* Sie – dann ist
 Es Ihre *Pflicht*, die Welt zu *unterwerfen*.
 (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3250-2, my emphases)

What had commenced with an exaltation of human freedom, closes with the exhortation to subject the entire world for the sake of humanity's eudaemonia.³¹⁹ Schiller provides an explanation to these apparently contradictory claims in his last epistle to the *Aesthetic Letters* (1795):

Hier also in dem Reiche des *ästhetischen Scheins* wird das *Ideal der Gleichheit* erfüllt, welches der Schwärmer so gern auch dem Wesen nach realisiert sehen möchte; und wenn es wahr ist, daß der *schöne Ton* in der Nähe des *Thrones* am

³¹⁹ Malsch rightly understands Posa's admonition not as the endorsement of a repressive regime, but rather the establishment of a protectorate and institutional monarchy: "sollte das gewiß gewalttätige Wort vom 'unterwerfen' hier nicht als repressiv aufgefaßt werden. Es ist vielmehr in Analogie zu der *Schutzherrschaft* zu verstehen [...]. Es ist die Vision einer Art *konstitutioneller Weltmonarchie*, in der das republikanische Ideal universal sein würde" (1988: 214, my emphases). Similarly, Lützel observes how under the banner of freedom republican and monarchic ideals were rendered conciliable: "Auch der Republikaner Marquis Posa vermag dann eine absolutistische Herrschaft zu akzeptieren, wenn die Monarchen im Dienst der Freiheit und der Menschenrechte stehen [...]" (2007: 56).

frühesten und am vollkommensten reift, so müsste man auch hier die gütige Schickung erkennen, die den Menschen oft *einzuschränken* scheint, um ihn in eine idealische Welt zu treiben.
(SW V/ 669, 27)

Aesthetic-anthropological and political expectations go for Schiller, once more, hand in hand. If, as he argues, the "graceful sound" ("schöne Ton") – a direct allusion to the string-music metaphor ("Saitenspiel") already encountered in the play as metonymy for the concept of art – can unfold earliest and most completely near the throne ("Thrones"), that is the monarchy, the restrictions that humankind may have to endure in the real world ought to be accepted as an incitement to strive for the ideal one.³²⁰ In this aesthetic realm, it is indeed the king's obligation ("Pflicht") to submit the rest of humanity to his kingdom of equality and freedom. In no instance did Schiller intend to withdraw the scepter from its sovereign. It is, on the contrary, Posa's goal to make Philipp II "von Millionen Königen *ein* König" (NA VII.1/ III.10, l. 3201, my emphasis).³²¹ Schiller reiterates this very creed of collective submission to the common human pursuit of intellectual freedom in *Deutsche Grösse*:

³²⁰ This is a concept that Schiller had already elucidated in his *Letters on Don Carlos* (1788): "Das entgegengesetzte Elend der Sklaverei und des Aberglaubens zieht sie [*sc.* Posas Seele] immer fester und fester an diese Lieblingswelt" (NA XXII/ 140-1, 2). Herder had similarly commented on the positive influence that enthusiasts like Posa exert on the history of mankind: "Am heiligsten sind dem Geist der Menschengeschichte gutmütige Toren und Schwärmer [...]. Ohne Begeisterung geschah nichts Großes und Gutes auf der Erde; die man für Schwärmer hielt, haben dem menschlichen Geschlecht die nützlichsten Dienste geleistet. Trotz alles Spottes, trotz jeder Verfolgung und Verachtung drangen sie durch; und wenn sie nicht zum Ziel kamen, so kamen sie doch *weiter* und brachten *weiter*" (SW VII/ 736, 10/ 121., emphases in the original).

³²¹ Posa's republican "absolutism", as I would name it, was not only in line with the widely supported enlightened model of constitutional monarchy, but it was later underpinned by a more moderate position that Schiller embraced upon the outbreak of the Jacobinian *terreur*; on the plurality of interpretations and adaptations to which the classic republican ideology was subject, see Schmidt's attentive study (2005: 105-10). As a matter of fact, for 18th-century German thinkers the notion of republic did not stand originally in opposition to that of the monarchy, but it was instead employed "zunächst im sinne von staatswesen überhaupt" – as the Grimm brothers report in their dictionary, see vol. 14, col. 818, online version from 06/27/2013; henceforth quoted as "DWB". In *Die Gesetzgebung des Lykurgus und Solon* (1790), Schiller situates the republic between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy, the latter identified with democracy ("die Republik zwischen königlicher Tyranney und anarchischer Demokratie" [NA XVI.1/ 425]); and in her analysis of Schiller's writing, Nilges juxtaposes the concept of "direct democracy" with that of "representative" as the one

Höherm Sieg hat der errungen
 Der der Wahrheit Blitz geschwungen,
 Der die Geister selbst befreit,
Freiheit der Vernunft erfechten,
Heißt für alle Völker rechten,
 Gilt für alle ewge Zeit.(NA II.1/ 435, ll. 8-13, my emphases)

In this envisioned enlightened humanism, that would coalesce and consolidate Europe in one cultural and literary community in the name of human reason and its freedom ("Freiheit der Vernunft"), cosmopolitan and patriotic rationales conditioned each other.³²² Under the banner of intellectual freedom, the country claimed the right to expand its cultural accomplishment and authority over others in the pursuit of a cosmopolitan project of "individual education" and prospect of *Humanität*.³²³

privileged by author (2011: 206-7). In his treatise *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795), Kant will equally set off republicanism from despotism, where despotism coincided for him with democracy: "Damit man die republikanische Verfassung nicht (wie gemeiniglich geschieht) mit der demokratischen verwechsle, muß Folgendes bemerkt werden. [...] Der Republikanism ist das Staatsprinzip der *Absonderung* der ausführenden Gewalt (der Regierung) von der gesetzgebenden; der Despotism ist das der eigenmächtigen Vollziehung des Staats von Gesetzen, die er selbst gegeben hat, mithin der öffentliche Wille, sofern er von den Regenten als sein Privatwille gehandhabt wird. – Unter den drei Staatsformen ist die der Demokratie im eigentlichen Verstande des Worts *nothwendig* ein Despotism, weil sie eine exekutive Gewalt gründet, da alle über und allenfalls auch wider Einen (der also nicht mit einstimmt), mithin Alle, die doch nicht Alle sind, beschließen; welches ein Widerspruch des allgemeinen Willens mit sich selbst und mit der Freiheit ist (KW 8:352, my emphases), see English transl. (1996: 324). It is important to notice that Kant begins his argument with the necessary premise that distinguishes republicanism from democracy which – as he holds (not without indirect reference to the French Revolution's failures) – are commonly confused with each other. On these grounds, he thus argues that contrary to despotism, republicanism separates the legislative from the executive power which otherwise risks, as is the case in democratic systems, that the majority's power be imposed while silencing the will of others.

³²² According to Whaley, it was in the eighteenthundreds that the intellectuals' critique against modernity – its materialism and nationalistic interests derived from the cataclysmic rupture in Europe that followed the French revolution – inaugurated the so-called "post-national" era of humanism: "das post-nationale Zeitalter der Menschheit oder der Humanität" (2010: 221).

³²³ In his *Ideas* (1784-85), Herder – who wrote extensively about the notion of "Humanität" in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-97) – included next to "Vernunft" (reason) also "Billigkeit" (fairness) as the two fundamental components which drive the humanization process forward: "Nur Vernunft und Billigkeit sollen sie [*sc. die Völker*] lernen; üben sie dieselbe, so kommt von Schritt zu Schritt Licht in ihre Seele, Güte in ihr Herz, Vollkommenheit in ihren Staat, Glückseligkeit in ihr Leben" (HW VI/ 645, III/ bk. 4, ch. 3). According to Mauser, these two key words constitute the core of Herder's (2007: 187) philosophy of history. The translation of the German "Billigkeit" with "fairness" is from Adler as well as his philological and philosophical definition of the term: "Humanity learns by experience and thus discovers what *Humanität* is. *Billigkeit* in this context is the pragmatic consideration of the human imperfection that energizes human

Er [*sc.* der deutsche Sohn] ist *erwählt* von dem Weltgeist, während
des Zeitkampfs
an dem ewgen Bau der *Menschenbildung*
zu arbeiten, [...]. (NA II.1/ 433, ll. 17-20, my emphases)³²⁴

It appears evident that Schiller's aesthetic anthropology draws upon a cosmopolitan ideal rooted in the comparative claim that posits and promotes the cultural supremacy of an elected ("erwählt") nation.³²⁵ He goes thus far as to elicit and establish the country's mediating role from its natural, centralistic geography: "Und so wie er [*sc.* der deutsche Sohn] *in der Mitte von/ Europens Völker* sich befindet,/ So ist er der *Kern der Menschheit*" (NA II.1/ 433, ll. 13-5, my emphases).

If, on the one hand, the idea of "cultural nation" is a conception which transcends Schiller's territorially particularistic patriotism by identifying the German *Gelehrtenrepublik* as one national entity, on the other hand, it undoubtedly invokes and imposes its primacy.³²⁶

curiosity and exploration. This imperfection allows for errors and mistakes – as long as human beings are willing to learn from mistakes" (2009: 109).

³²⁴ Kaufmann comments on the definition of citizen in terms of "son" to underscore the peculiarly genealogical relationship that tied the individual to his country and was intrinsic to the very conception of nation as family (1993: 63).

³²⁵ As Meinecke observed: "[d]ieser Universalismus war zugleich kräftigster Individualismus" (1962: 57). For Beyer, a contemporary of Schiller, it was the cosmopolitan concern of every patriot to include the rest of humanity in what he deemed would contribute to its welfare and advancement: "Dem Kosmopoliten wird an der Aufrechterhaltung der Macht, der Würde und Wichtigkeit des Staats, der sein Vaterland ist, um so viel mehr gelegen seyn, je mehr er einsieht und überzeugt ist, daß davon Vortheile abhängen, durch welche die Menschheit gewinnt" (1795: 227).

³²⁶ Following Viroli's distinction between patriotism and nationalism: "for the patriots, the primary value is the republic and the free way of life that the republic permits; for the nationalists, the primary values are the *spiritual and cultural unity* of the people" (1995: 2) – Schiller's nationalism reflects the cultural imperialism that was asserted by cosmopolitan thinkers in the name of knowledge. It is known, in fact, that German intellectuals had endowed their country with the mission to educate humanity. Fichte, for instance, argued in his *Patriotic Dialogues* (1807): "Ueberrimmt nicht der Deutsche durch *Wissenschaft* die *Regierung der Welt*, so werden zum Beschlusse von allerhand Plakereien aussereuropäische Nationen, die nordamerikanischen Stämme, sie übernehmen [...]; aber Ihr werdet bis dahin unter jeder Veränderung in sicherer Ehre und Wohlstand blühen; denn die Thorheit ist allenthalben beliebt, und wenn der Deutsche sie nicht abschüttelt, so schüttelt sicher keine andere europäische Nation sie ab, und Europa wird zu einer einzigen continenten Thorheit und *Unwissenheit*" (1846: 243-4, my emphases). One cannot but overhear a hegemonic, if not racist, undertone in his assertion

Schiller's cosmopolitan patriotism displays, in this regard, the same ambiguities for which Posa's behavior accounted.³²⁷ Schiller, however, who in his *Letters on Don Carlos* admits to know of his character's ideological contradictions, yet accepts them as necessary for the sake of his very ideals: "Posa, der Weltbürger, mußte gerade so und nicht anders handeln" (NA

enjoyed by ethnical and cultural discourses of supremacy alike. It was the time, after all, in which the enlightened universalism of these intellectuals was being challenged by the Romantics' earliest national sentiments. This is, for instance, the very case of Friedrich Schlegel, who in his *Study of Greek Poetry* (1797) argued: "dass die Deutschen [...] die kultivirtesten Nationen Europa's im Einzelnen an Höhe der Bildung eben so weit übertreffen" (1947: 197). On the same line, his brother August Wilhelm encouraged in his *Lectures on Fine Art and Literature* (1801-1804) to pursue a European patriotism in which the German Reich would perform – where it could no longer claim the prerogative to politically unify Europe – the exemplary role of the Orient as regenerator of culture: "Laßt uns Neid und Eifersucht entfernen, unsern *Patriotismus* liebevoll *erweitern*, so gehören uns die *großen Schöpfungen ihres Geistes* auch mit an. [...] Vielleicht ist uns die schöne Bestimmung vorbehalten, das erloschne Gefühl der Einheit Europa's dereinst wieder zu wecken, wenn eine egoistische Politik ihre Rolle ausgespielt haben wird. Das ist nicht zu läugnen: wenn der Orient die Region ist von welcher die Regenerationen des Menschengeschlechtes ausgehen, so ist Deutschland als der *Orient Europa's* zu betrachten" (1884c: 34-5, my emphases); on the growing linguistic and cultural interest that the Romantics displayed for the Orient which distinguished itself for its "superior knowledge" ("überlegenes Wissen"), see the comprehensive collection of essays by Bogdal (2007: 8). Fichte went so far as to conclude his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) by predicating the very future of (European) humanity as depending upon the survival of the German nation itself: "wenn ihr versinkt, so versinkt die ganze Menschheit mit, ohne Hoffnung einer einstigen Wiederherstellung" (1846: 499). Goethe himself, advocate of *Weltliteratur* since 1827, reported in his letter to J. L. Büchler from 14 June 1820: "da ich weder Blick noch Schritt in fremde Lande getan, als in der Absicht, das *allgemein Menschliche*, was über den ganzen Erdboden verbreitet und vertheilt ist, unter den verschiedensten Formen kennen zu lernen und solches in meinem Vaterlande wiederzufinden, anzuerkennen, zu fördern. Denn es ist einmal die Bestimmung des Deutschen, sich zum *Repräsentanten der sämtlichen Weltbürger* zu erheben"; *Sämtliche Werke* (henceforth "SW"), vol. 36, p. 65-6, 382. As Meinecke remarked: "Dadurch *nationalisierte* man die bisherige universale Bildung, und so, daß man nicht sagen konnte und wollte, wo das Universale aufhöre und das Nationale begönne" (1962: 56, my emphasis).

³²⁷ In his *Letters on Don Carlos* (1788), written only a year before the French revolution, Schiller had explicitly addressed the dangers involved in Posa's ideological enthusiasm: "Schon allein dieses, daß jedes solche moralische Ideal oder Kunstgebäude doch nie mehr ist als eine Idee, die, gleich allen andern Ideen, an dem eingeschränkten Gesichtspunkt des Individuums teilnimmt, dem sie angehört, und in ihrer Anwendung also auch der Allgemeinheit nicht fähig sein kann, in welcher der Mensch sie zu gebrauchen pflegt, schon dieses allein, sag ich, müßte sie zu einem äußerst gefährlichen Instrument in seinen Händen machen: aber noch weit gefährlicher wird sie durch die Verbindung, in die sie nur allzuschnell mit gewissen Leidenschaften tritt, die sie augenblicklich ergreifen und sich unzertrennbar mit ihr vermengen" (NA XXII/ 171, 11, my emphasis). As a premonition nearly of the forthcoming Parisian terror, Schiller observed how ideals could, through individual appropriation and application ("durch einen sehr menschlichen Übergang") be exposed to a deleterious abuse ("einem schädlichen Mißbrauch ausgesetzt sind") (NA XXII/ 171, 11). See also Safranski's comment to Posa's idealism: "Im Namen der Vernunft und der Freiheit wird Robespierre wenig später die wirklichen Köpfe abschlagen lassen. Der Terror der Revolution ist im strategischen Agieren Posas antizipiert" (2004: 256).

XXII/ 151, 3).³²⁸ The end, in other words, justifies the means. His idealistic goal concedes him to functionalize his friendships for the sake of his self-interested thinking – from the moment prior to his encounter with Philipp II ("[...] Nützen/ Muß man den Augenblick, der Einmal nur/ Sich bietet. [...] – Was der König/ Mit mir auch wollen mag, gleich viel! – Ich weiß,/ Was ich – ich mit dem König soll" [NA VII.1/ III.9, ll. 2950-2, and ll. 2966-8]) to his final epilogue:

POSA Doch ich, von falscher Zärtlichkeit bestochen,
 Von stolzem Wahn geblendet, ohne Dich [*sc.* Carlos]
 Das Wagestück zu enden, unterschlage
 Der Freundschaft mein gefährliches Geheimniß.
 Das war die große Uebereilung! Schwer
 Hab' ich gefehlt. Ich weiß es. Raserey
 War meine Zuversicht. Verzeih' – sie war
 Auf deiner Freundschaft Ewigkeit gegründet. (NA VII.1/ V.3, ll. 4640-7)³²⁹

Posa dies confident that his ideal – though still premature – was destined to be realized in a time yet to come: "[...] Das Jahrhundert ist meinem Ideal nicht reif. Ich lebe/ Ein Bürger derer, welche kommen werden" (NA VII.1/ III.9, ll. 3078-80).³³⁰ In this belief,

³²⁸ In his contemporary article, Beyer explains how the inconsistencies derived from the conciliation of cosmopolitan and patriotic ideals were particularly true under repressive regimes, such as the Spanish 16th-century counter reformation or the 18th-century absolutistic *ancien régime*. He mentions, for this matter, explicitly king Philipp II and count Alba, justifying indirectly Posa's own ideological inconsistencies: "Dagegen lassen sich Kosmopolitismus und Patriotismus schwerlich mit einander vereinigen, wenn der Kosmopolit da, wo er lebt [...] statt einer vernünftigen Freiheit, Intoleranz und Despotismus, Barbaren statt Kultur, und blinden Aberglauben, statt Vernunft und Aufklärung, findet. [...] Unmöglich kann und wird sich der Kosmopolit alsdann für den Staat, der sein Vaterland ist, erklären, wenn er sieht, daß sich dieser Staat in Entwürfe und Unternehmungen einläßt, die dahin abzielen, allgemeine Menschenrechte zu unterdrücken, der Vernunft Fesseln anzulegen, Aufklärung zu hindern, Aberglauben und Despotismus einzuführen" (1795: 225-6).

³²⁹ Cf. also Don Carlos's remarks to the king upon Posa's demise: "KARLOS Ihn zu beherrschen wähten Sie – und waren/ Ein folgsam *Werkzeug* seiner höhern Plane. [...] Ihr Herz/ Und Ihre Freundschaft drangen Sie ihm auf,/ Ihr Zepter was das *Spielwerk* seiner Hände" (NA VII.1/ V.4, ll. 4800-1, and ll. 4808-10, my emphases).

³³⁰ As Mani points out, cosmopolitanism remains, after all, eminently "an *imagination* of world citizenry" (2007: 27, my emphasis). The very idea of a world republic was eventually reduced to a utopian derivate. Kant, who had in his *Ideas for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent* (1784) yet spoken of "general cosmopolitan condition" will rectify his original statement in his following writings: "Obgleich dieser Staatskörper für jetzt nur noch sehr im rohen Entwurfe dasteht, so fängt sich dennoch gleichsam schon ein

Schiller concluded his *Aesthetic Letters* wondering whether and where his state of beauty truly existed: "Existiert aber auch ein solcher Staat des schönen Scheins, und wo ist er zu finden?" (SW V/ 669, 27). Aware of the difficulty to conciliate his cosmopolitan humanism with his patriotic hopes, Schiller eventually entrusted his answer to the realm of the ideal: "wo der Mensch durch die verwikeltesten Verhältnisse mit kühner Einfalt und ruhiger Unschuld geht, und weder nöthig hat, fremde Freyheit zu kränken, um die seinige zu behaupten, noch seine Würde wegzuwerfen, um Anmut zu zeigen" (SW V/ 669, 27). This wishful thinking can be viewed as Schiller's ultimate response to the flaws and faults of his cosmopatriotic design and dream.

Gefühl in allen Gliedern, deren jedem an der Erhaltung des Ganzen gelegen ist, an zu regen; und dieses giebt Hoffnung, daß man manchen Revolutionen der Umbildung endlich das, was die Natur zur höchsten Absicht hat, *ein allgemeiner weltbürgerlicher Zustand*, als der Schooß, worin alle ursprünglichen Anlagen der Menschengattung entwickelt werden, dereinst einmal zu Stande kommen werde" (KW 8:28); cf. English transl. (2001: 130). Driven, in fact, by the fear of censorship against a statement that may have been deemed revolutionary, he published a second article the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1793 entitled *On the Common Saying: that may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice*. This time he specified that his ideal of "a universal state of nations", though true in theory, would be (only) "possible" in practical terms: "Ich meinerseits vertraue dagegen doch auf die *Theorie*, die von dem Rechtsprincip ausgeht, wie das Verhältniß unter Menschen und Staaten sein soll, und die den Erdengöttern die Maxime anpreist, in ihren Streitigkeiten jederzeit so zu verfahren, daß ein solcher *allgemeiner Völkerstaat* dadurch eingeleitet werde, und ihn also als *möglich* (in praxi), und *daß er sein kann*, anzunehmen" (KW 8:313, my emphases); cf. English transl. (1996: 309). In his later lectures on the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1773/ 1798), Kant will further reduce his conception of "cosmopolitismus" to an "unattainable idea" asserting that, though not a constitutive principle, it represented a regulative one that deserved, at least, the effort to be pursued: "eine weltbürgerliche Gesellschaft [...] welche an sich *unerreichbare Idee* aber kein constitutives Princip [...], sondern nur ein regulatives Princip ist" (KW 7:331, my emphasis); cf. English transl. (2006: 236-7). In his subsequent treatise *On Perpetual Peace* (1795), he eventually equated his original conception of "world republic with a merely "positive idea" which fulfilled the main purpose to hold off the constantly impending risk of national wars: "so kann an die Stelle der positiven Idee einer Weltrepublik [...] nur das negative Surrogat eines den Krieg abwehrenden, bestehenden und sich immer ausbreitenden Bundes den Strom der rechtscheuenden, feindseligen Neigung aufhalten, doch mit beständiger Gefahr ihres Ausbruchs" (KW 8:357); cf. English transl. (1996: 328). On this last point, see Albrecht (2005: 187-92); on Kant's cosmopolitan patriotism, see Kleingold (2012: 26-34); on the Kantian aporia to conciliate his hopes for peace with his theory on the inevitability of wars as driving historical force and means that induces nations to come together and seek in federalism a form of protection, see Berghahn (1992: 91).

3.1.2 *Leoniero da Dertona* (1822-1831)

Conceived during the years (1822-1830) of his captivity at the Spielberg fortress in the southern Moravian city of Brno, Pellico brought his medieval tragedy from memory to paper upon his release and return to Turin: "la composi nello Spielberg a memoria (giacchè non mi davano carta e calamajo)" – is what he recounts to Quirina Magiotti Mocenni, who was tied to Foscolo already by a devoted friendship – "la ritenni impressa nel cervello, la corressi e ricorressi per molti anni, e finalmente, quando fui a Torino, la scrissi".³³¹ The sentence that Pellico had served in the Czech prison had deeply affected the poet's personality who, reconverted to the Christian creed of his childhood – after a temporary estrangement during his French sojourn in the enlightened and liberal Lyon – decided to eventually withdraw from the active engagement in politics cultivated as former Milanese "carbonaro", without however ever diverting his attention from the national concerns that yet afflicted the Italian peninsula.³³² Akin to Schiller, Pellico will eventually and exclusively resort to the realm of

³³¹ Qtd. in Rinieri (1899: 352-3) from Pellico's letter to Quirina dated 21 Dec. 1831. Pellico himself reports in *Le mie prigioni* (1832) the act of memorizing during his Spielberg captivity entire works and verses composed by heart while the prisoners were refused to be provided with any writing material: "Dimandammo infinite volte la grazia d'avere almeno carta e calamaio per istudiare [...]. Non fummo esauditi mai. [...] Mirabile fu la capacità che acquistammo di poetare lunghe produzioni a memoria, limarle e tornarle a limare infinite volte [...]. Maroncelli compose così, a poco a poco, e ritenne a mente parecchie migliaia di versi lirici ed epici. Io feci la tragedia di *Leoniero da Dertona* e varie altre cose" (1964: 540-1/ LXXV). Pellico left the Moravian dungeon on August 1, 1830 to reunite with his family in Piedmont on September 17. *Leoniero da Dertona* was published on November 20, 1831 by editor Bocca in a volume that included a former historical tragedy by the title *Gismonda da Mendrisio*, and the biblical drama *Erodiade*; on the editorial history of Pellico's play, see Mola's biography (2005: 141). For additional biographical dates and details cf. Savio's concise and yet complete summary (1900: 19) as well as the more recent study by Barbero (2010), who, in an equally narrative style, follows Pellico along the main stations of his public and private itinerary of life. On the political role that the publication of Pellico's *My prisons* exerted in the relationship between the Italian king Carlo Alberto of Savoy and the Austrian chancellor, prince Metternich, see Nada's article (1984: 23-30).

³³² Just as the former *Storm-and-Stress* Schiller abdicated, after learning of the Jacobinian terror, the ideological enthusiasm of a character like Posa and favored, instead, a more classical restraint, Pellico's moderate liberalism never aspired to a subversive revolution of the masses: "perché guai se le grandi masse si scatenano!" was his comment in a letter to his brother Luigi from May 1819 (LM 172). Even in the politically most engaged years of his youth, Pellico had never adhered to liberal extremism or accepted civil war as a valid expedient for

aesthetics to profess and practice a patriotism rooted in the Christian message and morals of peace, brotherhood and humanity.³³³ Hence his reiterated emphasis on literature as the

political change and improvement. In the subsequent chapters that he added to the publication of his prison memoirs, the author in fact reiterated with emphasis, in the attempt to object against the charge issued against him by the more intollerant group of liberals who accused him of having betrayed his original patriotic and political cause: "Del resto, se in gioventù i miei principii politici erano più temerarii, io non li aveva mai spinti però sino alla demagogia, e al disprezzo di tutte le antiche leggi; odiosi m'erano i discepoli del giacobinismo. In nessun'altra significazione io era mai stato acceso d'amore patrio, che nel desiderare nazionalità ed espulsione di dominanti stranieri. Negli anni maturi ho rettificato, ma non mutato di molto le mie politiche opinioni. Tuttavia la condanna ch'io dava alle cabale e alle guerre civili in generale, stupì ed irritò dopo la mia uscita di carcere molti de' così detti liberali" (1964: 599/ IV). In a letter directed to count Confalonieri from 1837, Pellico eventually announced his retirement from the political scene while he inveighed against those "irreligious" and malcontent "spoilsports" ("guastamestieri") that represented the liberal party and from which he clearly distanced himself: "Quanto alla politica, ho veduto non essere cosa che mi spetti [...], pregando Dio per gli oppressi ed anche per gli oppressori. [...] Il così detto partito liberale in Italia è sempre molto contaminato d'esagerazioni puerili e peggio che puerili, in gran numero di teste piene di pregiudizi giacobineschi e irreligiosi: effetto d'ignoranza e d'esasperazioni, le quali pur troppo si sono accresciute. Non vogliono capire che, per onorare davvero la patria, convien essere sensato e virtuoso. Il tempo solo può disingannare questi *guastamestieri*. Sono giovani, e li compatisco, perché mi sovviene che fui giovane anch'io quantunque non esagerato come loro" (letter from Oct. 11 [1863: 63/ 110., my emphasis]). The overall more contained and contemplative period of Pellico's later life stood, therefore, in sharp contrast to the ideological impetus that had animated his youth and had found instead a more pronounced echo, as we shall see, in his early dramatic production with *Francesca da Rimini* (1815) and *Eufemio da Messina* (1820) composed during his stay in Italy's literary centre of Milan (1809-1820), after an equally intellectually stimulating triennium spent in Lyon (1806-1809). This time, in fact, which coincided not incidentally with the dissolution of the Kingdom of Italy in April 1814, the end of the Napoleonic empire and, upon the Vienna Congress (1815), with the restauration of the *ancien* Austrian regime in Italy and Germany, represented Pellico's politically most active period. It was propagated by his early involvement in intellectual circles, his employment as tutor for Count Porro Lambertenghi's sons since May 1816, his subsequent role as editor of the progressive Romantic periodical *Il Conciliatore* in 1819 (subsidized by the very Porro and by Count Confalonieri), and upon the journal's suppression by the Austrian censorship, his initiation in 1820 into the clandestine Carbonari society through Maroncelli until his arrest in the Milanese St. Margherita prison on October 13, 1820. Followed by a five-month detention and trial in Venice, he was eventually sent to the insalubrious dungeons of the medieval Spielberg castle. Berchet will commemorate his friend's fate through an homage to "Silvio" as invoked by the poet's father figure in his patriotic poem *Il romito del Ceniso* (1823-1824): "Oh, l'improvido! l'han còlto/ come agnello al suo presepio;/ e di mano al percussor/ sol dai perfidi fu tolto/ perché, avvinto in ceppi, il calice/ beva lento del dolor;/ dove un pio mai nol consola,/ dove i giorni non gli numera/ altro mai che l'alternar/ delle scolte... [...]" (1911: 36, ll. 115-24). Published in London during Berchet's exile from Milan, while the city was suffering Metternich's repressive regime (1815-1848), the author laments the forfeiture of his country traded to foreigners: "Libertà volle; ma stolta!/ credè ai prenci e osò commettere/ ai lor giuri il suo voler./ I suoi prenci l'han travolta,/ l'han ricinta di perfidie,/ l'han venduta allo stranier" (1911: 36, ll. 55-60). It is this very allegation and criticism that will constitute the main subject of *Leoniero's* dramatic development.

³³³ Yet whereas Schiller viewed Christian religion primarily as a cultural phenomenon of human history, of which he availed himself to illustrate his aesthetic theory (cf. fn. 425 in section 3.3.1), Pellico vice versa contemplated literary writing as the instrument apt to propagate his religious devotion and doctrine. Despite, in fact, the inconsistencies that persisted between Pellico's and Mazzini's patriotism and political action, both authors exemplify the very nature of an Italian Risorgimento rooted in Catholic faith and fervor. In contrast, however, to Mazzini's insurrectionary activities, for the antirevolutionary Pellico and Schiller alike, literature represented and remained the main vehicle to first educate the masses to national citizens. In this respect,

pedagogic vehicle of civil and ethical education in the twenty-four years that followed his imprisonment until his death in 1854.³³⁴

In contrast to former comparative studies that have focused primarily on the narrative context and content to identify possible coincidences subsisting between Pellico's and Schiller's dramas, in my examination of their plays, I seek to exempt from a reductive analogy of individual scene. Instead, I will evidence the thematic and ideological kinship shared by the two authors and detectable in their dramas.³³⁵ This is particularly true in view of the fact that the tragic genre, in particular, acquired in the 19th century an increasingly

Pellico saw – in the equal acknowledgment of classic and romantic tradition no substantial difference. As he himself asserted in the midst of the heated *querelle* between "anciens" and "modernes": "[n]è alcuna delle due dottrine nega essere ufficio speciale della letteratura il promuovere o colla scelta degli argomenti o collo svolgimento delle idee, piuttosto che uno sterile piacere in chi legge, un caldo amore per *la patria* e per *le virtù civili*"; see his article on "Gertrude of Wyoming, ec. Gertrude di Wyoming. Poema in tre canti di Tomaso Campbell – Terza Edizione. Londra, 1810", *Il Conciliatore*, 14 Jan. 1819 (1953: 49, my emphases). Pellico remained faithful to this aesthetic creed even after replacing with a strong faith in the universal value of Christian humanitarianism the juvenile spirit – "dominato da cieca energia di cuore e da immaginazione" (1863: 153-4), as he writes to Orlandini – that had animated his early patriotic zeal. The at that time secretary of the Accademia Labronica in Livorno, Francesco Silvio Orlandini – who would edit and publish between 1850 and 1862 together with Enrico Mayer a posthumous collection of Foscolo's oeuvre (*Opere edite e postume*) that included manuscripts preserved by Quirina Mocenni – had asked Pellico for permission to publish fifteen inedited letters that he authored to Foscolo. Pellico, who had initially refused to render public "quelle lettere mie tutte impeto e smania e lagnanze eccessive", dismissing a patriotic enthusiasm and engagement to which he no longer adhered ("quelle lettere mie a Ugo Foscolo [...] [l]e trovo di poco interesse e quindi non degne di stampa. – Piacemi la calda amicizia che esprimevano per l'infelice Foscolo; ma io portava, in quel *bollore giovanile*, tutti i miei sentimenti ad un *eccesso stolto*. Onoro ed amo sempre la memoria di quell'alto ingegno, ma ora vedo ch'io era un *discepolo fanatico* sino all'idolatria. In giovinezza, io era vissuto più coi libri e co' sogni della fantasia, che fra gli uomini, e l'esagerazione di certi miei giudizi mi pareva gran senno; oggidì non può farmi fuorchè pietà" [1953: 153, my emphases]), will eventually grant his permission under the condition of expunging specific passages that would attest his former inexperienced, "fanatic" and "foolish" ardor (1863: 153-4); cf. letter to Orlandini from 15 Sept. 1853, in *Epistolario di Silvio Pellico*, no. 328.

³³⁴ In the preface dedicated to his parents "Onorato e Maria" in the 1831 trilogy collection of his dramas *Gismonda*, *Erodiade* and *Leoniero*, Pellico reiterates the notion of literature intended to depict authentic human beings and thus impart to society a sense of a moral responsibility: "La poesia, e particolarmente quella che con forza e verità dipinge virtù e colpe e sciagure umane, è riconosciuta da' savi non essere arte di poco pregio, ma contribuire al vantaggio della società, quando viene diretta a destare pensieri giusti ed affetti generosi. Sarei felice, o cari genitori, se questo intento apparisse loro espresso con efficacia in queste composizioni" (1861: 208).

³³⁵ For previous comparative approaches, cf. the older studies by Mazzucchetti (1913) and Cimino (1925), to which I shall more systematically refer in the course of my analysis.

eminent role in the expression and edification of a national, patriotic theater – a trend and tradition to which Pellico purposely adhered:

La tragedia tende dappertutto in questa età a meritarsi il titolo di poema eminentemente *nazionale*. Alfieri in Italia, Schiller in Germania, Chénier in Francia, ecco tre valenti poeti moderni i quali attinsero il loro estro dall'amore del vero e del giusto e quindi della patria.³³⁶

Departing, consequently, from the notions of fatherland and family – as it had been extensively elucidated in Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* (1787/1801) – in what follows, I intend to develop this interpretation by sharpening the focus in turn on Pellico's patriotic and cosmopolitan creed. Reference to the theories of the political Risorgimento activist and Schiller enthusiast Giuseppe Mazzini, shall further elucidate and expose with more clarity the overlaps and gaps, the connections and contradictions in ideological perspectives and practices of the two playwrights. The republican myth and motif will constitute the thematic framework of my analysis in the dichotomy of liberty and tyranny, against the backdrop of what Pellico identified to be "il sistema collosale di dispotismo" that Schiller portrayed in his drama.³³⁷

As Schiller's Marquis Posa returns, after several years abroad, to his country to pose an end to a tyrannic kingdom and reestablish peace and freedom in the oppressed Netherlands, in Pellico's tragedy the curtain is raised with the eponymous protagonist Leoniero – "da sì lunghi anni ramingo/ Co' pii crociati!" (LD I.1/ 254) – arriving at his

³³⁶ See Pellico's article on "Théâtre de Marie Joseph de Chénier, imprimerie de Baudovin fils – Parigi, 1818" which appeared in print on *Il Conciliatore*, 7 Febr. 1819, no. 46 (1953: 167-8, my emphasis).

³³⁷ See Pellico's article on "Philippe II. Tragédie de M.J. de Chénier. – Théâtre de Chénier. Paris, 1818", published in *Il Conciliatore*, 4 Dec. 1819, no. 62 (1953: 396).

hometown upon a prolonged absence as crusader in the Orient, to restore his "mother-city" ("città materna") from warfare and despotic bondage:

LEONIERO Che ingratamente abbandonata
 È la città materna; e alla nemica
 Repubblica Pavese, e agli stranieri,
 Che da nostra perfidia or traggon lucro,
 Oggetto siam di spregio.³³⁸

Contended by the hostile Republic of Pavia ("Repubblica Pavese") and the foreign Swabian invaders ("stranieri"), Leoniero finds Dertona burned to the ground ("Tutti gli [edifici] strusser la ferocia e il foco/ Degli stranieri" [LD I.1/ 254]), only to be confirmed by old-time friend Guidello that his own son Enzo is responsible for the local terror and tyranny ("tinto ora di sangue/ Cittadino è quel ferro" [LD I.1/ 255]) through his alliance with the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa ("all'avversario i brandi/ Nostri promette" [LD I.1/ 255]). Exclusive beholder of the consular seat ("da quattr'anni/ Deporlo [sc. L'annuo consolar ferro] nega [LD I.1/ 255]), Enzo has usurped and imposed his absolute power against the former town tribune Arrigo, son of Leoniero's erstwhile foe Auberto and spouse of his daughter Eloisa, whom he detains in captivity with the request, under threat of death, to hand down the city fortress ("Che, o l'usurpata rocca il tribun renda/ O reo di morte egli è" [LD I.3/ 256]): symbol of the popular power and freedom ("Sir della rocca/ Il popol è" [LD I.3/ 256]). The town – torn and frayed between those who support the young consul and his loyalty to the foreign Hohenstaufen king ("UN CITTADINO È padre/ Del popol Enzo!" [LD

³³⁸ *Leoniero da Dertona* (henceforth "LD"), act I, scene 1, p. 255. The action takes place in the 12th-century town of "Dertona antica" (LD I.1/ 254), the ancient Roman Derthona, current Tortona, a village in the Piedmontese province of Alessandria. The term "perfidia" that Pellico employs in the quote, recalls the use that Dante makes of the word in the *Inferno* against pope Boniface VIII – here in its etymological meaning of "per fidem", i.e. detrimental to faith – the more so as it appears, both in Pellico's and Dante's text juxtaposed to "lucro". To what extent Pellico may have adopted the term with this particular connotation in mind, especially within the context of the religious patriotism that permeates his plays, may be worthwhile examining in more detail in a subsequent study on the subject.

I.4/ 258]), and the people who side with Arrigo and the Lombardian League presided by the city of Milan ("POPOLO Arrigo/ Vogliamo! Arrigo, il tribun nostro!" [LD I.4/ 258]) – is prey to civil rivalry and revolution. This is the premise of the play which begins *in medias res*, and the ground on which the forthcoming dramatic action will unfold.

The picture of bloodshed and betrayal with which the tragedy opens, articulates – in the protagonist's recollection of his hometown's heroic past – Pellico's critique against longtime civil warfare ("l'ire cittadine") and his patriotic concern towards a weakened country rendered vulnerable to foreign expansion and invasion:

LEONIERO Ire di sangue dividean que' forti
 Ahi, troppo spesso! Ma se *ferri estranei*
 La *comun patria* minacciavan, l'ire
 Cittadine tacean, sin che Dertona
 Della vittoria il cantico intonasse.
 Ed ora – obbrobrio! E sarà ver? Curvarsi
 Anzi color che la struggean? *coll'empio*
 Svevo *allearsi*? E il figlio mio... La fama
 Non mentirebbe? Egli il fellow? (LD I.1/ 254, my emphases)

Through Leoniero's mourning, Pellico voices in these verses a notion of patriotism that entails at once the plea for a "common fatherland" ("comun patria") – hence for a collective kinship and loyalty –, and a polemic that indignantly defies its alliance with the Swabian oppressors in the denunciation addressed by the Milanese spokesman of Dertona's tyrannic consul: "ORATORE Compiuto è il tradimento/ Del consol vostro: allo stranier si vende" (LD III.1/ 264).³³⁹ It is indicative that Leoniero's patriotic feelings are restricted to the village of Dertona, and may extend as far as to include the Lombardian League. This perspective is

³³⁹ Pellico had already articulated this charge in his former tragedy *Francesca da Rimini* (1815), in which the poet lamented the tragic demise of Italian soldiers who had lost their lives by serving the Napoleonic troupes in the ominous Russian campaign of conquest. It is eventually the same invective that his contemporary intellectual patriot, Giovanni Berchet, will emphatically reiterate in his poem *Il romito del Cenisio* (1823-1824) which, not incidentally, features a direct reference to "Silvio" (1911: 36, l. 112).

characteristic of Pellico's so-called "regional (or even *urban*) patriotism", that is limited to a single town, as a consequence of the geopolitical subdivision of the peninsula in city-states (*comune*) or communes in constant competition and conflict with each other.³⁴⁰ In his definition of "patriotic love" ("amor patrio") as given in the eighth chapter of his subsequent writing *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834), Pellico will attribute to his provincial patriotism the same value generally ascribed to national patriotism: "L'amor patrio, e quando s'applica ad un paese vasto, e quando s'applica ad un piccolo, è sempre sentimento nobile" (1964: 635/ VIII).³⁴¹ This "noble sentiment" will be explicitly reinforced in the drama's later sequel, when Leoniero's son will express himself in favor of a national patriotism that would comprehend instead every "Italian city":

ENZO Gloria alla patria alta io bramava; e patria
Breve zolla non m'era; erami tale
Ogni contrada ch'itala s'appelli.
E sognava nel mio nobil delirio,
Sotto l'imperiale aquila sveva
Ricongiunte vederle, e i dì tornati
In che di cortesia specchio e d'onore
Era a' popoli Italia. (LD IV.3/ 271, my emphasis)

³⁴⁰ The term "patriottismo regionale" stems from Pertici (2004: 700) who supports his argument by quoting from the author's moral treatise *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834) in which Pellico explicitly states: "Non v'è parte d'una nazione che non abbia le sue proprie glorie: principi che le diedero potenza relativa, più o meno considerevole; fatti storici memorabili; istituzioni buone; importanti città; qualche onorevole impronta dominante nell'indole; uomini illustri per coraggio, per politica, per arti e scienze. Vi sono quindi anche ad ognuno ragioni d'amare la *nativa provincia*, la *nativa città*, il *nativo borgo*" (1964: 635-6/ VIII, my emphases).

³⁴¹ Inspired by Pellico's work, Mazzini will compose his own treatise on *Dei doveri dell'uomo* in 1841 with the difference, however, that he will replace Pellico's prevalently Christian ethical message with a political and patriotic program of thought and action, "pensiero" and "azione": a binomial that will constitute one of the main differences between Mazzini's activist theory and Pellico's abstention from politics as professed in the later years of his life. I shall address the evident similarities of thought shared by both writings in the further course of my analysis; for additional details on Pellico's treatise, his editorial history and influence on Mazzini, see Mola's comments (2005: 167-70) as well as his introduction (2005: 205-10) to the work. Pellico had apparently planned to author an analogous writing on the *Doveri delle donne* which, however, was never accomplished.

Upon arguing against the unification of the peninsula under foreign aegis and authority, Enzo's father will dismantle the son's alleged patriotism as personal political ambition, and plead in contrast for a circumscribed notion of "fatherland" which, however delimited to a single city-state or province, could claim its autonomy from foreign subjugation.³⁴²

LEONIERO E picciolette appaionti le glorie
 Degli avi tuoi, del padre tuo? Il quale mai
 Non s'avvide che il piccolo era affetto
 La carità del natio loco, *il santo*
 Zelo a respinger la straniera audacia! –

³⁴² Pellico's notion of "patria" saw its realization in the independence and freedom of the fatherland, not necessarily its unity in *one* nation whose members shared necessarily the same linguistic and ethnical traits (Pertici 2004: 701). Following the example provided by the Swiss confederation, Pellico expressed himself in favor of a federative rather than united Italian state. As he points out in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834): "Sono Svizzeri, questo di cantone italiano, quello di francese, quell'altro di tedesco. L'identità del legame politico che li protegge, supplisce alla mancanza d'una lingua comune, li affeziona, li fa contribuire con generosi sacrifici al bene d'una patria che non è nazione" (1964: 635/ VIII, my emphasis). He, therefore, contrasts the common feeling of national belonging that unites the Swiss, despite their linguistic and ethnical diversity, with the alienation experienced in Italy and Germany whose community members spoke essentially the same language and shared the same ethnical origin: "Vedi in Italia, od in Germania, un altro spettacolo: uomini viventi sotto diverse leggi, e divenuti quindi popoli diversi, talvolta costretti a guerreggiare un contro l'altro. Ma parlano, od almeno scrivono tutti la stessa lingua; onorano avi comuni, si gloriano della medesima letteratura [...]" (1964: 635/VIII). Although both cases account for two different examples of patriotic love, Pellico never envisioned the nationalization of his country – that is Italy's transformation into one unified nation-state – as a yet realistic and reasonable option. As early as 1819, in fact, right in the midst of his most exalted patriotic fervor, in a letter from Milan to his brother Luigi, he expressed his pessimism with regard to a possible unification of the peninsula in the near future: "Il nazionalizzamento dell'Italia è opera certa, ma lontana di due o tre generazioni ancora" (LM 172). In the same years that Pellico published *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834), Mazzini issued an article, *Nationalité. Unitaires et fédéralistes* (1835), that thematizes the very divide experienced in the 19th century between unitarians and federalists as illustrated by the case of Switzerland; *Scritti editi ed inediti* (henceforth "SEI"), vol. 4, p. 6-7. In contrast to Pellico, he eventually expressed his preference for the idea of national unity and a unified state denying the assumption that a centralized political system might turn into tyranny, and thus jeopardize the very notion of freedom: "L'unité c'est la force [...] nous ne trouvons pas que les argumens tirés de la république Helvétique contre l'unité soient valables: nous ne trouvons pas, comme tant d'autres, que l'unité doive entraîner de force la tyrannie à sa suite, nous ne trouvons pas comme quelqu'un l'a dernièrement trouvé, qu'il soit plus facile en tout état de cause d'imposer un roi à une grande nation qu'à vingt-deux cantons, faibles et petits" (1909: 11-12). In *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860), Mazzini will enunciate this tenet with major strength by arguing – thus posing himself in explicit opposition to patriots like Pellico: "La patria deve aver dunque un solo governo. I politici che si chiamano *federalisti* e che vorrebbero far dell'Italia una fratellanza di Stati diversi, smembrano la patria e non ne intendono l'unità. Gli Stati nei quali si divide in oggi l'Italia non sono creazione del nostro popolo; escirano da calcoli d'ambizione di principi o di conquistatori stranieri, e non giovano che ad accarezzare la vanità delle aristocrazie locali, alle quali è necessaria una sfera più ristretta della **grande patria**" (2005: 897/ V, emphasis in the original, bold added). This democratic notion of a comprehensive fatherland ("grande patria") sets itself clearly off from Pellico's provincial patriotism which Mazzini considered, in contrast, to be deleterious to the very aspiration of national emancipation and freedom.

Angusto è il natio loco? E perchè angusta
 È sua magione, uom de' spregiarla, e preda
 Darla a possente di ladron masnada
 Che il merto ha d'esser vasta? [...] (LD IV.3/ 271, my emphasis)

The rhetorical questions that aim at dismissing and disdaining the recourse to "foreign audacity" ("straniera audacia") and arrogance, in favor of a patriotism that advocates instead the attachment to one's place of origin ("natio loco") rather than its abnegation to foreign powers, will be articulated again with emphasis in Pellico's medieval poems *I Saluzzesi* and *La morte di Dante*, against the backdrop of the political hostilities entertained between guelf and ghibelline factions.³⁴³ The author's charge, in fact, against civil wars and their promotion of foreign domination and despotism, reminisces Leoniero's invective against his son for surrendering Dertona to the German "barbarians":

LEONIERO Enzo, il tuo labbro blasfemò: di patria
 Più generoso amor quel che le toglie
 Leggi, gloria, possanza, e sotto i piedi
 D'un barbaro la pone?" (LD IV.3/ 271).

"Nel *Leoniero*" – explains Pellico in the prefatory dedication to his collection of dramas, featuring additionally *Gismonda da Mendrisio* and *Erodiade* (1831) – "dipingendo

³⁴³ Both poems were originally published in the 1837 edition of *Poesie inedite* that appeared in Turin; see Bellorini's marginal comment to the Dante "cantica" in his volume of Pellico's selected writings (1907: 391). If in "I Saluzzesi" Pellico will criticize the guelf alliance with the French Angevin dynasty that had with the king of Naples, Charles of Anjou, installed itself in the Reign of Sicily ending the dynasty once the hostilities had ceased ("La cacciata degli stranieri diede novella virtù ai Saluzzesi; le discordie scemarono, e s'estinse [...] la fatale casa d'Angiò, che aveva cotanto illuso ed insanguinato l'Italia"; see *Opere complete* [1964: 430]), in "La morte di Dante", which closes the collection of poems, Pellico concludes with the admonition voiced by the Italian laurel poet not to trust in "foreign swords" ("straniere spade") and the fallacious "glory" derived from their allegiance, thus desisting from "fratricide wars" ("fraterne guerre") conducted under the "shameless pretense" of acting in the interest of the fatherland: "E giù quelle speranze, ahi, da me pure/ Nudrite un dì, nelle straniere spade!/ Gloria non sorge da esecrande leghe,/ E da trame e da perfidi pugnali/ Innalzati col *vanto inverecondo*/ Del patrio ben, né da *fraterne guerre*./ Cessate i mutui di vittoria sogni/ Per primeggiar sull'abborrita parte,/ Chè vane son fuggevoli vittorie/ Onde un nemico trae letizia e lucro,/ E la patria dissanguasi e s'infama"; *Opere complete* (1964: 466, my emphases). According to Mola, Pellico had published his collection of inedited poems in 1837 with the intent to contain an increased extremism of thought and action that he had witnessed in the wars of those very years, and that he tried to mitigate with his verses (2005: 184).

nel medio evo la sventura delle discordie civili, ho mirato a far sentire l'uopo che la società ha di mutua indulgenza e di sincere riconciliazioni fra' buoni, e come queste possano essere salutari ne' gravi cimenti" (1861: 209). It is this very Christian ethics of brotherhood and peace that permeates the play and the plot development in the reiterated message of reconciliation voiced by Leoniero's daughter, Eloisa, mediator between Arrigo's popular and Enzo's patrician factions:

ELOISA [...] Ah, de' beni
 Il primiero è la pace. E tu rammenta
 Che così rompe a violenza il freno
 Enzo sol dacchè il popolo a' tumulti
 Vede proclive; ed opra è tua. Se cessi
 Di civil guerra in lui la tema, e pegno
 N'abbia il castel (solenne fede innanzi
 Al popol ten dava), ei dello Svevo
 Rigetta i patti. Ah! Il popolo desioso
 D'*interna pace* da te pende. [...]

(LD II.4/ 262, my emphases)

As she attempts to placate the antagonism between the two brothers-in-law – symbolic of the civil hostilities that divide the town – Eloisa's plea for "inner peace" ("*interna pace*") becomes the prerequisite for the unanimous rejection of Dertona's common foreign foe.³⁴⁴ While the younger generation remains unreconciled, the pact of brotherhood is initiated by their fathers, Leoniero and Auberto, as they abdicate their perennial hatred and advocate an "abiding friendship" which renews – in Auberto's aphoristic maxim "Come non le virtù, le

³⁴⁴ Far from proffering Mazzini's revolutionary demands, Pellico's patriotism remained – akin to Schiller – in its essence pacifistic and moderate. In his poem *La patria* (1837), Pellico will explain that his love of country was never "superba frenesia di guerra", not even at the patriotically most zealous times of his Milanese sojourn when in Pellico's words: "me travolvean disegni insani,/ Quando far forza ai casi ambito avrei,/ Sì che a' brandi stranieri onta tornasse" (1861: 343). No mercy, however, should be shown towards outsiders who threatened with their invasion the country's freedom when every patriot ought to save his "[g]agliarda ira tremenda" for the day "che a provocarne scenda/ La burbanzosa avidità straniera:/ Del Prencipe e della Patria allora a scampo,/ Precipitiamo in campo,/ Col grido invitto: 'Si trionfi o pera!'", willing to die for the sake and salvation of his fatherland (1861: 343).

not disclaim the existence of other cities ("città), provinces ("province") or nations ("nazioni"), but on the contrary upholds the ideal of mutual acknowledgment and accord. In his moral writing *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834), Pellico recommends in fact his young readers:

Ma badisi che l'amor patrio, tanto ne' più ampli suoi circoli, quanto ne' più ristretti, non facciasi consistere nel vano insuperbire d'essere nato in quella tal terra, e nel covare indi odio contro altre città, contro altre provincie, contro altre nazioni. Un *patriottismo illiberale*, invidio, feroce, invece d'essere virtù, è vizio.
(1964: 636/ VIII, my emphases)

In lieu of "illiberal", that is aggressive, patriotic sentiments based on the imposition of a community's supremacy over others, Pellico calls upon a cosmopolitanism that resembles Posa's love for humanity.³⁴⁶ Love of country and love of humanity are, therefore, not deemed mutually exclusive. As Pellico points out in his above-captioned treatise: "[l]'amore dell'umanità è egregio, ma non dee vietare l'amore del luogo nativo; l'amore del luogo nativo è egregio, ma non dee vietare l'amore dell'umanità" (1964: 635/ VIII).³⁴⁷ Inspired by the ideal

³⁴⁶ As Pellico had already stated in an earlier writing *Dell'amor patrio*, written right after his release from Spielberg: "Non già tuttavia che la divisione dell'umanità in più patrie è talvolta necessario motivo di deplorabili guerre, ma non mai ragione sufficiente d'illiberalità e d'odio fra i diversi popoli. Gli uomini buoni di tutti i tempi amando la patria furono anche benevoli verso gli stranieri. Amor patrio vuol dire: amare i nostri simili in quel circolo d'azione in cui veniamo posti dal nascere concittadini d'altri uomini, dal nascere partecipi de' beni e de' mali d'un popolo. Vuol dire il *sacro* intendimento d'onorare l'umanità [...]" (1899: 381, my emphasis). Pellico's cosmopolitan patriotism was thus based on what he called the "sacred" intent to honor humanity. A decade later, Mazzini will reiterate this cosmopolitan tenet in *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860) by declaring it the chief duty of man towards his fatherland ("verso la patria" – as specified in the chapter title): "Siete *uomini* prima d'essere *cittadini* o *padri*. Se non abbracciaste del vostro amore tutta quanta l'umana famiglia – se non confessaste la fede nella sua unità, conseguenza dell'unità di Dio, e nell'affratellamento dei popoli che devono ridurla a fatto – se ovunque geme un vostro simile, ovunque la dignità della natura umana è violata dalla menzogna o dalla tirannide, voi non foste pronti, potendo, a soccorrere quel meschino o non vi sentiste chiamati, potendo, a combattere per risollevarli gli ingannati o gli oppressi – voi tradireste la vostra legge di vita [...]" (2005: 892-3/ V). This duty towards humanity ("verso l'umanità"), rooted in our nature as humans that precedes our identity as citizens ("cittadini"), constituted for Mazzini the very premise for the uprooting of tyranny and despotic oppression.

³⁴⁷ In *Dell'amor patrio*, Pellico had already asserted: "Dal grand'obbligo d'amare tutti i nostri simili deriva quello d'amare la patria, perocché i nativi d'un medesimo paese sono quelli che hanno più relazioni tra loro, più modo e più dovere di giovare" (1899: 381). Composed together with two other essays, *Dei nobili affetti* and

of *humanitas*, both Pellico's and Schiller's cosmopolitan patriotism viewed all nations and their people as members of a universal familial entity – be it in Pellico's Christian or Schiller's enlightened and secularized acceptance.³⁴⁸ It was, moreover, a patriotism that praised individuality and heterogeneity over individualism and homogeneity.³⁴⁹ Akin to the

Del pensare giusto e generoso, Dell'amor patrio was the only writing that Pellico eventually completed, though never published. All three works, however, will eventually constitute the conceptual draft for his forthcoming reflections on *Dei doveri degli uomini*.

³⁴⁸ As Pellico points out in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834): "Tutti i popoli sono frazioni d'una vasta famiglia, la quale per la sua estensione non può venir governata da una sola reggenza, sebbene abbia per supremo signore Iddio. Il riguardare le creature della nostra specie come una famiglia, vale a renderci benevoli all'umanità in generale" (1964: 634/ VIII). Similarly, Mazzini's concept of brotherhood will be based, as he specifies in his own treatise *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860), on the ethical duty of man to long for the constitution of a "universal family": "Voi dovete formare la famiglia universale, edificare la Città di Dio, tradurre in fatto progressivamente, con un continuo lavoro, l'opera sua nell'umanità" (2005: 920/ VIII). In the edification of this *civitas dei* resided Mazzini's notion of a religiously connotated cosmopolitan patriotism.

³⁴⁹ Mazzini alike, in his essay on *Politica internazionale* composed in 1871, in which he expounded the principles of international politics, argued for an associative rather than assimilative cosmopolitan allegiance that recognized every nation's singularity: "Le Nazioni rappresentano le diverse facoltà umane chiamate a raggiungere *associate*, non **confuse** e **sommerse** l'una nell'altra, il *fine* comune e hanno eterno il diritto di vivere di vita propria: non s'associa chi non vive e non comincia dall'affermare la propria *individualità*" (SEI XXIX/ 153-4, emphases in the original, bold added); cf. English transl. by Recchia/ Urbinati (2009: 233). In this respect, Mazzini displays his kinship of thought with Herder's belief in the value of national character and culture that can nearly word by word be detected in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797): "Die Verschiedenheit der Sprachen, Sitten, Neigungen und Lebensweisen sollte ein Riegel gegen die anmaßende *Verkettung* der Völker, ein Damm gegen fremde Überschwemmungen werden: denn dem Haushalter der Welt war daran gelegen, daß zur Sicherheit des Ganzen, jedes Volk und Geschlecht *sein* Gepräge, *seinen* Charakter erhielt, Völker sollten *neben* einander, nicht **durch** und **über** einander drückend wohnen" (HW VII/ 115., 687; emphases in the original, bold added). Herder plead for national singularity was rooted in a pluralism that excluded both national syncretism ("durcheinander" reflecting Mazzini's attribute "confuse") and supremacy ("übereinander", allusive of Mazzini's term "sommerse"). The creed in human self-determination that the German idealism had brought along with the emancipation of man from its immaturity, was reconceptualized in 19th-century patriotic theories in terms of national emancipation and self-determination: "Le *nazioni* sono unico argine al dispotismo d'un popolo come la libertà degli *individui* al dispotismo d'un uomo" (SEI XXIX/ 154, emphasis in the original); cf. English transl. by Recchia/ Urbinati (2009: 233). This was a principle in which Mazzini had strongly believed since his early writings, *Dei doveri dell'uomo* from 1841 ("Prima di *associarsi* colle nazioni che compongono l'umanità, bisogna esistere come nazione" [2005: 896/ V]), and later in his London article on *Nationality and Cosmopolitanism* (1847): "it makes no sense to seek to efface all patriotic sentiment from the People's hearts, or to seek to suppress at once Nationalities. It would indeed be vain to desire to confound the special destinies of countries and to attempt to force all human beings, which God has placed into different peoples to facilitate their progress, into uniformity of I do not know what abstract Cosmopolitanism" (2009: 61).

German theologian and thinker Herder, Pellico expressed his despise for a cosmopolitanism that would privilege an allegedly philanthropic over a patriotic creed.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ The critique that Pellico launched in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834) against the so-called "cynical cosmopolitanism" – that is the original cosmopolitan philosophy by Diogenes of Sinope that was also upheld by the Carbonari society (Isabella 2008:39) – aimed at reevaluating the love of country and patriotic sentiments as prerequisites for a more comprehensive love of the world and cosmopolitan citizenship: "Il cinico che ha tanti sofismi contro ogni generoso sentimento, suole ostentare filantropia per deprimere l'amor patrio. Ei dice: — 'La mia patria è il mondo; il cantuccio nel quale nacqui non ha diritto alla mia preferenza, dacché non può sopravanzare in pregi tante altre terre, ove si sta od egualmente bene o meglio; l'amor patrio non è altro che una specie d'egoismo accomunato fra un gruppo d'uomini, per autorizzarsi ad odiare il resto dell'umanità'" (1964: 634/ VIII). By dismantling its alleged philanthropism as a sophism that aimed at discrediting the relevance of patriotism, Pellico inveighed against a cosmopolitanism that he deemed – akin to what he will call a few years later in his poem *La patria* (1837) "aggressive patriotism" ("Del santo patrio affetto/ Gl'ipocriti son dessi!" [1861: 343]) – as hypocritical ("suole ostentare filantropia per deprimere l'amor patrio" [1964: 633/ VIII]), and opposed to a more authentic philosophy than the one professed by Diogenes, that of religion: "la vera filosofia è [...] religiosa, ed onora l'amor patrio" (1964: 634/ VIII). Hence Pellico's moderate and conciliatory cosmopolitan patriotism which, without dismissing the cosmopolitan creed, yet upheld the allegiance and loyalty to one's country – a stance that Mazzini will restore and reiterate in his polemic against the Carbonari claim to worldcitizenship; see on this point Isabella's article (2008: 37-58). As the scholar remarks in his monography: "the Risorgimento produced several different types of cosmopolitan patriotism – including for instance the Christian universalism of moderates like Gioberti and Balbo" (2009: 99), to which one may count as well Pellico whom the abbot Vincenzo Gioberti admired; an accurate study of their relationship, from Pellico's initial deference to his subsequent disapproval is provided with the inclusion of their correspondence by Rinieri (1899: 248-99). In his moral treatise *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834), therefore, Pellico invites the single national communities to partake in a cosmopolitanism without renouncing their individuality and identity: "Certo, anche dell'intero mondo possiamo dire ch'è nostra patria. [...] è anche un fatto che l'umanità si divide in popoli. Ogni popolo è quell'aggregato d'uomini che religione, leggi, costumi, identità di lingua, d'origine, di gloria, di compianti, di speranze [...] unisce in particolare simpatia. Chiamare accomunato egoismo questa simpatia, e l'accordo degl'interessi fra i membri d'un popolo, sarebbe quanto se la mania della satira volesse vilipendere l'amor paterno e l'amor filiale, dipingendoli come una congiura tra ogni padre ed i figli suoi" (1964: 634-5/ VIII). Following this essential analogy between nation and family, Pellico and Mazzini alike emphasized the necessity to first create the *national* people prior to constituting a universal "alliance of peoples". As Mazzini put it in his writing *Nazionalismo e nazionalità* (1871): "Senza Patria, non è possibile ordinamento alcuno dell'Umanità. Senza popoli non può esistere **Alleanza di Popoli**. E questi Popoli devono, a stringerla leale e durevole, essere liberi ed eguali, aver coscienza di sé, affermare la propria *individualità* e il proprio *principio*: essere insomma *nazioni*. L'Umanità è il *fine*: la Nazione, il *mezzo*: senz'essa, potrete adorare contemplatori oziosi l'Umanità, non costituirla o tentarlo" (SEI XXX/ 90, emphases in the original, bold added). Against an abstract notion of humanity and cosmopolitan philanthropism, Mazzini pleaded for one's country's patriotism. In this respect, both Pellico and Mazzini shared Herder's polemic against a pretentious enlightened cosmopolitanism. In contrast to the German thinker, however, who discerned and disdained behind its ideological façade an objectionable eurocentrism, Schiller, Pellico and Mazzini alike did not shy away to call upon a European patriotism. In *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834), Pellico conceptualized the notion of a patriotism that was obviously and essentially European: "Due viaggiatori europei s'incontrano in altra parte del globo; uno sarà nato a Torino, l'altro a Londra. Sono europei; questa comunanza di nome costituisce un certo vincolo d'amore, un certo, direi quasi, *patriottismo*, e quindi una lodevole sollecitudine di prestarsi buoni uffici" (1964: 635/ VIII); though based on solidarity and reciprocal respect, Pellico's European patriotism resulted and remained rooted in a eurocentric mindset. In an early letter to Luigi from 24 July 1817, the author explicitly discredited the Eastern world *tout court* as retrograde: "basta osservare che in tutto l'Oriente dove poco o nulla si legge, tranne baje religiose o galanti, l'incivilimento non progredisce mai se non quando il riverbero dei *lumi europei* manda qualche debole chiarore" (LM 107, my emphasis). In this respect,

Love of country called, instead, for familial devotion and filial *pietas* – the same one that Enzo had initially expressed towards his father ("No, forza al padre/ Io non farò, *sacro* egli m'è" [LD I.4/ 258, my emphasis]), and that he had sealed through his oath:

LEONIERO "Io giuro, o padre,
 (Queste fur d'Enzo le parole), io giuro
 Di camminar sulle vestigie *sante*
 Degli avi miei, che per gli altar, le leggi,
 La patria gloria, prodigaro il sangue" (LD I.4/ 257, my emphasis)

The recurrence in both instances of attributes as "sacred" ("sacro") and "holy" ("santo") accounts for an ethical value "*sanctioned*" – which is to say, rendered "sanctus" – by a law that was to be divinely ordained. This is the very definition of moral "duty" that Pellico provides in the introductory chapter of *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834) when he explains that:

Il dovere è attaccato inevitabilmente al nostro essere, ce n'avverte la coscienza fin da quando cominciamo appena ad aver uso di ragione [...]. Parimenti tutto ciò ch'è *fuori di noi* ce n'avverte, perché tutto si regge per una **legge armonica ed eterna**; tutto ha una destinazione collegata ad esprimere la sapienza e ad eseguire la volontà di quell'Ente ch'è causa e fine d'ogni cosa. (1964: 619/ I, emphasis in the original, bold added)

It is of this very "sacred" and eternal law of which Guidello, Leoniero's loyal friend, reminds the tyrant: "In te rientra, o figlio/ Di Leonier. Gran tempo è che di spade/ Non natie ti circondi, e col terrore/ Sospendi il moto delle *sacre leggi*" (LD I.4/ 258, my emphasis). In contrast to his son, Leoniero stands for the paragon of "l'*antico eroe*" (LD I.5/ 259), representative "de' tempi degli eroi!" (LD I.1/ 254) – that is, of an erstwhile heroic time invoked, not incidentally, in the very opening verses of the play. The hiatus that divides the past from the present is reflected in the generational conflict enacted by Leoniero and Enzo,

Pellico's and Schiller's cosmopolitan patriotism displayed similar inconsistencies whose appropriate assessment and understanding cannot exempt from their legitimate historical contextualization and ideological premises.

which exemplifies the suspension of patrilial, that is, patriotic love.³⁵¹ This denial eventually culminates in the subsequent severing of the filial bond ("io no, non ho più figlio" [LD IV.6/ 273]) sanctioned by the triple curse that the father voices against his son – emphatically stressed through the anaphoric reiteration of "maledetto":

LEONIERO *Maledetto* sia il dì ch'io, da tua madre
 Un figlio ricevendo, il più felice
 M'estimai de' viventi! *maledetta*
 La lacrima di gioia onde t'aspersi,
 E il sorriso infernal che su tue labbra
 Parea d'angelic'anima il sorriso!
 Maledetto ogni palpito d'amore,
 Con che in età crescer vedeati e augùri
 Stolti di gloria al nome mio sognava!
 Maledetto ogni istante in che mie braccia
 Fanciul non soffocavanti, o alle soglie
 Non infrangean tue scellerate tempie! (LD IV.6/ 273)

It is significant that in the play Auberto and Leoniero alike are willing to relinquish their sons for the sake of their fatherland.³⁵² Their paternal roles appear, in other words, defined in relation to a bond that reaches beyond their immediate blood ties to the very people ("popolo") in which their concept of "patria" as family is essentially rooted.³⁵³

³⁵¹ Enzo represents, in this respect, the hypocritical patriot who, by lacking "filial piety", can only pretend to love his country. As Pellico points out in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834): "Che dire di coloro i quali pretendono d'amare la patria, i quali ostentano eroismo, e mancano a sì alto dovere qual è la pietà filiale?" (1964: 637/ X). In his former discourse, Pellico had introduced *Dell'amor patrio* with a very definition of "patriotic love" that admonished the younger generation to guard themselves from false patriotic sentiments animated merely by personal ambitions and interests: "Gioventù generosa, che ardi d'amor patrio, t'invito a riflettere su questo affetto nobilissimo; t'invito a coltivarlo di tutto cuore, ma con senno, ma con vera cognizione di ciò ch'esso è, di ciò ch'esso impone. Un amor patrio ostentato per cieco entusiasmo, per leggerezza, per impegno di fazione, ma non altamente sentito, è volgar cosa; egli è ciò ch'è una fede religiosa, disgiunta da pii sensi, disgiunta da lodevoli opere" (1899: 380-1).

³⁵² See, for instance, the dialogue entertained between the two father figures in which they declare themselves willing to postpone the lives of their sons to the town's liberation: "AUBERTO [la patria] ami io sì forte,/ Che sangue e figlio e tutto a lei posponga. LEONIERO E alla mia patria non pospongo io un figlio?" (LD III.5/ 268).

³⁵³ Mazzini alike conceptualized the idea of "nationality" in correlation to its people, distinguishing it from the "feudal and dynastic" connotation intrinsic, instead, to the notion of "nationalism". As he points out, in *Nazionalismo e nazionalità* (1871): "i re erano intermediari tra Dio e i sudditi e la Legge era l'arbitrio loro: - non

It is upon the key notions of "people" and "freedom" that the republican ideal thematized in the play eventually draws. In contrast, however, to the republicanism upheld by Schiller in *Don Carlos* (1787/ 1801), the concept of *res publica* that permeates and promotes the dramatic action of Pellico's tragedy is – in the Vichian etymological denotation of the term – a *popular* rather than a patrician one.³⁵⁴ This juxtaposition is rendered manifest by the conflict that the play enacts between the two social classes, as reported by Enzo to his father in the attempt to justify his misdeeds: "di civil scempio/ Orrendamente le [antiche mura] macchiar del volgo/ E de' patrizi le discordie" (LD IV.4/ 271). As Enzo sides, in their defense, with the patricians ("fra i nobili proscritti un campion sorge,/ Che il braccio suo alla sbaldanzita plebe,/ Offre [...]. All'arrogante plebe/ Io posi il freno! io delle illustri case/ Rialzai la potenza! [...]" [LD IV.4/ 271]), Leoniero's eventual triumph over the tyrant validates in the end the popular power that was originally questioned. Whereas *Don Carlos*

idea di *popolo*: popolo era una agglomerazione d'uomini nati a servire, a nudrire il fasto signorile e monarchico e vivere di vita materiale come poteva" (SEI XXX/ 92, emphasis in the original). This was the very notion of "people" still upheld by King Phillip II in Schiller's *Don Carlos* (1787/1801). To this yet monarchical system, Mazzini opposed a republican Europe that since 1815 had begun to claim its right. As we shall see, both Schiller's *Maria Stuart* (1800), and in particular *The Maid of Orleans* (1801) will attest in their dramatic development the increased seizing of popular assertion as driven forth by a stronger awareness of their political influence and governance which will culminate in the wake of the crucial transition from the Napoleonic era to the Restoration. As Mazzini will concisely put it: "Oggi, desti i popoli alla coscienza del Diritto e della propria potenza" (SEI XXX/ 92).

³⁵⁴ As to Vico's definition and etymology of the term "Respublica" or – as he renames it – "Respopulica", see fn. 279 in section 3.1.1. Mazzini, who was well acquainted with Vico's works and thought (Recchia/ Urbinati 2009: 4) will fervently commit to this democratic connotation of the Republic whose origins he will identify in the very history of Italy and its mission towards national emancipation. As he attempts to remind and incite his compatriots in his address *Agli Italiani* (1840): "Dio v'ha fatti d'un popolo repubblicano fin dalla culla, e d'una classe ch'era il nervo della repubblica [...] e voi avete dimenticato gli antichi tempi e le belle glorie de' vostri padri [...]" (2005: 541); for more details on Mazzini's republican creed see also Sullam (2008: 115-20). Urbinati identifies the roots of Mazzini's republican (that is democratic) thought in Kant although – as the scholar specifies – the Italian thinker was not directly acquainted with the German philosopher, and would have probably not been inclined towards what he may have deemed an "abstract" perpetual peace theory (2008: 27-9).

accords the supremacy to the monarchy, *Leoniero* asserts the survival of the republic.³⁵⁵ Both plays, however, enact respectively two Roman republican myths. To Cato's suicide exemplified by Posa's self-sacrifice, corresponds Leoniero's murder who – in the inversion of the classical Brutus myth that witnessed the slaughter of his adoptive father Caesar – stabs his son to death in order to save the republic: "Ei tratto/ Dall'amor suo per la *patria* e per voi..." (LD V.4/ 276, my emphasis). Whereas Leoniero's parricide is carried out in the interest of his "*patria*", that is in the paternal defense of the very people whom he had addressed as his family, king Philipp II condemns his son to death for the salvation of the throne, rather than the town.

Leoniero's and Posa's demise alike is accomplished in the name of their ideals of freedom and fatherland, love of humanity and of country. Leoniero epitomizes, in this respect, the exemplary patriot or "*vero patriota*" that Pellico portrayed in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834):

Ei non invoca, né suscita dissensioni civili; egli è anzi coll'esempio e colle parole moderatore, per quanto può, degli esagerati, e fautore d'indulgenza e di pace. Non cessa d'essere *agnello*, se non quando la patria in pericolo ha bisogno d'essere difesa. Allora diventa *leone*: combatte e vince, o muore" (1964: 637/ IX, my emphases).

Leoniero embodies in the Christian symbol of the lamb or *Agnus Dei*, and the lion, the figure of Christ who sacrifices himself for the salvation of his people. The heroic patriotism illustrated by his conduct is carried out in the name of a faith that Pellico deemed to be both political and religious: "Essere schernitori della religione e de' buoni costumi, ed amare degnamente la patria, è cosa incompatibile, quanto sia incompatibile l'esser degno estimatore

³⁵⁵ For this reason, Pellico's play had been associated in past studies with Schiller's *Fiesko*; cf. for instance Mazzucchetti (1913: 318-20), and Mazzoni (1943: 921) who identifies, in particular, in the play's ending Pellico's inspirational source for his drama.

d'una donna amata, e non riputare che vi sia l'obbligo d'esserle fedele" (1964: 636/ IX). It is this very binomial of religion and politics that he had extensively thematized already, and that we shall reencounter in more detail and depth in the tragedy of *Eufemio di Messina* (1820). Pellico will proffer this very notion of religious patriotism only a few years later in the closing chapter of *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834): "Esponi i tuoi giorni per la salvezza altrui, s'è d'uopo, e massimamente per la salvezza della tua patria. Qualunque specie di morte ti sia destinata, sii pronto a riceverla con dignitosa forza, e a santificarla con tutta la sincerità e l'energia della fede" (1964: 684-5/ XXXII). I shall return to this point in my analysis of *Eufemio's* (1820) tragedy.

3.1.3 Summary

Departing from the notion of nation as family, Schiller and Pellico alike portray the idea of "fatherland" in terms of familial bond and bondage. Whether the tyrant is embodied by *Don Carlos's* parent or by *Leoniero's* offspring, both tragedies stage a generational conflict that reenacts metaphorically the drama of a divided country in which the relationship between the citizens and their sovereign, the country's sons and their father results disrupted. As these first two plays illustrate, the paternal figures that they feature, are not consistently demonized. Their roles instead oscillate – as the forthcoming dramas shall additionally corroborate – between villains and heroes. Despite the authors' criticism, their characters preserve a kernel of humanity that portrays them as distinctively ambiguous.³⁵⁶

This ambivalence accounts for a Republicanism – whose original ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity had been rooted in the French Revolution – that will remain essentially moderate and rely on the establishment of a constitutional monarchy as alternative paternalistic form of government. Neither Schiller nor Pellico professed, in fact, the more radical Republican creed that will, instead, inspire and incite Mazzini's revolutionary nationalism and political activism. The playwrights' increased confinement to the *otium* of

³⁵⁶ Even a more overtly negative father figure such as Pellico's Teodoro, the Sicilian king who features in his earlier tragedy *Eufemio di Messina* (1820), is close to his demise staged in the act of praying for his daughter's divine forgiveness: a scene that is emotionally heightened by the protagonists' reconciliation and the daughter's mourning who recognizes her faults and eventually reinstates the paternal authority: "TEODORO Ov'è... la figlia mia?! Più non la sento... Ah, le perdoni il cielo (*muore*) / LODOVICA Padre adorato! (*si affanna per soccorrerlo, piange dirottamente, e dopo avere, per lungo tempo cercato d'illudersi, esclama con angoscia*). Ei non è più! No, degna/ D'un tal padre io non era: io nol conobbi;/ Io l'oltraggiai barbaramente"; see *Opere complete*, IV.1, p. 151, henceforth "EM" followed by the act and page number. Likewise, Schiller's critique of Phillip II's absolutistic regime is counterbalanced by a humanization of the tyrant that we shall reencounter in Queen Elizabeth, protagonist of his forthcoming drama *Maria Stuart* (1800). These tyrant figures are portrayed as if compelled to act as villains. Caught between appearance and reality, their subjects' will and liking, they exemplify through their existential dilemma the human tragedy that history perpetrates in its dialectic of necessity and freedom. Their major drama resides in their survival: immune to death, they are eventually incapable of achieving the aesthetic apotheosis and authentic freedom that would turn them into heroic figures. In their quality of antiheroes, they remain nonetheless human.

their literary studies as basis of Schiller's aesthetic anthropological and Pellico's moral didactical programs that distinguished their later work, will replace the political involvement of their early youth. Hence their conversion from a zealously *civic* (that is, Republican) to an eminently *cultural* patriotism which aimed at instructing, under the intellectual leadership of one country, all other nations. This endeavor seamlessly coalesced – rather than contrast and contradict – their particularistic patriotism with the envisioning of a cosmopolitan *res publica literaria*.³⁵⁷ The following tragedies will illustrate in more detail how this cosmopolitan patriotism affected the playwrights' perspective on and perception of history, historical source and historiography.

³⁵⁷ In this envisioned European alliance of one cultural and literary community, cosmopolitan and patriotic rationales conditioned one another. According to Whaley, it was in the eighteenthcenturies that the intellectuals' critique against modernity – its materialistic and nationalistic aspirations which were derived from the cataclysmic rupture in Europe that followed the French Revolution – inaugurated the so-called "post-national" era: "das post-nationale Zeitalter der Menschheit oder der Humanität" (2010: 221). In its comprehensive and complete study of the history and thought of the enlightened Republic of Letters, Goodman points to the cosmopolitan (16-19) and patriotic claims alike upheld by European intellectuals: "the man of letters was the intermediary between the Republic of Letters, which was of all times and places, and the *patrie*. He served the *patrie* by representing the Republic of Letters to it" (1994: 47, emphases in the original).

3.2.1 *Maria Stuart. Ein Trauerspiel* (1800)

For Schiller, whose Kantian interest and influence had been initiated by his reading of the *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784), and who had systematically devoted himself to the study of history as early as 1787 with his seminal work on the *Geschichte des Abfalls der vereinigten Niederlande* (1788), *Don Carlos* inaugurated his career as historical dramatist and drew the path for his forthcoming historical plays.³⁵⁸

Only a few months after Göschen had received *Don Carlos*' revised manuscript in January 1801, Cotta was publishing in April *Maria Stuart*, and *The Maid of Orleans* was being

³⁵⁸ It was with Schiller's first historical work on the Netherlands' war of independence that the Grand Duke Karl August of Weimar granted him, through Goethe's mediation, the academic appointment as *Professor Philosophiae extraordinaria* at the University of Jena, where he taught universal and European history from summer 1789 to the winter term of 1791 when his classes had to be unexpectedly suspended due to his precarious health conditions. Apart from his history lectures, Schiller began to write in 1790 another major opus on the *Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Kriegs* (1791-1793), which would become the groundwork to his *Wallenstein* (1800); see Oellers (2005: 113). Schiller's onset as historian can, however, be dated back as early as 1786 when he wrote his short story *Verbrecher aus Infamie*, later changed into *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* (1792), in which he addressed essential notions regarding the reception of and response to historical subjects, both on the narrator's and reader's side. Prior to Kant, Schiller had also been familiar already with Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784/85), in which the author articulated the question on whether history ought to be deemed an autonomous scientific discipline ("ob denn, da alles in der Welt seine Philosophie und Wissenschaft habe, nicht auch das, was uns am nächsten angeht, die Geschichte der Menschheit im Ganzen und Großen eine Philosophie und Wissenschaft haben sollte?" [SW XIII/ 7]), and further laid out his conception of history as one in which the individual actively pursued his humanity along a process of natural evolution that is inscribed in history itself. In the *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte*, Kant objected precisely this organological interpretation of historical development. In contrast to Herder's understanding of a harmonious interaction of forces in nature ("Nicht Krieg also, sondern Friede ist der Natur-Zustand des unbedrängten Geschlechts: denn Krieg ist ein Stand der Noth, nicht des ursprünglichen Genußes" [SW XIII/ 322]), Kant argued instead for the essentially conflictual state of nature as indispensable to animate human and historical progress: "Dank sei [...] der Natur für die Unvertragsamkeit, für die mißgünstig wetteifernde Eitelkeit, für die nicht zu befriedigende Begierde zum Haben oder zum Herrschen! Ohne sie würden alle vortrefflichen Naturanlagen in der Menschheit ewig unterentwickelt schlummern. Der Mensch will Eintracht; aber die Natur weiß besser, was für seine Gattung gut ist: sie will Zwietracht" (KW 8:4, 21); cf. English transl. (2001: 123); on Herder's philosophy of history intended as a critique against his enlightened contemporaries, see also Mulack (1991: 141-4). A closer insight into *Maria Stuart*'s drama shall illustrate how Schiller clearly desumed from Kant his idea of history as strife and struggle, see for instance his aesthetic essay *Ueber das Erhabene* (1801) in which he addresses the tragic clash of freedom and constraint – the same that fomented Kleist's keen interest and enthusiasm for Schiller's dramas: "Die Welt, als historischer Gegenstand, ist im Grunde nichts anders als der Konflikt der Naturkräfte unter einander selbst und mit der Freyheit des Menschen und den Erfolg dieses Kampfs berichtet uns die Geschichte" (NA XXI.2/ 49). For more details on Kleist's admiration for and affinity with Schiller, see Borchardt (1948: 97-105) and, with specific reference to *Maria Stuart*, Müller-Seidel (2009: 120).

premiered in September of the same year.³⁵⁹ As Friedrich Schlegel commented in 1802: "In der Maria Stuart ist historisches Talent sichtbar" (NA IX.1/ 258).

In a letter to Goethe, written shortly before beginning his work on the new tragedy, Schiller had, nonetheless, declared his predilection for human rather than historical subjects: "Neigung und Bedürfnis ziehen mich zu einem frei phantasierten, nicht historischen, und zu einem bloß *leidenschaftlichen und menschlichen* Stoff, denn Soldaten Helden und Herrscher habe ich vor jetzt herzlich satt" (March 19, 1799 [NA XXX/ 39, 42., my emphases]). Yet, only a month later, Schiller was again writing to Goethe with the request to remit him a list of history books on his dramatic subject.³⁶⁰ Despite, in fact, the reiterated resistance that Schiller had voiced during the gestation period of his play towards historical sources – of which he criticized the painstaking dryness of their reports – he never desisted from extensively consulting and studying the Tudor and Stuart queens' histories since his earliest 1783 sojourn in Bauerbach where he first conceived his tragedy.³⁶¹ What might be, at first,

³⁵⁹ See Schiller's letter to Göschen from 15 January 1801 ("erfolgt endlich der Anfang des versprochenen Manuskripts" [NA XXXI/ 4, 5.]), and his calendar entry ("An Göschen. (Schluss des Carlos)" [NA VII.2/ 66]) dated May 14, 1801. Maria Stuart had been staged already the previous year in Weimar on 14 June 1800, and was followed by Cotta's successful publication of the *Wallenstein* trilogy at the end of the same month.

³⁶⁰ Cf. his letter from April 29, 1799: "Indeßen habe ich mich an eine Regierungsgeschichte der Königin Elisabeth gemacht und den Prozeß der Maria Stuart zu studieren angefangen. [...] Wollten Sie die Güte haben und gegen beiliegende Scheine die notierten Werke aus der Bibliothek für mich holen und durch das Botenmädchen senden lassen. Camden habe ich schon mitgenommen [...]. Wenn Sie mir etwa aus der Sammlung den Genzischen Historischen Calender der das Leben der Maria Stuart enthält verschaffen könnten, so wäre es mir sehr angenehm" (NA XXX/ 45, 51.). Schiller is referring to Friedrich Gentz's article "Maria Königin von Schottland"; for a complete account of historical sources consulted by Schiller for his drama, see NA IX.1/ 196-207.

³⁶¹ After leaving Stuttgart in 1782, he was hosted by Henriette von Wolzogen at her wealthy farm house in Bauerbach. During his stay, he had begun to read William Camden's *Annales Rerum Anglicarum, et Hibernicarum* at a time when he was already considering to write a tragedy about the Scottish Queen, and was keenly asking his youth friend and future brother-in-law Reinwald to send him per express delivery additional books to consult on the subject: "Zu meiner Maria Stuart liebster Freund schicken Sie mir doch auch jezt Geschichten. Camden ist herrlich, doch ist es gut wenn ich mehrere habe. Kommen Bücher an mich von Mannheim so schicken Sie mir einen Expressen" (end of February, 1783 [NA XXIII, 69, 49.]).

erroneously interpreted as an aversion towards history was, instead, derivative of the dramatist's attempt to amend the current practice of 18th-century history writing, and blend it with his poetry.³⁶²

Commenced on June 1799 and concluded precisely a year later – as the entries in his calendar attest – Schiller decided to embark on *Maria Stuart's* play soon after completing his three-year comprehensive *Wallenstein* project.³⁶³ It had been the author's intent to create with his generalissimo a heroic personage "auf rein *realistischem* Wege" (NA XXVIII/ 204, 158., my emphasis) – that is, through accurate adhesion to historical facts – and thus purportedly

³⁶² Schiller expressed, in fact, more than once his preference for history books that would exempt themselves from the dry report of facts, fostering in contrast the reader's imagination. Referring, for instance, to the sources that documented the Scottish queen's trial, Schiller commented towards Goethe: "Die nöthige Exposition des Prozeßes und der Gerichtsform hat, außerdem daß solche Dinge mir nicht geläufig sind, auch eine *Tendenz zur Trockenheit*, die ich zwar überwunden zu haben hoffe, aber doch nicht ohne viel Zeit dabey zu verlieren, und zu umgehen war sie nicht. Die englische Geschichte von Rapin Thoyras, die ich seit dieser Arbeit lese hat den guten Einfluß mir das englische Local und Wesen immer *lebhaft vor der Imagination* zu erhalten" (July 12, 1799 [NA XXX/ 71, 78., my emphases]). By equating human imagination, in virtue of its pictographic and intuitive nature, to the notion of freedom, he attributed it particular importance and ascribed to the poet the function to freely unfold the individual's inventiveness. As he stated in his review *Über Matthissons Gedichte* (1794): "Er [*sc. der Dichter*] muß fürs erste unsre Einbildungskraft frei spielen und selbst handeln lassen [...]. Dadurch, daß er unserer Einbildungskraft keinen andern Gang vorschreibt, als den sie in ihrer vollen Freiheit und nach ihren eigenen Gesetzen nehmen müßte. [...] Die Imagination in ihrer Freiheit folgt, wie bekannt ist, bloß dem Gesetz der Ideenverbindung, die sich ursprünglich der Zeit, mithin auf etwas ganz Empirischer gründet" (NA XXII/ 267). For this very reason, imagination came to fulfill a privileged role in Schiller's aesthetic theory, and it turned – as we shall see – into an operational element in his practice as historian, who cannot exempt himself from the use of poetry. In the attachment provided to his fourth to last *Kallias* letter to Körner from 28 February/ 1 March 1793, Schiller defined poetry as the element of conjunction between the conceptual nature of language and the representative power of imagination: "Die Sprache stellt alles vor den Verstand, und der Dichter soll alles vor die Einbildungskraft bringen (darstellen) *die Dichtkunst will Anschauungen*, die Sprache gibt nur Begriffe" (NA XXVI/ 228, 157., my emphasis).

³⁶³ In his calendar, Schiller annotated on June 4, 1799 "Maria angefangen auszuarbeiten" (NA XLI.1/ 117), and on June 9, 1800 "Maria Stuart geendigt" (NA XLI.1/ 135). Schiller, who had begun working at his *Wallenstein* in the spring of 1796, set it forth, with various suspensions, until 1799; for more details regarding the drama's prolonged and procrastinated origin, see Oellers (2005: 113-20). In September of that year, Schiller wrote to his friend Körner: "Es wäre recht schön, wenn Du mir Stoffe für dramatische Arbeiten zuführen könntest, denn an Stoffen fehlt mirs am meisten. Vor der Hand bin ich aber die historischen Sujets überdrüssig, weil sie der Phantasie gar zu sehr die Freiheit nehmen, und mit einer fast unausrottbaren Prosaischen Trockenheit behaftet sind" (Sept. 26, 1799 [NA XXX/ 98, 102.]). Yet on the following day, Schiller was already recording in his calendar the return to his new historical drama ("Wieder zu Maria [?] gegangen", 30 September 1799 [NA XLI.1/ 124, emphasis in the original]).

set him off from the idealist, if not thoroughly invented figure of Marquis Posa in his former play *Don Carlos*.³⁶⁴ By the time, however, that the three-part drama on the Thirty Years' War was finally accomplished, Schiller wished himself back to a more poetic than historical narrative, longing for the portrayal of a human rather than heroic character. When Körner first read *Maria Stuart*, he congratulated his friend with the remark: "Es giebt keine Helden in Deinem Stück, selbst die HauptPersonen sind nicht idealisirt, und keine ihrer Schwächen

³⁶⁴ See his letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt from March 21, 1796: "Vordem habe ich wie im Posa und Carlos die fehlende Wahrheit durch schöne Idealität zu ersetzen gesucht, hier im Wallenstein will ich es probieren, und durch die bloße Wahrheit für die fehlende Idealität (die sentimentalische nehmlich) entschädigen" (NA XXVIII/ 204, 158.). Whereas Wallenstein's personality, however, could not claim as Posa to be idealized ("Er berechnet alles auf die Wirkung, und diese mißlingt. Er kann sich nicht, wie der Idealist, in sich selbst einhüllen, und sich über die Materie erheben [...] [NA XXVIII/ 204, 158.]), in his later letter to Körner, Schiller confessed no less the arduous task to familiarize himself with the unpoetic quality of the historical subject: "Der Stoff ist, ich darf wohl sagen, im höchsten Grad ungeschmeidig [...]. Es ist im Grund eine Staatsaction und hat, in Rücksicht auf den poetischen Gebrauch, alle Unarten an sich, die eine politische Handlung nur haben kann, ein unsichtbares abstractes Objekt, [...] eine (für den Vortheil des Poeten) viel zu kalte trockene Zweckmäßigkeit [...]. Die Base, worauf Wallenstein seine Unternehmung gründet, ist die Armee, mithin für mich eine unendliche Fläche, die ich nicht *vors Auge* und nur mit unsäglichlicher Kunst *vor die Phantasie* bringen kann [...]" (NA XXIX/ 17, 15., my emphases). It is in virtue of its iconographic valence that Schiller will, therefore, with more insistence seek out in his subsequent tragedy to the effect of imagination, as the poetic device essential to any writer: "Von der Maria Stuart werden Sie nicht mehr als Einen Akt fertig finden; dieser Akt hat mir deswegen viel Zeit gekostet [...], weil ich den *poetischen Kampf* mit dem *historischen Stoff* darinn bestehen mußte und Mühe brauchte, der Phantasie eine *Freiheit* über die Geschichte zu verschaffen, indem ich zugleich von allem was diese brauchbares hat, Besitz zu nehmen suchte" (letter to Goethe dated July 19, 1799 [NA XXX/ 73, 80., my emphases]). It is precisely for the sake of the imagination's freedom that Schiller will strive to overcome – as I shall illustrate throughout the play – the antithesis between poetry and history; on the individual's freedom to imagination, see again *Über Matthissons Gedichte* (1794) in which Schiller articulates a recipient's response theory, advocating the right to personal inventiveness: "Stellt er [*sc. der Künstler*] uns also bestimmte Gestalten und in einer bestimmten Ordnung vor, so bestimmt er, und nicht wir, indem keine objektive Regel vorhanden ist, in welcher die freie Phantasie des Zuschauers mit der Idee des Künstlers übereinstimmen könnte. Wir empfangen also das Gesetz von ihm, das wir uns doch *selbst* geben sollten, und die Wirkung ist wenigstens nicht rein poetisch, weil sie keine vollkommene *freie Selbsthandlung der Einbildungskraft* ist. Will aber der Künstler die Freiheit retten, so kann er es nur dadurch bewerkstelligen, daß er auf *Bestimmtheit*, mithin auf *wahre Schönheit*, Verzicht tut" (NA XII/ 270, my emphases). If, according to Schiller, imagination is, akin to freedom, synonymous with lack of determination, the poet can find "true beauty" only "*innerhalb der menschlichen Natur*, und daher wird er nicht ruhen, bis er seinen Gegenstand in dieses Reich der höchsten Schönheit hinübergespiegelt hat" (NA XII/ 271, my emphasis). It is no other but "within human nature" that Schiller will concentrate *Maria Stuart's* true aesthetic beauty and historical verisimilitude.

und gehäßigen Seiten verborgen, an denen sie in der Geschichte kenntlich sind" (July 9, 1800 [NA XXXVIII.1/ 287, 364.]).³⁶⁵

For the sake of concentrating the dramatic development on its eminently human aspect, Schiller opted to exclude altogether the trial scene with its political premises, and initiate the play, instead, *in medias res* with the protagonist's death sentence: "denn ich sehe eine Möglichkeit, den ganzen Gerichtsgang zugleich mit allem politischen auf die Seite zu bringen, und die Tragödie mit der Verurtheilung anzufangen" (April 26, 1799 to Goethe [NA

³⁶⁵ Since Schiller had been working on his *History of the Revolt of the Netherlands* (1788), he had been engaged with Körner in a fervid correspondence on the relevance of historical studies and the recasting of historical sources through poetry. Körner, who had expressed little appreciation for Schiller's interest in history (see his letter from January 4, 1788 [NA XXXIII/ 163, 133.]), wrote an unfavorable review of *Wallenstein* upon his friend's request to announce the last part of his trilogy on the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (cf. Schiller's request from May 8, 1799 [NA XXX, 46, 53.], Körner's consent from May 17, 1799 [NA XXXVIII.1/ 88, 104.], and eventually the writing with which he forwarded his review dated May 30, 1799 [NA XXXVIII.1/ 94, 113.]). From a letter to Goethe, we learn that Schiller had been anything but pleased by Körner's assessment of the play, in particular in view of the fact that it was yet unknown to the public and may have prejudiced its reception, reason why the review was eventually never published: "Hier erfolgt Körners Aufsatz über den Wallenstein. Er ist aber, so wie er ist, nicht zu gebrauchen, weil er sich die Bequemlichkeit gemacht hat, lieber den *Dichter*, statt seiner, sprechen zu lassen, und auf diese Weise das Werk in Fetzen zerrißen vor das Publikum bringt. Wenn das Stück schon gedruckt wäre, möchte das hingehen, so aber finde ich meine Rechnung nicht dabey" (NA XXX.1/ 53, 60., my emphasis). That Körner wrote the review from the standpoint of the poet ("Dichter") – as Schiller blamed him – rather than the historian's, hits the crux of the argument that the two writers had been entertaining in their letters in the first three months of 1788. The preference that Körner attributed to poetry over history ("Wie viel Vortheile hat nicht der Romanschreiber vor dem Historiker voraus!" [NA XXXIII.1/ 163, 133.]), was not shared by Schiller at a time when historical novels were becoming increasingly popular. If in fact, according to Körner, the novelist had the right to alter history to the point that it would be completely absorbed by his poetic imagination ("Der Vorzug der Wahrheit ist Täuschung. Wird nicht jede Geschichte durch lebhafte Darstellung zum Roman?" [NA XXXIII.1/ 163, 133.]), Schiller in contrast aimed at conciliating, as he specified in the introduction ("Vorbericht") to the first volume of his *Allgemeine Sammlung historischer Memoires, erste Abteilung* from 1790, the two genres without allowing one to prevail over the other: "Zu einer Zeit, wo der Geschmack an historischen Schriften, durch einige Meisterstücke in dieser Gattung erweckt, sich unter dem lesenden Publikum immer allgemeiner verbreitet, und das zahllose Heer von Romanen und romanisirten Geschichten, welche lange Zeit fast allein im Besitz waren, die Wißbegierde zu beschäftigen, allgemach zu verdrängen scheint, glaubte der Herausgeber, einem Werke, welches zwischen beyden gleichsam in der Mitte steht, und die gefälligen Eigenschaften der Einen mit den gründlichen Vortheilen der andern verbindet, eine nicht ungünstige Aufnahme versprechen zu können" (NA XIX.1/ 10). His objective, as he wrote in his reply to Körner from 7 January 1788, was to render history through poetry more accessible and less tedious to the reader: "Wenn es Nothdurft ist, die Geschichte zu lernen, so hat derjenige nicht für den Undank gearbeitet, der sie aus einer trockenen Wissenschaft in eine reizende verwandelt, und da *Genüsse* hinstreut, wo man sich hätte gefallen lassen müssen, nur *Mühe* zu finden" (NA XXV/ 3, 1., emphases in the original). I shall return to this point in more detail in the later analysis of the play, by illustrating Schiller's conciliation of facts with fiction as a precursor of modern historiography.

XXX/ 45, 51.]). By doing so, Schiller achieved that the political drama would be mediated by the queens' personal tragedy.

If the critics' investigations have thus far focused either exclusively on the Stuart's inner drama, or stressed with emphasis the political backdrop against which it unfolded, I shall propose in the scope of this study to read Schiller's play through both lenses and prove their overlapping to be in line with the playwright's endeavor of combining historical with poetic truth. According to my thesis, I shall demonstrate how Schiller transposes the clash between old and new state orders – between a feudal system in which secular and religious powers yet coexist, and an enlightened contractual government based on the people's representative power – from the public to the private domain.³⁶⁶ On this ground, I will demonstrate how the dramatist relocates the dialectic between freedom and coercion, self-determination and constraint from history into the human subject, exhibiting behind the contest of dynastic legitimacy a personal conflict between the two famed sisters, whose public legal ambitions intersected and interfered with their private love affairs.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ On Schiller's juxtaposition in the play of two antithetical forms of government, cf. Guthke's remarks (2005: 208). In his introduction to the *History of the Revolt of the Netherlands* (1788), Schiller had already underscored, with reference to Philipp II, the importance of exploring the character's intimate motives, prior to witnessing the king in action ("[e]r wir ihn handeln sehen"), to find in them the key to his political life ("und hier einen Schlüssel zu seinem politischen Leben aufsuchen") (NA XVII.1/ 54).

³⁶⁷ Notwithstanding the fact that Mary addresses Elizabeth in the play as "sister" ("Schwester"), historically both queens – though from the same house of the Tudors – were not sisters, but great-cousins (Mary joined the Stuart dynasty through her second marriage to Henry Stuart, also known as Lord Darnley). As a matter of fact, Elizabeth was first cousin to Mary's father Jacob V, King of Scotland, and Mary's paternal grandmother, Margarete Tudor, was sister to the King of England, Henry VIII, father of Elizabeth who had become claimant to the throne after the death of her Catholic sister Mary, addressed in the play only marginally with the derogatory appellation of "spanische Maria"; cf. also Immer who explains the genealogical claim that Mary Stuart set upon the throne of England as great-granddaughter of the English king Henry VII (2008: 366). Schiller, however, converted the two cousins into sisters with the intent to heighten most probably the effect of the dramatic action.

According to the dictum of freedom that Schiller had articulated already in his *Briefe über Don Carlos* (1788): "die schönsten Träume von Freiheit werden ja im Kerker geträumt (NA XXII/ 140-1, 2), the tragedy sets on in the dungeons of Fortheringhay Castle where Maria Stuart is held imprisoned with the charge of murder against her second husband Lord Darnley, on the very day of his death's anniversary ("MARIA Der Jahrestag dieser unglückseligen Tat/ Ist heute abermals zurückgekehrt" [NA IX/ I.4, ll. 277-9]). Whereas the convicted queen sorrowfully admits her crime and submissively accepts her conviction ("MARIA Ich erkenn ihn/ Es ist der blutge Schatten König Darnelys,/ Der zürnend aus dem Gruftgewölbe steigt,/ Und er wird nimmer Friede mit mir machen,/ Bis meines Unglücks Maß erfüllet ist" [NA IX/ I.4, ll. 271-5]), her former nanny and current confidant Hanna Kennedy, reveals the ghosts of the past and reprimands the actual motive of her detention:

KENNEDY Was Ihr auch zu bereuen habt, in England
 Seid Ihr nicht schuldig, nicht Elisabeth,
 Nicht Englands Parlament ist Euer Richter.
 Macht ists, die Euch hier unterdrückt, vor diesen
 Anmaßlichen Gerichtshof dürft Ihr Euch
 Hinstellen mit dem ganzen Mut der *Unschuld*.
 (NA IX/ I.4, ll. 373-8, my emphases)

Two key words are addressed in this initial scene of act one, which will direct and dictate the further development of the dramatic action: the notions of might ("Macht") and of guilt – or, for the matter, innocence ("Unschuld"). Both represent recurrent motives throughout the play that will define the relationship and rivalry between the two female characters.

Maria's invective against the violence ("Gewalt") inflicted on her by Elisabeth's manipulative jurisdiction ("Gesetze"), not only questions the decree's alleged justice ("Gerechtigkeit") but unmasks the expediency that informs the enacted jugglery ("Gaukelspiel"):

MARIA Ich bin die Schwache, sie die Mächtge – Wohl!
 Sie brauche die *Gewalt*, sie töte mich,
 Sie bringe ihrer Sicherheit das Opfer.
 Doch sie gestehe dann, daß sie die Macht
 Allein, nicht die *Gerechtigkeit* geübt.
 Nicht vom *Gesetze* borge sie das Schwert,
 Sich der verhaßten Feindin zu entladen,
 Und kleide nicht in heiliges Gewand
 Der rohen Stärke blutiges Erkühnen.
 Solch *Gaukelspiel* betrüge nicht die Welt!
 Ermorden lassen kann sie mich, nicht richten!
 Sie geb es auf, mit des Verbrechens Früchten,
 Den heiligen *Schein* der Tugend zu vereinen,
 Und was sie *ist*, das wage sie zu *scheinen*!
 (NA IX/ I.7, ll. 961-74, my emphases)

The antithesis between appearance ("Schein") and evidence ("sein"), rhetorically stressed already in these incipient lines through the *figura etymologica* of "Schein" and "scheinen", will be strengthened in the forthcoming development of the play. I will illustrate how this dramatic ambivalence underscores the fragmentary and fictional quality that Schiller ascribed to the very practice of historical writing. If history represents the actual scenario of *Maria Stuart's* theatrical action, the actors stage in turn a "Gaukelspiel" in which thespian artistry seamlessly coalesces with reality.

Schiller did not deem history to be incompatible with poetry. On the contrary, he considered the latter complementary to historical narratives for it was no other but through the faculty of intuition and imagination that one could fill in the gaps – or "Lücken" as he named them – in the historian's accounts, thus bringing the past's loose amalgam of facts into a coherent whole.³⁶⁸ In this respect, the historian and the creative writer did not differ from

³⁶⁸ Schiller had first extensively formulated his concept of "Lücke" in his inaugural Jena lecture *Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* (1789): "Weil die Weltgeschichte von dem Reichthum und der Armuth an Quellen abhängig ist, so müssen eben so viele Lücken in der Weltgeschichte entstehen, als es leere Strecken in der Ueberlieferung giebt. So gleichförmig, nothwendig und bestimmt sich die

Weltveränderungen auseinander entwickeln, so unterbrochen und zufällig werden sie in der Geschichte in einander gefügt seyn. Es ist daher zwischen dem **Gang der Welt** und dem Gange der *Weltgeschichte* ein merkliches Mißverhältniß sichtbar. Jenen möchte man mit einem ununterbrochen fortfließenden Strom vergleichen, wovon aber in der Weltgeschichte nur hie und da eine Welle beleuchtet wird" (NA XVII.1/ 372, emphasis in the original, bold added). Upon first distinguishing between the "course of the world" ("Gang der Welt") and the "course of world history" ("Gang der Weltgeschichte"), Schiller separates the image of the former in its acception of a homogeneous and perpetual streamlike movement ("ununterbrochen fortfließenden Strom") with the idea of world history, portrayed in contrast as a sequence of single and sporadic waves ("Welle"). Schiller subsequently explains that in order to meaningfully link these individual events or waves, that disjointly emerge with major emphasis on the surface of the world, and turn history into a science by conveying its fragments ("Bruchstücke") with a sense of unity, one must avail himself of his "philosophical understanding" ("philosophischer Verstand/ Geist") and by means of "artificial connectors" ("künstliche Bildungsglieder") provide history with a *telos* that casts it into a reasonable whole: "So würde denn unsre Weltgeschichte nie etwas anders als ein Aggregat von Bruchstücken werden, und nie den Nahmen einer Wissenschaft verdienen. Jetzt also kommt ihr der philosophische Verstand zu Hülfe, und, indem er diese Bruchstücke durch *künstliche Bildungsglieder* verkettet, erhebt er das Aggregat zum System, zu einem vernunftmäßig Ganzen. [...] Eine Erscheinung nach der andern fängt an, sich dem blinden Ohngefähr, der gesetzlosen Freyheit zu entziehen, und sich einem übereinstimmenden Ganzen (das freylich nur in seiner [*sc.* des philosopischen Geistes] Vorstellung vorhanden ist) als ein passendes Glied anzureyhen" (NA XVII.1/ 373, my emphasis). This is a fundamental argument that Schiller will later employ again to justify the combination of science with art, that is of history with poetry. As he will, in fact, write in his notorious letter to Caroline von Beulwitz from 10-11 December 1788, history represented for Schiller a "storehouse" for his imagination ("Die Geschichte ist überhaupt nur ein Magazin für meine Phantasie" [NA XXV/ 154, 120.]), one that – as he had already explained towards Körner: "mir die Gegenstände hergeben wird, in denen ich meine *Feder* und zuweilen auch meinen *Geist* übe" (27 July 1788 [NA XXV/ 85, 64., emphases in the original]). Schiller will look intentionally for these lacunae in historical sources to infill them with his own ideas: "Ich suche absichtlich in den Geschichtsquellen eine *Begrenzung*, um meine Ideen durch die Umgebung der Umstände streng zu bestimmen und zu verwirklichen [...]. Ich will dadurch meine Figuren und meine Handlung *bloß beleben; beseelen* [...]" (letter to Körner, 28 Nov. 1796 [NA XXIX/ 18, 15., emphases in the original]). These are words that he will nearly *verbatim* cite in his prologue to *Wallenstein* (1799) three years later: "[...] Doch in den kühnen Scharen,/ Die sein Befehl gewaltig lenkt, sein Geist/ *Beseelt*, wird euch sein Schattenbild begegnen./ Bis ihn die scheue Muse selbst vor euch/ zu stellen wagt in *lebender Gestalt*" (NA VIII/ II. 112-6, my emphases). To poetry Schiller thus attributed the merit to revive the course of events, turning their protagonists back to life and making history tangible. For this very reason, he had underscored already in his essay from 1792 *Ueber die tragische Kunst* the importance of historical truth to submit itself to poetry: "die historische Wahrheit den Gesetzen der Dichtkunst unter zu ordnen, und den gegebenen Stoff nach ihrem Bedürfnisse zu bearbeiten" (NA XX.1/ 166). Long before reading Aristotle, whom he initially discredited for his association with French classicism, Schiller desumed the primacy of poetry over history from Lessing, whom he had explicitly quoted as early as 1783 in his *Fiesko* prologue ("Freiheiten, welche ich mir mit den Begebenheiten herausnahm, wird der Hamburgische Dramaturgist entschuldigen, wenn sie mir geglückt sind" [NA IV/9]). It is more precisely one of Lessing's theater reviews dating back to the time when he had been engaged as advisor and dramaturg at the German National Theater in Hamburg, and eventually collated under the title of *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767-69) that appears to have influenced Schiller's poetics: "Nun hat es Aristoteles längst entschieden, wie weit sich der tragische Dichter um die historische Wahrheit zu bekümmern habe [...]. Er braucht eine Geschichte nicht darum, weil sie geschehen ist, sondern darum, *weil sie so geschehen ist, daß er sie schwerlich zu einem gegewärtigen Zwecke besser erdichten könnte*. [...] Und wie viele wissen denn, was geschehen ist?" (1856: 109, 19, my emphasis). Lessing's argument reflects Schiller's very notion of history as storehouse of ideas. During the composition of his *Wallenstein*, Schiller would eventually read Aristotle and admit towards Körner how "gestärkt und erleichtert" his *Poetics* had left him (3 June 1797 [NA XIX/ 82, 85.]), pleased – as he would write to Goethe – by the way in which "er die Poesie und die Geschichte miteinander vergleicht, und jener eine größere Wahrheit als dieser zugesteht" (May 7, 1797 [NA XIX/ 74, 75.]). After recognizing that he had, after all, rendered justice in his historical drama to the Stagirite's theory ("Mich

each other. As Schiller was about to complete the second act of his play, he addressed towards Goethe his explicit intent to refashion his historical tragedy "*theatralisch* [...]" ob ich sie gleich für den Zweck der Repraesentation etwas enger zusammen ziehe", and sets forth specifying:

Weil es auch historisch betrachtet ein reichhaltiger Stoff ist, so habe ich ihn, in historischer Hinsicht auch etwas *reicher* behandelt und Motive aufgenommen, die den nachdenkenden und instruierten Leser freuen können, die aber bei der Vorstellung, wo ohnehin der Gegenstand sinnlich dasteht, nicht nothig und wegen *historischer Unkenntniß* des großen Haufens auch ohne Interesse sind.
(NA XXX/ 85, 89., my emphases)

What the poet deemed of interest for his play was less the conspicuous amount of facts revolving around the trial and its political implications, of which Schiller preferred to inform the audience through the characters' retrospective reports and introspective analyses. More relevant to the actual drama was for the playwright the human and psychological ordeal that had unfolded from it. Far from dismissing or, what may be worse, distorting the facts handed down by historical records, he "enriches" ("reicher behandelt") the plot with motifs whose goal yet remains to entertainingly *inform* the "thoughtful and educated reader" rather than artificially enhance the stage performance, or mendaciously impair, all in all, the precarious historical knowledge ("historischer Unkenntniß") available about the subject.³⁶⁹

hat er mit meinem Wallenstein keineswegs unzufriedener gemacht. Ich fühle, daß ich ihm, den unverilgbaren Unterschied der neuen von der alten Tragödie abgerechnet, in allen wesentlichen Foderungen Genüge geleistet habe und leisten werde"; letter to Körner, 3 June 1797 [NA XIX/ 82, 85.]), he would eventually reassess his merits, and redeem the Greek philosopher from the misinterpretations with which the French dramatists had prejudiced his work ("der peinlichen Art, wie die Franzosen den Aristoteles nehmen und an seinen Foderungen vorbeizukommen suchen"; letter to Körner, 3 June 1797 [NA XIX/ 82, 85.]).

³⁶⁹ In his essay *Ueber die tragische Kunst* (1792), Schiller had pointed out the merits of drama to act, in contrast to all other literary genres, without the narrator's mediation turning staged reality into a tangible experience: "In Tragödien werden die einzelnen Begebenheiten im Augenblick ihres Geschehens, als gegenwärtig, vor die Einbildungskraft oder vor die Sinne gestellt; unmittelbar, ohne Einmischung eines dritten. Die Epopee, der Roman, die einfache Erzählung rücken die Handlung, schon ihrer Form nach, in die Ferne, weil sie zwischen den Leser und die handelnden Personen den Erzähler einschieben. [...] Alle erzählende Formen machen das

Gegenwärtige zum Vergangenen; alle dramatische machen das *Vergangene gegenwärtig*" (NA XX.1/ 164-5, my emphasis). The ability of tragedy to render by means of dramatic immediacy the past vividly present led to a closer association of drama with history. This was the more so true after the rejection of Aristotle's normative *Poetics* (by contemporary theoreticians as A. W. Schlegel who in chapter 17 of his *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* [1809] had upheld the organic unity ("organische Einheit") of Shakespeare's dramas against the mechanical Aristotelian unities hailed by the French Neoclassicists [1967: 18-21]) – and its separation of the historian from the poet which reflected his well-known distinction between what is "probable or necessary" as far as "the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be" (9/ 1451b [1941: 1463-4]). Evidence of a consequent dramatization of history can be detected as early as in Herder's writing *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), in which the author compares the history of humankind ("Geschichte des Menschlichen Geschlechts") to an endless drama ("ein 'unendliches' Drama von Szenen!") [SW V/ 559], after having extensively praised in his essay *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773) Shakespeare's work ("Eine Welt dramatischer Geschichte" [SW V/ 221] as exemplary for his historical plays: "Jedes Stück ist *History* im weitesten Verstande [...] *Historie! Helden- und Staatsaktion zur Illusion mittlerer Zeiten!* [...] ein völliges *Größe habende Eräugnis einer Weltbegebenheit, eines menschlichen Schicksals*" (SW V/ 231, emphases in the original). The aesthetization of history undertaken by Schiller in his tragedies is one that additionally displays a close affinity between dramatist (or poet) and historian. Not only, in fact, are their historical narratives the result of a subjective reconstruction, they also assume their own temporal present and life experience as the departing point of their interpretation. This is a fundamental notion of historical hermeneutics to which a German historian and hermeneutic thinker as Wilhelm Dilthey will eventually call his eminent attention: "Die Macht und Breite des eigenen Lebens, die Energie des Besinnung über dasselbe ist die Grundlage des geschichtlichen Sehens. Sie allein ermöglicht, den blutlosen Schatten des Vergangenen ein zweites Leben zu geben. Ihre Verbindung mit einem grenzenlosen Bedürfnis, *sich fremdem Dasein hinzugeben, sein eigenes Selbst in diesem zu verlieren*, macht den großen Geschichtsschreiber" (1992: 201, my emphases). For Schiller alike, as one can read in his early Jena lecture *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* (1789), the universal historian proceeds in his understanding of history backwards, that is from the present to the past: "Das Verhältniß eines historischen Datums zu der *heutigen Weltverfassung* ist es also, worauf gesehen werden muß, um Materialien für die Weltgeschichte zu sammeln. [...] der Universalhistoriker rückt von der neuesten Weltlage aufwärts dem Ursprung der Dinge entgegen" (NA XVII.1/ 371-2, emphasis in the original). As such, the historian and dramatist alike read history as subjects partaking in history itself with the consequent effect to bring the past, through their personal experience and present interpretative perspective, back to life. Arguably, the historian's assimilative process or "embodiment" of the past into one's present – the German term "Einverleibung" renders more closely Dilthey's notion "sich fremden Dasein hinzugeben, sein eigenes Selbst in diesem zu verlieren" – is particularly appropriate in the space of the theater where the spectator can literally identify himself with the character and the representation on stage, turning into a prospective actor and potential agent of his own present who directs his action according to the examples inferred from the past. However, as part of the history they describe, historians are unable to guarantee objective distance and evaluation of past events – reason why, in his letter to Körner, Schiller had described historical narratives as being not only "voll Lücken" (full of gaps), but also "willkürlich" (arbitrary) (7 Jan. 1788 [NA XXV/2, 1.]). He had certainly intuited a *modus scribendi* in historical narratives that draws him close to modern historiography, not far from Hayden White's understanding of history as an essentially subjective and selective narrative procedure. Upon accepting his position as history professor in Jena, Schiller had, in fact, articulated this very idea once more in *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studierte man Universalgeschichte?* (1789): "Er [sc. der philosophische Geist] nimmt also diese Harmonie [der Geschichte] aus sich selbst heraus, und verpflanzt sie ausser sich in die Ordnung der Dinge, d.h. er bringt einen vernünftigen Zweck in den Gang der Welt, und ein teleologisches Prinzip in die *Weltgeschichte*. Mit diesem durchwandert er sie noch einmal, und hält es prüfend gegen jede Erscheinung, welche dieser große Schauplatz ihm darbietet. Er sieht es durch tausend beystimmende Fakta *bestätigt*, und durch eben so viele andre *widerlegt*; aber so lange in der Reyhe der Weltveränderungen noch wichtige Bindungsglieder fehlen, so lange das Schicksal über so viele Begebenheiten den letzten Aufschluß noch zurückhält, erklärt er die Frage für *unentschieden*, und diejenige Meinung siegt, welche dem Verstande die höhere Befriedigung, und dem Herzen die größte Glückseligkeit anzubieten hat" (NA XVII.1/ 374, emphases in the original). As Safranski remarks,

As he was explaining to Körner a decade earlier, while yet in his incipient stage of historian devoted to the study of the Dutch emancipatory revolution against Spain, Schiller's chief objective was to convert "durch Schönheit und Gefälligkeit" the narration of history "aus einer trockenen Wissenschaft in eine reizende" (January 8, 1788 [NA XXV/ 2, 1.]).³⁷⁰ Echoing in his remark the "prodesse et delectare" parlance of the Horatian aesthetic-didactic tradition, Körner enthusiastically acclaimed *Maria Stuart* as example of an "ächten Tragödie" and complimented the author for his advancement "in der dramatischen Kunst" and his approximation to ancient models: "Du näherst Dich immer mehr der Manier der Alten, eine Handlung darzustellen" (NA XXXVIII.1/ 287, 364.).³⁷¹ As a matter of fact, by 1799 the

the teleological trajectory that described Schiller's notion of history was not an objective, but on the contrary an essentially subjective one (2007: 62).

³⁷⁰ Schiller will reiterate this thought in less prosaic terms in the concluding prologue of his *Wallenstein* (1799): "Ja danket ihrs [sc. der Muse], daß sie das düstre Bild/ Der Wahrheit in das heitre Reich der Kunst/ Hinüberspielt, die Täuschung, die sie schafft,/ Aufrichtig selbst zerstört und ihren Schein/ Der Wahrheit nicht betrüglich unterschleibt,/ Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst" (NA VIII/ 133-8).

³⁷¹ Schiller had already articulated the Horatian claim of literary practice to both teach and delight in his early essay *Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?* (1785) as one of the theater's chief ends: "Die Schaubühne ist die Stiftung, wo sich Vergnügen mit Unterricht, Ruhe mit Anstrengung, Kurzweil mit Bildung gattet" (NA XX.1/ 100); he would further expand upon this notion of dramatic and tragic pleasure in his subsequent essays *Ueber den Grund des Vergnügens an tragischen Gegenständen* (1792), and *Ueber die tragische Kunst* (1792). On the reception and influence of Horace's *Ars Poetica* in 18th-century German literature, see Pietsch whose study departs from Kant's borrowing of the Horatian "sapere aude" as tenet of the Enlightenment to illustrate its significance in relation to the poet's "prodesse et delectare" dictum and the equal importance he attributed to both reason and poetic imagination (1988: 19-25). In his forward to the *Geschichte des Abfalls der vereinigten Niederlande* (1788), Schiller had already maintained that in order to instruct the history reader with pleasure: "eine Geschichte treu geschrieben seyn kann, ohne darum eine Geduldprobe für den Leser zu seyn, und [...] daß die Geschichte von einer verwandten Kunst [sc. poetry] etwas borgen kann, ohne deswegen nothwendig zum Roman zu werden" (NA XVII.1/ 9), and while he was still writing the *History of the Netherlands' Revolt*, he confided to Körner: "Die Geschichte wird unter meiner Feder, hier und dort, manches, was sie nicht war" (12 February 1788, [NA XXV/ 16, 9.]) His objective was to avail himself of poetry to provide history, as he wrote later to Caroline von Beulwitz, with a "more important kind of truth" ("eine wichtigere Art von Wahrheit") which he called "inner truth" ("innere Wahrheit"), able to inform a more intimate human reality: "Die innre Uebereinstimmung, die Wahrheit wird gefühlt und eingestanden, ohne daß die Begebenheit wirklich vorgefallen seyn muß. Der Nutzen ist unverkennbar. Man lernt auf diesem Weg den Menschen und nicht den Menschen kennen, die Gattung und nicht das so leicht verlierende Individuum" (10-11 Dec. 1788 [NA XXV/ 154, 120., emphases in the original]). Whereas in his debate with Körner, Schiller had been eager to defend the value of history against the preference that his friend had allocated to poetry, in his letter to Beulwitz – who had instead asserted the primacy of history – Schiller defended the importance of

former Storm-and-Stress poet had eventually abandoned his anarchic zeal in favor of a more restrained neoclassical style – at a time in his literary career that coincided not surprisingly with his appointment as playwright at the Weimar court theater under Goethe's direction, and their inauguration of Weimar classicism.³⁷²

In one of his commentaries to *Maria Stuart*, Goethe had conceded his friend the poetic license of "romantic" imagination provided that it would not contravene the principle of verisimilitude: "Was die Situation betrifft so gehört sie, wenn ich nicht irre, unter die *romantischen*. Da wir modernen nun diesem Genius nicht entgehen können, so werden wir

poetic over historical truth, pointing out: "gerade der Geschichtsschreiber ist oft in den Fall gesetzt, diese wichtigere Art von Wahrheit seiner historischen Richtigkeit nachzusetzen" (NA XXV/ 154, 120.). Unlike Schiller, who viewed poetry as the device necessary to explain history, that is to understand and unveil its recondite veracity, Manzoni – as we shall see – will be caught in the impasse of conciliating poetic with historical truth. Although a more systematic elucidation of his disquisitions will be at the core of my analysis of his plays in the following and concluding dissertation chapter, outlining at this point the major developments of his dilemma may result helpful in understanding the authors' different perception and treatment of history. As a matter of fact, in contrast to Schiller, Manzoni's works and his aesthetic reflections had been pervaded by a profoundly religious creed. It was, therefore, far more difficult for him to accept the enlightened theory which denied God, and ascribed to the individual the ability to allocate a meaningful telos to history. If in his early *Lettre à M. Chauvet* (1820), Manzoni was still prone to view the poet as the ideal contemplator of history and in his *Lettera sul Romanticismo* (1823), he reiterated the poet's duty to behold the historical truth as his exclusive object of observation, in *Del Romanzo Storico* (1830-1845) he appears to rectify his original theory by declaring poetry and history incompatible, and the only truth acceptable the positive historical one. Yet, in this very last writing, the author equally refers to his *Dialogo dell'invenzione* (1841-1845) in which he had presented the reader with an explanation on how to overcome the dichotomy and reconcile history with poetry as two distinct modes to represent and reflect the only authentic and absolute divine truth. In order to overcome the chiasm between history and poetry, Manzoni would ultimately inscribe the Christian myth into history allegorizing its narrative. Whereas Schiller and the young Pellico from his French sojourn will still believe in an enlightened notion of history, which questioned a divine interpretation or intervention, their secularized historical approach will be able to transcend the past from the contingency of its narrated events, providing them with a universal meaning that featured humankind and its achievements and advancement in history. If Manzoni's historical plays, therefore, will allegorically relate to the Christian myth, Schiller's historical narratives reemploy the myths of the past to articulate a message and meaning conveyed by and consigned to humans, and which – though surpassing territorial and temporal borderlines – remained yet anchored to their reality and the history of humanity. On more details regarding Manzoni's admiration for Schiller, and specific affinities with his dramatic *oeuvre*, see Kostka's study (1997: 13-26).

³⁷² While the decline of Weimar classicism – denoting a stylistic marker (rather than a specific historical epoch) of Romanticism – is generally said to coincide with the year of Schiller's demise in 1805, its onset remains controversial and tends to oscillate between 1768/88 (the year of Goethe's journey to Italy), and 1794 (when Schiller and Goethe initiated their collaborative literary and dramatic production that preceded immediately the publication of Schiller's literary journal *Die Horen* between 1795 and 1797).

sie wohl passieren lassen, wenn die *Wahrscheinlichkeit* nur einigermaßen gerettet ist."

(September 4, 1799 [NA XXXVIII.1/ 154, 184., my emphases]).³⁷³ The "Situation" to which Goethe specifically directs his remark was the queens' encounter in the park of Fortheringhay Castle which Schiller had invented and inserted in the third act of his play and which, as a departure from historical records available at that time, was deemed an "audacious" manipulation on the author's side.³⁷⁴ Ironically, recent sources attesting an actual meeting to have taken place between Elisabeth and Mary turned *res fictae* into *res factae*, providing

³⁷³ On the meaning of "romantic", intended as "phantastic", and the opposition between modern poetics versus traditional French classicism, see Wistoff's comments to the above-captioned letter (NA XXXVIII.2/ 279). Goethe's notion of plausability and probability ("Wahrscheinlichkeit") stems from Aristotle's distinction of the historian from the poet whose "function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable and necessary" (9/ 1451b [1941: 1463]); for further details cf. also fn. 369.

³⁷⁴ See Karl August Böttiger's, one of Schiller's contemporaries, negative comment in this respect: "Es sind kühne Wagestücke darin. Unter anderen läßt er die beiden Königinnen wirklich zusammen kommen, was nach der Geschichte Marie von der Elisabeth so oft vergeblich bat, und schürzt gerade dadurch die Peripetie des Stücks" (letter dated June 20, 1800 to the Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer [qtd. in NA IX.1/ 223]). In a previous letter to Goethe, Schiller himself had declared the controversial scene "an sich selbst moralisch unmöglich" (3 Sept. 1799 [NA XXX/ 95, 98.]), and according to an anecdote mentioned by Wilhelm Grimm in one of his letters, Goethe compared the two queens in their encounter to "harlots" ("Mich soll nur wundern, was das Publikum sagen wird, wenn die beiden *Huren* zusammenkommen und sich ihre Aventuren vorwerfen" [qtd. in NA IX/ 371, my emphasis]). The truth is that Schiller and Goethe alike had, during their years at the Weimar Court Theater (1799-1805), shared and supported an acceptance of dramatic art that had been essentially opposed to the moralizing institution of 18th-century sentimental theater. As a matter of fact, as early as in the forward to the first edition of *The Robbers* (1781) – which Schiller allocated "mit Recht einen Platz unter den *moralischen* Büchern" (NA III/ 8, my emphasis) – the author attempted to defend his play from censorship by addressing the importance to stage villains and vices alike: "daß mancher Charakter auftreten mußte, der das feinere Gefühl der Tugend beleidigt, und die Zärtlichkeit unserer Sitte empört. Jeder *Menschenmaler* ist in diese Nothwendigkeit gesetzt, wenn er anders eine Kopie der *wirklichen* Welt, und keine idealische Affektationen, keine Kompendienmenschen will geliefert haben. [...] Wer sich den Zweck vorgezeichnet hat, das Laster zu stürzen, und Religion, Moral und bürgerliche Geseze an ihren Feinden zu rächen, ein solcher muß das Laster in seiner nackten Abscheulichkeit enthüllen, und in seiner kolossalischen Größe vor das Auge der Menschheit stellen –" (NA III/ 5-6, my emphases). Only by means of a faithful reproduction of reality could the dramatist, in his quality of "Menschenmaler", depict and display on stage the whole human being. In his later short story *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* (1792), which he will subtitle "Eine *wahre* Geschichte", Schiller would uphold the representation of human faults as exemplary in educating both the heart and mind of humankind: "In der ganzen Geschichte des Menschen ist kein Kapitel unterrichtender für Herz und Geist als die Annalen seiner Verirrungen" (NA XVI/ 7, my emphasis).

conclusive evidence to the dramatist's narrative theory of history.³⁷⁵ As Schiller was being faulted on the score of factual inaccuracy, Aristotle's aphorism – according to which poetry is truer than history – was being validated by the emergence of a new historiography that acknowledged the epistemological place of imagination in the act of historical interpretation.³⁷⁶

The highpoint of the royals' one-on-one confrontation, climax and capstone scene of the tragedy, witnesses the Stuart's defiance against the Queen of England by exposing her ostentatious sanctimony to the public:

MARIA Weh Euch, wenn sie [*sc.* die Welt] von Euren Taten einst
 Den Ehrenmantel zieht, womit Ihr gleißend
 Die wilde Glut verstohlner Lüste deckt.

³⁷⁵ As Prüfer explains, the technical terms *res fictae* and *res factae* stem from the field of rhetorics, to which history was originally linked before turning in the 18th century into an autonomous scientific discipline; on this basis, Prüfer analyzes Schiller's historical theory in relation with its roots in ancient rhetorics, providing an illuminating picture of both change and continuity (2002: 145-50). Witte remarks that, although the queens' encounter did never take place in reality, the acrimonious manner of their confrontation reflected the tone and content of numerous letters that Elisabeth and Mary had consistently exchanged with each other since she moved back to Scotland in 1561, and the more so since 1568 after seeking refuge in England (1962: 243); see also Guthke (2005: 211). The same can be said about another scene of the play, Melvil's administration of the Eucharistic sacrament, which was controversially received by Schiller's contemporaries and had been heavily contested on stage as blasphemous – for reasons more inherent to political and religious views dictated by the Catholic Austrian Empire – the more so as no proof of it could at the time be found in official historical records. The recent discovery, however, of new historical document, both confirmed that Maria did indeed receive communion prior to be sent to the scaffold (Witte 1962: 248), and corroborates Schiller's theory of the proximity shared by fictional and factual narratives alike.

³⁷⁶ Contrary to enlightened historicism, Schiller heralded a new historiographic model which – based on the notion of poetry that he had recently formulated in his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795) as "Tochter der Freiheit" (SW V/ 572, 2), that is, based on the free play between intuition and intellect – would grant equal if not major importance to poetic imagination in the process of historical interpretation and reconstruction. In accord, once more, with Aristotle's *Poetics*, who deemed poetry "more philosophical and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of *universals*, whereas those of history are *singulars*" (1451b [1941: 1464, my emphases]), Schiller saw in poetry the instrument to access the universal meaning of history rooted in humans' innermost feelings and motives, providing therefore a more truthful and total picture. Official historical writings, in contrast – as he had personally experienced while writing the *History of the Netherlands' Revolt* (1788) – with their focus on singularly selected events were rather the result of a tedious process of collation and comparison of often contrasting and contradicting sources, which prevented rather than promoted the search for truth: "Bei so ungleichen, relativen, oft ganz widersprechenden Darstellungen derselben Sache hält es überhaupt schon schwer, sich der Wahrheit zu bemächtigen, die in allen [Quellen] theilweise versteckt, in keiner aber ganz und in ihrer reinen Gestalt vorhanden ist" (NA XVII.1/ 8).

Nicht *Ehrbarkeit* habt Ihr von Eurer Mutter
 Geerbt, man weiß, um welcher Tugend willen
 Anna von Boleyn das Schafott bestiegen.
 (NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2427-32, my emphasis)

Elisabeth, who had afore humiliated her rival with the charge of promiscuity ("Es kostet nichts, die allgemeine Schönheit/ Zu sein, als die gemeine sein für alle! [NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2417-8]), in the attempt to impose her moral authority over the prisoner, must face in turn a blame that undermines at once her personal and political supremacy. By disgracing her individual reputation ("Ehrbarkeit"), Maria reaffirms, if not her ethical rectitude, her legal right to the throne: "Der Thron von England ist durch einen *Bastard*/ Entweiht, der Briten edelherzig Volk/ Durch eine listge *Gauklerin* betrogen" (NA IX.1/ III.4, ll. 2447-9, my emphasis). The term "bastard" conjoins, in this respect, both personal and political spheres whose motives come explicitly to the fore in the monologue that immediately precedes the queen's signature of Maria's death warrant:³⁷⁷

ELISABETH [...]. Mit hohen Tugenden
 Muß ich die Blöße meines Rechts *bedecken*,
 Den Flecken meiner fürstlichen Geburt,
 Wodurch der eigne Vater mich geschändet.
 Umsonst bedeck ich ihn – Der Gegner Haß
 Hat ihn *entblößt*, und stellt mir diese Stuart,
 Ein ewig drohendes Gespenst, entgegen.
 [...]
 Wo mir eine Freude, eine Hoffnung
 Gepflanzt, da liegt die Höllenschlange mir
 Im Wege. Sie entreißt mir den *Geliebten*,
 Den *Bräutigam* raubt sie mir! Maria Stuart
 Heißt jedes Unglück, das mich niederschlägt!

³⁷⁷ As Lamport observes, the term "bastard" carried, at a time when the legitimacy of dynastic monarchy had been increasingly put into question by the French revolution, an eminently political rather than personal connotation: "Das Wort 'Bastard' ist nämlich keine bloß persönliche Beleidigung, sondern im Zeitalter der erblichen Monarchie in höchstem Grad ein *Politikum* – erst recht, nachdem in Frankreich die monarchische Legitimität abgeschafft worden war und die anderen gekrönten Häupter Europas vor den Folgen der Revolution zitterten (1990: 135).

(NA IX/ IV.10, ll. 3221-35, my emphases)³⁷⁸

Denounced by her foe as impostor and disclosed in her "Gaukelspiel", Elisabeth fears not only that her stigma of birth may jeopardize her royal legitimacy – as the terms "bedecken" (cover) and "entblößen" (uncover) respectively suggest – but also that her political authority may be undermined by her competitor's alluring influence over her lover, the Earl of Leicester and her former husband-to-be, the French Duke of Anjou. Elisabeth views her personal subordination to her rival's seductive qualities as an evident lack of power. The erotic component that emerges from their public altercation results thus closely tied to the queens' dynastic question, fraught with legacy and justice, as proved by Maria's comment following the scene of their encounter: "Vor Leicesters Augen hab ich sie erniedrigt!/ Er sah es, er bezeugte meinen Sieg!".³⁷⁹ Aware of her political defeat and death ("MARIA Sie geht in Wut! Sie trägt den Tod im Herzen!" [NA IX/ III. 5, l. 2454]), the Stuart measures her actual triumph ("Sieg") in exclusively personal terms:

MARIA Nach Jahren der Erniedrigung, der Leiden,
Ein Augenblick der Rache, des Triumphs!
Wie Bergeslasten fällt's von meinem Herzen,
Das *Messer* stieß ich in der Feindin Brust.
(NA IX/ III.5, ll. 2456-9, my emphasis)

In contrast to Maria's knife, Elisabeth will employ an arrow: "[...] der Pfeil ist abgedrückt, er fliegt,/ Er trifft, er hat getroffen, gälts mein Reich,/ Ich kann ihn nicht mehr halten –" (NA

³⁷⁸ As Immer remarks in his analysis of Elisabeth's monologue, it is for eminently personal reasons that Mary Stuart is condemned to death. The discovery, in fact, of the emotional ties that Leicester had entertained with Maria as well as the humiliation that Elisabeth had suffered in their public altercation in the park of Fortheringhay Castle, dictates both the tone and argument of the queen's monologue, prompting her at last to delegate Maria's execution (2010: 299).

³⁷⁹ For more details on the role and relevance that the love motif holds in Schiller's plays, see Funke who in his analysis of *Maria Stuart* highlights the extent to which her actions are called forth by political and passiona causes alike: "Die politische und die erotische Motivierung ihres Handelns sind ineinander verflochten" (2007: 60).

IX/ V.11, ll. 3885-7). Both weapons become symbolic of the characters' antithetical personalities. Whereas the impetus with which the Queen of Scots strikes the knife directly against her enemy is indicative of her emotional temperament "der irdischen Maria" (NA IX/ IV.4, l. 2813), the arrow represents a subtler lethal weapon. Inasmuch as, once released, it leaves the sphere of control and responsibility of its agent, it becomes symbolic of Elisabeth's political manoeuvring and the expediency employed to preserve the illusion of her involvement in Maria's death sentence, and thus innocence, intact.³⁸⁰

Hence unlike *Don Carlos* – in which the love theme served primarily the dramatic purpose to drive and direct Posa's cosmopolitical aspirations, remaining as platonic and idealized as his utopian pursuit of freedom – the erotic motif in *Maria Stuart* and, as we shall see, in Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini* (1815), essentially shifts the dramatic focus from the political to the private domain.³⁸¹ This transition goes hand in hand with Schiller's

³⁸⁰ In contrast to Elisabeth, the "königlichen Heuchlerin" of England (letter to Goethe, 30 July 1799 [NA XXX, 75, 82.]), Schiller describes Maria as "physisches Wesen" whose "Schicksal ist nur heftige Paßionen zu erfahren" (letter to Goethe, 18 June 1799 [NA XXX, 61, 68.]). Contrary to her rival, the Stuart's prevalently emotional personality is thus charged with a positive connotation that Schiller sets off against Elisabeth, who is instead negatively portrayed in the play as the cold vergin and virago: "ELISABETH [...] ich meinte doch, regiert/ Zu haben, wie ein Mann und wie ein König" (NA IX/ II.2, ll. 1170-1).

³⁸¹ To bring the erotic rivalry between the two queens to the fore, Schiller had once more altered historical facts, considerably rejuvenating – as he pointed out in a note to his letter to Iffland – both female competitors: "Marie ist in dem Stücke etwa 25 und Elisabeth höchstens 30 Jahr alt" (22 June 1800 [NA XXX, 164, 199.]), whereas in 1587 – year in which the Stuart was condemned to death – they were respectively 44 and 53 (Witte 1962: 239). For this purpose, Schiller turned Lord Leicester – who historically had only been proposed as husband to Mary Stuart (Witte 1962: 243) – into Elisabeth's and Maria's contended lover. Reproduced and reflected in the sisters' amorous rivalry, their political antagonism resembles – though under different dramatic premises and circumstances – the conflict entertained by the brothers Lanciotto and Paolo for Francesca in Pellico's homonymous tragedy. Far, however, from Francesca's bashful and selfless love for Paolo, Leicester sticks out as the most selfish and hypocritical character in the play. "Weg mit Verstellung! Handelt öffentlich!" (NA IX/ II.2, l. 1923) is Mortimer's admonishment to the earl after handing out to him the letter in which Maria requested his former suitor to free her from the dungeon. In striking contrast to Mortimer, willing to gamble his life in order to liberate her beloved Catholic queen, Leicester's actions are exclusively dictated by personal interests and political reckoning which makes his favors hesitantly oscillate from one to the other. When his participation in the plan that Mortimer had designed to save Maria from captivity comes to light, he goes thus far as to discard his complicity and consign the queen's conspirator to the royal guards ("MORTIMER Weg über meinen Nacken schreitet er./ Mein Fall muß ihm die Rettungsbrücke bauen" [NA IX/ IV.4, ll. 2800-1]). Led by

transposition of action – concentrated in the play on the queens' personal discord – from out to inward conflict. The author, who as early as in his *Fiesko* (1783) had addressed the relevance ascribed to the "human heart" in historical matters, turned with increased interest to the individual's inner motives to justify a course of history that since the French Revolution's failures had gone astray, and lost its valence as provider of universal values and educator of human conduct.³⁸² Schiller's optimistic faith in a history that would aim at the progress and

the unscrupulous craftiness to belie every evidence and turn it into appearance, he does not hesitate to deny his relationship with Maria after the letter with which she solicited the earl to maintain his promise of support had come to Elisabeth's hands ("LEICESTER Der Schein ist gegen mich, doch darf ich hoffen,/ Daß ich nicht nach dem Schein gerichtet werde!" [NA IX/ IV.4, ll. 2925-6]). Always determined to overthrow reality by means of deceit, at the end of the play, Leicester will eventually be unable to escape reality, while caught in the dungeon and forced to witness, against his will, the tangible and tragic evidence of Maria's execution ("LEICESTER Wie? Fesselt mich ein Gott an diesen Boden?/ Muß ich anhören, was mir anzuschauen graut? [NA IX/ V.10, ll. 3868-9]) – reporting to the audience her teichoscopically staged decapitation: "Die Stimme des Dechanten – Er ermahnet sie –/ Sie unterbricht ihn – Horch! – Laut betet sie –/ Mit fester Stimme – Es wird still – Ganz still!/ Nur schluchzen hör ich, und die Weiber weinen –/ Sie wird entkleidet – Horch! Der Schemel wird/ Gerückt – Sie kniet aufs Kissen – legt das Haupt –" (NA IX/ V.10, ll. 3868-9). In contrast to Leicester, Maria's young and bold suitor Mortimer, a thoroughly invented character, represents next to the earl (also partially fictitious in his role of the elder honest counselor [Witte 1962: 243]), the most authentic figure in the play, willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of freedom and justice shortly before being held captive of the queen's guard: "Was willst du, feiler Sklav der Tyrannei?/ Ich spotte deiner, ich bin frei!" (NA IX/ IV.4, ll. 2806-7). In his enthusiastic and unwavering idealism, he resembles the personage of Marquis Posa who, as imaginary as Mortimer, remains a product of Schiller's wishful thinking.

³⁸² Schiller's complete quote from the forward to his *Fiesko* clearly underscores this objective: "die kalte, unfruchtbare Staatsaktion aus dem menschlichen Herzen herauszuspinnen, und eben dadurch an das menschliche Herz wieder anzuknüpfen [...] und von der erfinderischen Intrige *Situationen für die Menschheit* zu entlehnen" (NA IV/ 9-10, my emphasis). The historical subject constituted for Schiller the point of departure and reference of his dramas whose aesthetic and ethical goal – in contrast to the moralizing ends of the foregoing sentimental drama – consisted in disclosing the motives of actions at the heart of the individual's soul – as Schiller had already stated in the prologue to his first play, *The Robbers* (1781) ("die Vortheile der dramatischen Methode, die Seele gleichsam bei ihren geheimsten Operationen zu ertappen" [NA III/ 5]), and thus infer situations for humankind. This is the very thought that also Manzoni will articulate in his above-captioned *Lettre à M. Chauvet* (1820) in which, while reflecting upon the need to reform the theatre, he will stress the relevance attributed by the dramatist who deals with historical subject to human passions with the goal to evoke and exemplify on stage the common basis of human suffering and misery in which all of humankind partakes: "C'est de l'histoire que le poëte tragique peut faire ressortir, sans contrainte, des sentimens humains; ce sont toujours les plus nobles, et nous en avons tant besoin! C'est à la vue des passions qui ont tourmenté les hommes, qu'il peut nous faire sentir *ce fonds commun de misère et de faiblesse* qui dispose à une indulgence, non de lassitude ou de mépris, mais de raison et d'amour"; *Tutte le opere*, vol. 5, p. 160, my emphasis. It is on this "common ground of misery and weakness" ("fondo comune di miseria e di debolezza") that Manzoni will detect the kernel of humanity, and Schiller alike recognized, since his earliest considerations on poetry and history: "Daß ein Mensch in solchen Lagen so empfindet, handelt, und sich ausdrückt ist *ein großes wichtiges Factum für den Menschen*; und das muß der Dramatische oder Romandichter leisten" (letter to

freedom of humankind had been disappointed by the realization that the alleged advancement of humanity had proven to be illusory. The reality brought about by the Jacobinian terror had, in contrast, portrayed a picture of degraded inhumanity that only confirmed him in his theory of the alienation witnessed between the rational and the sensual natures that had affected the modern human being.³⁸³ The Napoleonic regime and its politics of invasion and expansion had, moreover, deluded the very cosmopolitan ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood originally upheld by the enlightened revolutionaries. With the loss of its *telos*, the meaning of history both as process and practice was, arguably, put into question. The consequent aesthetization of history rooted in the belief that only poetry would be able to restore the forfeited historical value by resorting to its "inner truth" which Schiller had defined as "Kunstwahrheit" or poetic truth as the means to obviate the historical lack of meaning. Tragedy allowed to conjoin history with poetry, contributing to an understanding from within human subjectivity which Schiller considered to be the "wichtigere Art von Wahrheit".³⁸⁴ As he had already asserted in his early lecture *Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?* (1784): "Die Schaubühne ist [...] ein unfehlbarer Schlüssel zu den geheimsten Zugängen der menschlichen Seele" (NA XX/ 95).³⁸⁵

Beulwitz, 10-11 Dec. 1788, NA XXV/ 154, 120., my emphasis). Manzoni like Schiller will reiterate Posa's understanding of history as made essentially by humans rather than heroes: "Daß Menschen nur – nicht Wesen hör'er Art –/ Die Weltgeschichte schreiben! [...]" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3149-50).

³⁸³ According to Williams, the contrastive personality traits that the two queens embody, exemplify metaphorically Schiller's notion of the human "splintered psyche": "Neither character is whole – Elizabeth, the rational, political pragmatist, or Mary, the emotionally, volatile, charismatic spirit" (2006: 289). Yet, through the acceptance of her death, Maria will eventually be able to restore her individual wholeness and reassert human freedom.

³⁸⁴ See Schiller's letter to Caroline von Beulwitz from December 10-11, 1788 (NA XXV/ 154, 120.).

³⁸⁵ The dramatic genre was in this respect particularly apt to represent, through the poetic interpretation of historical records, what Schiller deemed to be essentially human, rendering history, in turn, more real and

Through their inward drama – which reproduces the modern dilemma of human alienation – Schiller's characters enact the conflict displayed in history between freedom and necessity. Elisabeth is the figure that best exemplifies the individual's struggle between self-determination and constraint, torn by her wish to execute Maria and her will to retain the appearance of a merciful sovereign:

ELISABETH Ich wollte die Gesetze handeln lassen,
 Die eigne Hand vom Blute rein behalten.
 Das Urteil ist gesprochen. Was gewinn ich?
 Es muß vollzogen werden, Mortimer!
 Und ich muß die Vollziehung anbefehlen.
 Mich immer trifft der Haß der Tat. Ich muß
 Sie eingestehn, und kann den Schein nicht retten.
 Das ist das Schlimmste!
 (NA IX/ II.5, l. 1592-9, my emphasis)

As Elisabeth pretends to be compelled, against her resolution, to enforce the judges' decree of Maria's capital penalty, she is determinate to dissimulate her responsibility in the queen's execution to avoid jeopardizing her positive image: "Was man scheint,/ hat jedermann zum Richter, was man ist, hat keinen" (NA IX/ II.5, ll. 1601-2). In order to abstain herself from direct involvement in Maria's death ("Von meinem Rechte überzeug ich niemand,/ So muß ich Sorge tragen, daß mein Anteil/ An ihrem Tod in ewgem Zweifel bleibe" [NA IX/ II.5, ll. 1603-5]), and thus preserve, as Mortimer puts it, "den frommen Heuchelschein der Gnade"

tangible. In his article on Schiller's practice as historian, Süssmann highlights the dramatist's preference for concrete historical representations ("Schiller denkt Geschichte eben auch, vor allem und primär *in* Darstellungen" [2006: 49, emphasis in the original]), and describes him consequently as "Geschichtspraktiker" (2006: 51) rather than theoretician. Schiller's own disregard, as stated once more in his *Fiesko* forward, of an abstract understanding of history which turns the individual into a nearly ethereal "factum" devoid of physical consistency, confirms Süssmann's point: "Höher Geister sehen die zarten Spinnewebe einer That durch die ganze Dehnung des Weltsystems laufen, und vielleicht an die entlegensten Grenzen der Zukunft und Vergangenheit anhängen – wo der Mensch nichts, als das *in freien Lüften schwebende Factum* sieht. Aber der Künstler wählt für das kurze Gesicht der Menschheit, die er belehren will, nicht für die scharfsinnige Allmacht, von der er lernt" (NA IV/ 9, my emphasis).

(NA IX/ II.6, l. 1638-9), she imparts the keeper's nephew the murderous plan to assassinate her rival beforehand.

As Elisabeth finds herself constrained to surrender her freedom of action to her people's desires, she is aware of the danger that can be derived from seconding the mob's inconstancy ("Die wankelmütge Menge,/ Die jeder Wind herumtreibt! Wehe dem,/ der auf dies Rohr sich lehnet!-" [NA IX/ IV.11, ll. 3260-2]), and fears compromising her responsibility and reputation:

ELISABETH [...] Ach wie sehr befürcht ich,
 Wenn ich dem Wunsch der Menge nun gehorcht,
 Daß eine ganz verschiedene Stimme sich
 Wird hören lassen – ja daß eben die,
 Die jetzt gewaltsam zu der Tat mich treiben,
 Mich, wenns vollbracht ist, strenge tadeln werden!
 (NA IX/ IV.8, ll. 3071-6).

Instrument of their arbitrary will, the Queen of England sees her powers resigned to the might of the masses, and her actions submitted to her subjects' moral judgment: "Die Meinung muß ich ehren, um das Lob/ Der Menge buhlen, einem Pöbel muß ichs/ Recht machen, dem der Gaukler nur gefällt" (NA IX/ IV.10, ll. 3194-6). "Gehorche/ der Stimme des Volks, sie ist die Stimme Gottes" (NA IX, IV.8, ll. 3067-8) is Burleigh's admonition to the queen – the more strikingly assertive if contrasted to the reminder that in *Don Carlos* the Spanish inquisitor had directed to king Philipp for whom people were yet reduced to mere numbers: "Menschen sind/ Für Sie nur Zahlen, weiter nichts" (NA VII.1/ V.10, ll. 5225-6).

If in *Don Carlos* the king was still bound to the will of the church, in *Maria Stuart* the queen obeys to the people's voice who derive their authority directly from God.³⁸⁶ Listening

³⁸⁶ According to Lampert, God stands in this context for the ethical claim that is intended to challenge Elisabeth's consciousness (1990: 140). This becomes particularly clear from the soliloquy that she entertains

to her subjects meant for Elisabeth to act, first and foremost, in the interest of the state and the freedom of her country:

BURLEIGH —Denk an die Kirche! Soll mit dieser Stuart
Der alte Aberglaube wiederkehren?
Der Mönch aufs neu hier herrschen, der Legat
Aus Rom gezogen kommen, unsre Kirchen
Verschließen, unsre Könige entthronen? (NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 3173-7)³⁸⁷

The critique launched by the Lord Treasurer is one that declares and defends the sovereigns' freedom from the supremacy of the Catholic Church, to which king Philipp was yet subject and which he had been charged to violate ("GROSSINQUISITOR [...]. Sie sind/ Durchschaut – Uns wollten Sie entfliehen./ Des Ordens schwere Ketten drücken Sie" [NA VII.1/ V.10, ll. 5237-9]) in the alleged pursuit of exclusive power: "GROSSINQUISITOR Sie wollten *frey* und *einzig* seyn" (NA VII.1/ V.10, l. 5240, my emphases).

The advent of Protestantism, as synonym of freedom and autonomy, inaugurates the decline of an old, yet feudal system, and its replacement by a modern form of government based on parliamentary representation and on the people's love, rather than fear, towards the monarch. As Elisabeth emphasizes: "Mein gutes Volk liebt mich zu sehr. Unmäßig,/ Abgöttisch sind die Zeichen seiner Freude" (NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2229-30). In this new system, priority is given to the "people's welfare" deemed, as Burleigh asserts, the queen's "highest

when, upon learning of Maria's execution, she appears to be plagued by her scruples: "—Was zitt'r ich? Was ergreift mich diese Angst?/ Das Grab deckt meine Furcht, und wer darf sagen,/ Ich hab's getan! [...]" (NA IX/ V.12, ll. 3897-9).

³⁸⁷ The play establishes in this passage an important identity of the traditional notion of "fatherland" ("Vaterland") with the "people" ("Volk") rather than the sovereign. It is out of eminent love for her people (not self-love) that Elisabeth is supposed to act when her Lord Treasurer admonishes her: "BURLEIGH – Du sagst, du liebst dein Volk, mehr als dich selbst,/ Das zeige jetzt! Erwähle nicht den Frieden/ Für dich und überlaß das Reich den Stürmen" (NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 3170-2), and prioritizes the salvation of his country in place of his queen's personal life: "Hat Shrewsbury das Leben dir gerettet,/ So will ich England retten – da ist mehr!" (NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 3183-4).

duty" ("Des Volkes Wohlfahrt ist die höchste Pflicht" [NA IX/ IV.9, l. 3182]), and the sovereign's legacy is made dependent upon the subjects' benevolent support and consent.³⁸⁸

As it can be elicited from Elisabeth's lamented loss of freedom and authority, the absolute power once detained by the sovereign is now subject to the people's will and liking: "O der ist noch nicht König, der der Welt/ Gefallen muß! Nur der ists, der bei seinem Tun/ Nach keines Menschen Beifall braucht zu fragen" (NA IX/ IV.10, ll. 3197-9).

As Schiller illustrates, however, within this more progressive form of government evidences of an unenlightened despotic system still abide and are exposed to the invective of the Catholic Queen of Scots. Maria Stuart not only questions in her confrontation with Burleigh, who had apprized her of the verdict, the legal validity of her death sentence masqueraded as justice (NA IX/ I.7), but appeals moreover to the claims to which she is entitled as "freie Königin des Auslands" (NA IX/ I.7, l. 727).³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Mary Stuart's fate, dethroned and ostracized by her people upon the murder of her Scottish husband ("PAULET Verjagt von ihrem Volk, des Throns entsetzt,/ Den sie mit schwerer Greuelthat geschändet" [NA IX/ I.1, ll. 99-100]), illustrates in this respect a concrete historical example. The idea that the monarch's claim to power could be jeopardized by his people's unfavorable assessment had already been addressed, albeit to a less pronounced degree, in *Don Carlos* through Madrid's insurrection upon Posa's death and Prince Carlos's imprisonment: "OFFIZIER Ganz Madrid in Waffen!// Zu Tausenden umringt der wüthende/ Soldat, der Pöbel, den Pallast. Prinz Karlos,/ Verbreitet man, sey in Verhaft genommen,/ Sein Leben in Gefahr. Das Volk will ihn/ Lebendig sehen oder ganz Madrid/ In Flammen aufgehn lassen" (NA IX/ V.5, ll. 4857-9, my emphasis). Judged by his subjects, who had turned into rebels ("KÖNIG Meine Unterthanen haben mich/ Gerichtet" [NA IX/ V.4, ll. 4854-5]), King Philipp sees his right to the throne threatened: "Steht mein Thron noch?/ Bin ich noch König dieses Landes? – Nein./ Ich bin es nicht mehr. Diese Memmen weinen,/ Von einem Knaben weich gemacht. Man wartet/ Nur auf die Losung, von mir abzufallen./ Ich bin verrathen von Rebellen" (NA IX/ V.5, ll. 4866-71). His recourse, however, as *ultima ratio* to religion, epitomized – as ethical instance – in the character of the chief inquisitor, serves eventually the purpose to reestablish, through the reinforcement of violence which culminates in his son's execution, Spain's despotic regime.

³⁸⁹ It shall not be considered inconsistent on Schiller's side if he – who in the character of *Don Carlos's* inquisitor had critiqued and condemned the Catholic church (which had costed him the play's censorship [Houben 1992: 543-4]) – upholds now the Catholic queen as positive example against the Protestant sovereign. Pellico detects in this apparent contradiction rather an essential trait and proof of the dramatist's valued open-mindedness as he remarks in his review of Schiller's tragedy, not without disclosing a biased critique raised in his profound Catholic creed against the Protestant queen: "Ciò che poi onora infinitamente *l'intelletto liberale* di Schiller, si è ch'egli, protestante, non siasi per nessuna considerazione astenuto dal far versar lagrime a favore dei cattolici perseguitati, gettando invece senza risparmio tutta l'odiosità meritata sovra la setta protestante,

MARIA — Mylord, man halt mich hier
 Gefangen wider alle *Völkerrechte*.
 Nicht mit dem Schwerte kam ich in dies Land,
 Ich kam herein, als eine Bittende,
 Das *heilge Gastrecht* fodernd, in den Arm
 Der *blutsverwandten* Königin mich werfend—
 Und so ergriff mich die Gewalt, bereitete
 Mir Ketten, wo ich Schutz gehofft —. (NA IX/ I.7, ll. 936-43, my emphases)

Elisabeth's disregard of the foreign sovereign's sacrosanct right to hospitality ("heilge Gastrecht") contravenes in its core the enlightened claim to "universal hospitality" which, according to Kant, ought to be granted to all foreigners.³⁹⁰ Not only does the queen scorn, as Maria accuses her in their subsequent encounter, "des Gastrechts heilige Gesetze,/ Der

dacché questa nel regno d'Elisabetta comparve persecutrice" (1954: 106-7). As a child of his time, Schiller's adhesion to Kant's idealism, provided him with a full belief and trust in human cognitive capacities and the individual's capability to rely upon reason and personal will to regulate his moral conduct without the need to resort to an external divine entity. He did, therefore, not shy away from originally staging Maria's confession and communion which – no less than the decapitation of a Catholic queen – had been vehemently contested and censured by the contemporary audience (Houben 1992: 553-8); see also Goethe's letter in which the director of the Weimar Court Theater recommended his friend to expunge the Eucharist scene from the play: "Der kühne Gedanke, eine Communion aufs Theater zu bringen, ist schon ruchtbar geworden und ich werde veranlaßt Sie zu ersuchen diese Function zu umgehen. Ich darf jetzt bekennen daß es mir selbst dabey nicht wohl zu Muthe war, nun da man schon zum voraus dagegen protestirt, ist es in doppelter Betrachtung nicht rätlich" (NA XXXVIII.1/ 269, 342.). The inclusion of a religious ceremony on stage was, however, perfectly in accord with Schiller's notion of the theater as institution that, along with religion and the judicial system, would fulfill an equally if not superior ethical function towards the improvement of society and the ennoblement of humankind. As Catholic, Pellico highly praised this scene in his review of the play, defending the author: "Né si può per verun conto imputare a Schiller d'aver mancato al decoro e al buon gusto avventurando sul teatro la rappresentazione del più augusto fra gli atti di culto della Chiesa romana: l'unione mistica del Dio che perdona col mortale colpevole che si pente all'ora della morte. Nulla v'è di più poetico delle idee religiose, allorché sono chiamate naturalmente dal soggetto" (1954: 115).

³⁹⁰ It is the same allegation which the French ambassador Aubespine will direct against the queen, outraged by his dismissal from the country: "Ich gehe, ich verlasse dieses Land,/ Wo man der Völker Recht mit Füßen tritt" (NA IX/ IV.2, ll. 2692-4). On Kant's *ius cosmopolitanum*, cf. introduction to this chapter, in particular fn. 249. See also Pellico's comments in this respect: "Del resto il delitto di quest'ultima, cioè la violazione dell'ospitalità, l'imprigionamento e la morte di Maria, – fosse anche stato l'unico, – era un delitto atroce, provato dinanzi all'Europa intiera" (1954: 106). Maria's claim to unite Scotland and England under one Parliament and Crown to resolve the countries' hostilities and guarantee their peaceful coexistence ("MARIA [...] bis endlich/ Ein Parlament sie brüderlich vereint,/ Ein Zepter waltet durch die ganze Insel" [NA IX/ I.7, ll. 824-6]) falls within the enlightened notion of "perpetual peace" as articulated by Kant, and thus within the very cosmopolitan patriotism already extensively discussed in my analysis of *Don Carlos*: "MARIA Ja ich gestehs, daß ich die Hoffnung nährte,/ Zwei edle Nationen unterm Schatten/ Des Ölbaums frei und fröhlich zu vereinen" (NA IX/ I.7, ll. 829-31); the olive ("Ölbaum") stands in this context as the Christian symbol for peace.

Völker heilig Recht" (NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2299-300), she also dismisses any plea of "public international laws" ("Völkerrechte") and her natural ties as "blood relative" ("blutsverwandten Königin"). Elisabeth's overt defiance: "Was ist mir Blutsverwandtschaft, Völkerrecht" (NA IX, III.4, l. 2353) notably echoes king Philipp's very denial of any moral, natural or legal claims (NA VIII.1/ IV.9, ll. 3788-91).³⁹¹ The old and wise counselor Shrewsbury, eventually, warns the Scottish sovereign of the consequences that will befall her kingdom if she will sign Maria's death warrant and deny justice ("Gerechtigkeit"):

SHREWSBURY Durchziehe London, wenn die blutge Tat
Geschehen, zeige dich dem *Volk*, das sonst
Sich jubelnd um dich her ergoß, du wirst
Ein andres England sehn, ein andres Volk,
Denn dich umgibt nicht mehr die herrliche
Gerechtigkeit, die alle Herzen dir
Besiegte! *Furcht*, die schreckliche Begleitung
Der *Tyrannei*, wird schauernd vor dir herziehen,
Und jede Straße, wo du gehst, veröden.
(NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 3128-36, my emphases)

As her people ("Volk") will turn their fondness towards the queen into fear ("Furcht"), Elisabeth's despotism ("Tyrannei") will jeopardize the enlightened monarchy model.

In contrast to Maria Stuart, who in the park of Fortheringhay Castle, prior to her encounter with the queen, was granted the momentary illusion of freedom which she believed to enjoy by the hands of her former suitor, the Earl of Leicester (NA IX/ III.1, ll. 2119-28), Elisabeth is thoroughly aware of the (only) apparent independence that conceals the "disgraceful bondage" ("schmähliche Knechtschaft") which enslaves her to serve the people ("Sklaverei des Volkdienst"), flattered idol ("Götzen") of her spite:

ELISABETH O *Sklaverei des Volkdiensts!* *Schmähliche*
Knechtschaft – Wie bin ichs müde, diesem *Götzen*

³⁹¹ For more details, cf. fn. 301 in section 3.1.1.

Zu schmeicheln, den mein Innerstes verachtet!
 Wann soll ich frei auf diesem Throne stehn!
 [...]
 Doch wars denn meine eigne freie Wahl
 Gerecht zu sein? *Die allgewaltige*
Notwendigkeit, die auch das freie Wollen
Der Könige zwingt, gebot mir diese Tugend.
 Umgeben rings von Feinden hält mich nur
 Die *Volksgunst* auf dem angefochtenen Thron.
 (NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 3190-3213, my emphases)

Dependent upon the approbation of the multitude ("Volksgunst") as guarantor of her contested throne, Elisabeth reprimands in her monologue the very model of justice that she had chosen for her regime and questions its value as virtue dictated exclusively by the "omnipotent necessity" ("allgewaltige Notwendigkeit") to which she was forced to subject her free will ("freie Wollen"). As she is caught within the constraints that her social role and expectations prescribe, and her desire for self-determination, she pretends to regain her freedom upon Maria's demise: "Ist sie aus den Lebendigen vertilgt,/ Frei bin ich, wie die Luft auf den Gebirgen!" (NA IX/ IV.10, ll. 3237-8). Ironically, however, it is through Maria's execution that Elisabeth grants instead the royal foe her absolute freedom.

It is through and in death, in fact, that Maria Stuart is able to overturn her captivity and overcome her physical bondage:

MARIA Was klagt ihr? Warum weint ihr? Freuen solltet
 Ihr euch mit mir, daß meiner Leiden Ziel
 Nun endlich naht, daß *meine Bande* fallen,
 Mein Kerker aufgeht, und die frohe Seele sich
 Auf Engelsflügeln schwingt zur *ewgen Freiheit*.
 (NA IX/ V.6, ll. 3480-4, my emphases)

The "ewge[] Freiheit" that Maria exalts, as she consoles the loyal servants who mourn her imminent fate, bears a significance that reaches beyond its explicitly and exclusively religious meaning indicating, in its metaphysical connotation, an alternative and more

authentic freedom from any "physical bonds" elevating the subject to a sphere beyond the natural world in the harmonious synthesis of necessity and reason.³⁹² This intimate form of

³⁹² In his treatise *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793), Schiller articulated the concept of human will as mediator between the necessity of nature and individual reasoning: "Bey dem Menschen ist noch eine Instanz mehr, nemlich der Wille, der als ein übersinnliches Vermögen weder dem Gesetz der Natur, noch dem der Vernunft, so unterworfen ist, daß ihm nicht *vollkommen freye Wahl* bliebe, sich entweder nach diesem oder nach jenem zu richten" (NA XX.1/ 290, my emphasis). With the introduction of personal will, Schiller provided the individual with the ability to autonomous action and self-determination. As he explains in detail, will leaves the individual the absolute freedom to choose ("*vollkommen freye Wahl*") between his reason and the law of nature ("Der Wille steht hier zwischen beyden Gerichtsbarkeiten, und es kommt ganz auf ihn selbst an, von welcher er das Gesetz empfangen will" [NA XX.1/ 291]). This is particularly true when will is considered in its "natural essence" ("Naturkraft"), as "moral force" ("Moralkraft"). Though it is not "bound" ("gebunden") to neither necessity nor reason, it ought to be "affiliated" ("verbunden") to the latter: "*Gebunden* ist er an keine [Gerichtsbarkeit], aber *verbunden* ist er dem Gesetz der Vernunft" (NA XX.1/ 291, my emphases). Maria's calm acceptance of her death sentence is indicative of the moral power of will invested in obeying to the "law of reason" ("Gesetz der Vernunft"), and thus surrendering to her execution without despair. Schiller described this act of individual triumph over the constraints of nature in his omonymous essay *Vom Erhabenen* (1793) as the "sublime": "*Groß* ist, wer das Furchtbare überwindet. *Erhaben* ist, wer es, auch selbst unterliegend, nicht fürchtet" (NA XX.1/ 185, emphases in the original). By willingly submitting to her inexorable death, Maria is able to regain her autonomy and reassert herself as free subject: "Unser *intelligibles Selbst*, dasjenige in uns, was nicht Natur ist, muß sich bey jener Affektion des Erhaltungstriebes von dem sinnlichen Theil unsers Wesens unterscheiden, und seiner Selbstständigkeit, seiner Unabhängigkeit von allem, was die physische Natur treffen kann, kurz, seiner Freyheit bewußt werden" (NA XX.1/ 184, emphasis in the original). In order to allow her spiritual self ("intelligibles Selbst") to achieve freedom, Maria must vanquish her physical nature: "bloß darinn muß unsre Freyheit bestehen, daß wir unsern physischen Zustand, der durch die Natur bestimmt werden kann, gar nicht zu unserm Selbst rechnen, sondern als etwas auswärtiges und fremdes betrachten, was auf unsre moralische Person keinen Einfluß hat" (NA XX.1/ 184). Schiller names this "sublime disposition" – or "erhabene Gesinnung" – "dignity" ("Würde") which, in his essay *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793), he describes as expression of "freedom of mind": "Beherrschung der Triebe durch die moralische Kraft ist *Geistesfreiheit*, und *Würde* heißt ihr Ausdruck in der Erscheinung" (NA XX.1/ 294, emphases in the original). In contrast to "grace" ("Anmuth") – which instead manifests itself in the perfect harmony and wholeness of sense and sensibility, reason and feelings, volition and necessity – "dignity" is the result of a condition of "pathos", that is suffering, from which the individual is able to emancipate himself by means of the exclusive faculty of reason: "Würde wird daher mehr im *Leiden* (*πάθος*); Anmuth mehr im *Betragen* (*ἡθος*) gefodert und gezeigt" (NA XX.1/ 297, emphases in the original); on the conceptual history of "dignity" as originally defined by the Stoic school as logos that governs the cosmos, and later inferred by the Enlightenment as human reason, restricted to the individual's "recta ratio" in control of his drive forces, see Ebert (2006: 133) and his in depth disquisition on and distinction of Schiller's notion of human dignity in three chief categories ("anthropologische Würde" as specified in *Ueber Anmuth und Würde*, "ästhetische Würde" as articulated in the *Aesthetic Letters*, and "erhabene Würde" as addressed in *Ueber das Pathetische*). Maria turns, therefore – as Mme de Staël had commented in praising Schiller's theater ("*Marie Stuart* est, ce me semble, de toutes les tragédies allemandes la plus pathétique et la mieux conçue" [1906: 83]) – into an epitome of pathos or "Darstellung des Leidens", which Schiller deemed to be "die erste und unnachlässliche Forderung an den tragischen Künstler" (NA XX.1/ 196). In her subsequent experience from pathos to the sublime, she exemplifies Schiller's dramaturgical notion of the "sublime pathos" which – in the second omonymous chapter, "Das Pathetischerhabene", of his original essay *Vom Erhabenen* (1793), he described as follows: "Die Vorstellung eines fremden Leidens, verbunden mit dem Affekt und dem Bewußtseyn unsrer innern moralischen Freyheit, ist *Pathetischerhaben*" (NA XX.1/ 192, emphasis in the original). With the concept of the "sublime pathos" Schiller focuses on the dramatic reception, indicating the spectator's ability to distance himself from the emotional participation in the enacted suffering ("fremdes Leiden"), refraining himself from identifying with a misery that he recognizes as not being his own,

freedom, resulting from an integrated human sensibility that, as Schiller had witnessed, had been denied to the individual *in* history, could henceforth be achieved on a metahistorical level.³⁹³ The immanence of enlightened historiography, which had originally viewed the

consequently freeing himself mentally and morally from the sorrow represented on stage: "Wird das Mitleiden zu einer solchen Lebhaftigkeit erhöht, daß wir uns mit dem Leidenden ernstlich verwechseln, so beherrschen wir den Affekt nicht mehr, sondern er beherrscht uns. Bleibt hingegen die Sympathie in ihren aesthetischen Gränzen, so vereinigt sie zwey Hauptbedingungen des Erhabenen: sinnlich-lebhaftes Vorstellung des Leidens mit dem Gefühl eigener Sicherheit verbunden" (NA XX.1/ 193). In *Maria Stuart*, Schiller intended to expand the heroine's pathos beyond a personal sense of compassion: "das pathetische muß mehr eine allgemeine tiefe Rührung, als ein persönlich und individuelles Mitgefühl seyn" (letter to Goethe, 18 June 1799 [NA XXX/ 61, 68.]). It is Elisabeth who ironically illustrates an example of self-pity rather than sympathy, and acts out a scene of pathos that lacks sublimity when, upon reading Maria's letter, she is moved to tears: "Was ist der Mensch! Was ist das Glück auf Erde!" (NA IX/ II.4, l. 1528). While she identifies herself with Maria's misery, she is unable to distance herself from her sorrow. The sublime remains inhibited and the scene becomes literally "pathetic": "ELISABETH — Verzeiht, Mylords, es schneidet mir ins Herz,/ Wehmut ergreift mich und die Seele blutet,/ Daß Irdisches nicht fester steht, das Schicksal/ Der Menschheit, das entsetzliche, so nahe/ An meinen eignen Haupt vorüberzieht" (NA IX/ II.4, ll. 1538-42). In her inability to achieve the sublime, Elisabeth stands in sharp contrast to Maria's final sublimation. On the basis of this reasoning, Schiller will articulate in his 1801 essay *Ueber das Pathetische* the famed statement: "Das Pathetische ist nur ästhetisch, in so fern es erhaben ist" (NA XX.1/ 200). Schiller's belief – as he stated in *Vom Erhabenen* (1793) – in the human "Freyheit des Geistes" (NA XX.1/ 193), that is the individual's capacity to emancipate himself through a willful act of self-determination from physical constraints and thus transcend necessity, will constitute the chief anthropological tenet of his future *Aesthetic Letters* (1795).

³⁹³ If in his Jena inaugural lecture *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* (1789), Schiller had still supported the enlightened notion of history as promoter of human, that is intellectual, freedom ("Licht wird sie [*sc.* die Weltgeschichte] in Ihrem Verstande, und eine wohlthätige Begeisterung in ihrem Herzen entzünden" [NA XVII.1/ 374]), after the French Revolution he did no longer believe in this notion of historical progress. As Posa's disillusioned idealism had already illustrated, the shattered hope to achieve freedom within historical immanence, is henceforth compensated by the individual's claim to an inner, moral freedom that can be accomplished only on a metahistorical level. As it will become more evident with the female heroine Jeanne d'Arc, religion turns in this endeavor, into an expedient to obviate the historical impasse and lack of freedom; see also Hofmann's comment to Schiller's employment of religious references in his dramas ("Die ästhetisch begründeten Anleihen bei der katholischen Religion, wie sie sich in den späten Dramen *Maria Stuart* und *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* zeigen, sind kein Hinweis auf eine religiöse Neuorientierung Schillers, sondern ein Beleg dafür, dass Schiller poetisch-theatralische Bilder für den Anspruch des Menschen auf eine andere Freiheit als die sucht, die sich im empirischen historischen Prozess zeigt" [2006: 193]). Upon bidding farewell to her earthly belonging and beloved, Maria's emancipation from all physical constraints and the extinction of her own physical nature will culminate in her union with the divine body as epitomized in the final Eucharist scene: "MELVIL Und wie du jetzt dich in dem irdschen Leib/ Geheimnisvoll mit deinem Gott verbunden/ So wirst du dort in seinem Freudenreich,/ Wo keine Schuld mehr sein wird, und kein Weinen,/ Ein schön erklärter Engel, dich/ Auf ewig mit dem Göttlichen vereinen" (NA IX/ V.7, ll. 3752-7, my emphasis). Her union with God epitomizes the consequent apotheosis of the individual according to his intrinsic human nature that Herder had originally identified, in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797), in the divine component manifesting itself in the individual's pursuit of humanity ("Das Göttliche in unserm Geschlecht ist also *Bildung zur Humanität*" (HW VII/ III. 27, 148, emphases in the original), and that Schiller had described in his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795) as the intrinsically human predisposition for the divine: "Die Anlage zur der Gottheit trägt der Mensch unwidersprechlich in seiner Persönlichkeit in sich" (SW V/ 603, 11). Both

historical development in terms of human progress and perfection, is consequently reverted into the transcendent as quality of the potential ideality that eminently distinguishes the human being. The heroine's saint-like transfiguration is also her hypostatization to Schiller's human ideal that exemplifies, outside of history, his utopian envisioning of the healed – that is, made whole and holy – divided modern subject and sensibility. As *The Maid of Orleans* will further illustrate, Schiller's historical pessimism had diverted his originally linear and spiral acceptance of progressive history, into a circular and mythical one in which the end of the story (and history) – as exhibited by the myths of Mary Stuart and Jeanne d'Arc – is already inscribed in its beginning.³⁹⁴

Schiller's *Maria Stuart* (1800) and Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini* (1815) end their play with the death and beatification of their heroines after being absolved from their stigma of adultery. Whereas Schiller's Maria resembles, however, the Maria Magdalena figure who – upon repenting her sins – is willing to expiate them, Pellico's Francesca – while deviating from historical truth – sticks out, in contrast, for her chastity and embodies more closely the Virgin Mary.

³⁹⁴ Myths as such transcend the cause-and-effect principle that governs history and that Schiller saw no longer applicable to a historical process which had lost its purposiveness and meaningfulness. The recurrent mythical characters in the play, with which Maria is associated, further accentuate and corroborate the legendary quality of this historical figure and her mythical idealization. Besides her immediate identification with the Homeric Helena ("PAULET —O Fluch dem Tag, da dieses Landes Küste/ Gastfreundlich diese Helena empfang" [NA IX/ I.1, ll. 83-4]) – who best exemplifies her role as seductress and *femme fatale* –, she is also addressed as Ate ("BURLEIGH —Und in dem Schloss zu Fotheringhay sitzt/ Die Ate dieses ewgen Kriegs, die mit/ Der Liebesfackel dieses Reich entzündet" [NA IX/ II.3, l. 1281]), goddess of discord who tempts men to evil, and as the merciless Medusa to which she metonymically compares herself, relating to the snake-haired Gorgon, shortly before her public altercation with Elisabeth ("MARIA In blutgen Haß gewendet wider sie/ Ist mir das Herz, es fliehen alle guten/ Gedanken, und die *Schlangenhaare* schüttelnd/ Umstehen mich die finstern Hölleengeister" [NA III.3/ 2184-7, my emphasis]). Hammer identifies in her study of Schiller's plays, a cyclical (hence a proto-mythical) trajectory of history that repeats itself, reaching as far back as to Vico, and finding in Rousseau's notion of historical evolution – intended as "vicious circle" that describes an unrestrainable and irreversible process of decline – its direct ascendent (2010: 156-7). This cyclical model stood in line, after all, with Schiller's analogical understanding of history as nature – as he had first formulated it in the introduction to *History of the Netherlands' Revolt* (1788): "Die ganze Weltgeschichte ist ein ewig wiederholter Kampf der Herrschsucht und Freiheit um diesen streitigen Fleck Landes, wie die Geschichte der Natur nichts anders ist als ein Kampf der Elemente und Körper im Raum" (NA XVII.1/ 39). The more so since Schiller's theory of universal history had been contradicted and questioned by the latest events witnessed on the concrete scenario of empirical history, consequently losing its telos and averting from a once linear teleological trajectory; cf. also Hofmann (2006: 183). While Büssgen highlights the teleological perspective of Schiller's historical thinking (2006: 53-4), Reill points out that his teleology, very much in analogy with the natural world – instead of being a "simplistic and optimistic linear one" – describes instead a "wavelike motion" in which the progress of human freedom appeared simultaneously to consistently recede (2006: 75). Prüfer eventually opts for a synthesis in

Whereas Maria eventually attains her freedom and turns her apparent defeat into an actual triumph, Elisabeth's victory reveals to be illusory as her alleged liberty ends in her confinement to a court abandoned by her devoted counselor Shrewsbury and her lover Leicester. If Maria, moreover, knew of her innocence as eventually proven by her wrongful death, Elisabeth was aware of her falsely vindicated integrity ("ELISABETH Das Volk bestürmte mich, zu unterzeichnen,/ Ich muß ihm seinen Willen tun, ich tats,/ Gezwungen tat ichs [...]") [NA IX/ V.14, ll. 3963-5]) which makes her in the end guilty of murder, juxtaposing Maria's salvation to her condemnation: "— Ich habe deinen edlern Teil/ Nicht retten können" are Shrewsbury's final words before bidding the queen farewell (NA IX/ V.15, ll. 4028-9).³⁹⁵

Schiller's thought of both a linear and a cyclical framework that leads ultimately to a spiral, progressing in a triadic (utopian) and a binary (antithetical) movement alike, which foresees the forthcoming reconciliation of nature and culture, necessity and freedom, on an idealistic (third and final) developmental stage of history (2002: 205-6). Schiller saw this final stage no longer achievable through history, but exclusively through art.

³⁹⁵ Despite the morally reprimandable conduct with which Maria is initially introduced on stage (cf. her nurse's summary of her past misdeeds [NA IX/ I.4, ll. 338-54], she eventually leaves the scene redeemed from her sins and worthy of what Schiller defined in terms of "aesthetic judgement". The essential distinction that he had made in his essay *Vom Erhabenen* (1793) of "unsrer *moralischen*, nicht unsrer *physischen* Freyheit" (NA XX.1/ 193, my emphasis), was in fact further elaborated in the notions of aesthetic versus moral judgement that he formulated in his sequel treatise *Ueber das Pathetische*, published in 1801. In both writings, *Vom Erhabenen* and *Ueber das Pathetische*, Schiller highlights the individual's faculty to self-determination and freedom, although his attention had now shifted from the spectator to the actor. Both theories are also related to the spectator's reaction towards what is represented on stage, with the exception that Schiller no longer focused on the characters' suffering, but their deeds. The author, in other words, maintained that a villain's morally contestable action, could still bear aesthetic value insofar as he displayed an "absolute faculty of will" ("das absolute Willensvermögen") and an "endless intellectual power" ("unendliche Geistergewalt") to counteract and overcome the limitations and constraints imposed on the subject by nature and physical reality ("dem Zwange der Natur und den Schranken der Sinnlichkeit gegenüber" [NA XX.1/ 216]), and thus achieve freedom. A negative moral judgment could, in other words, yet lead to an aesthetically honorable action ("Der nämliche Gegenstand kann uns in der moralischen Schätzung mißfallen, und in der ästhetischen sehr anziehend für uns seyn" [NA XX.1/ 213]) for what matters is not what the individual does or has done, but what he can do – that is: the potential that Maria exhibits in exerting her will power to overcome her bondage to the physical world and her physical nature, gaining in turn absolute individual freedom. It does, therefore, not surprise that of the two antithetical judgments ("die moralische und die ästhetische Beurtheilung, weit entfernt einander zu unterstützen, [stehen] einander vielmehr im Wege" [NA XX.1/ 217]), Schiller prefers the aesthetic over the moral one ("wenn wir uns bey ästhetischen Urtheilen erweitert, bey moralischen hingegen eingeengt und gebunden fühlen" [NA XX.1/ 216]). In line with his play-drive theory, Schiller's dramatic approach will

Drawing a line of conclusion, *Maria Stuart's* drama illustrates on a narrative basis Schiller's failed belief in history as manifestation of the individual's freedom to progress towards an integrated and inclusive humanity. It demonstrates, in contrast, how the individual is not actually, but only potentially free in virtue of his ideality as human being. If Elisabeth, caught in her historical immanence in which the only freedom possible is dictated by necessity ("BURLEIGH "Raube dir nicht selbst/ Die Freiheit, das Nothwendige zu tun" [NA IX/ II.4, ll. 1552-2]), represents therefore the subject's loss of personal will, her counterpart Maria epitomizes the will power that allows the protagonist to emancipate herself from empirical reality as she accomplishes her ideality in historical transcendence. In her freedom of will to resist suffering consists the heroine's actual strength and superiority towards Elisabeth. In her dramatic gesture coalesce Schiller's fundamental two tenets of his tragic theory as articulated in his treatise *Ueber das Pathetische* (1801): "Das erste Gesetz der tragischen Kunst war Darstellung der leidenden Natur. Das zweyte ist Darstellung des moralischen Widerstandes gegen das Leiden" (NA XX.1/ 199). In her human struggle of enduring suffering, Maria Stuart exemplifies both the tragic Greek heroine and the divided modern subject whose moral reasoning allowed her ultimately to resist natural forces and restore her unity in transcendence.³⁹⁶

On a meta-narrative level, instead, the drama enacts through the antithesis of appearance and reality Schiller's poetological reflections on the ambivalence of historical

eventually shift and substitute the moral relevance of theater with an eminently aesthetic value, reflecting a new trend in the history of drama that, with the close of the 18th-century, brought along the dissolution of the theater's moralizing and pedagogical function – a change that Schiller had already concisely predicted in the conclusion to his 1784 discourse *Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet* by holding: "in dieser künstlichen Welt träumen wir die wirkliche hinweg" (NA XX.1/ 100).

³⁹⁶ As Schiller specified in *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793): "Schon der bloße Wille erhebt den Menschen über die Tierheit; der *moralische* erhebt ihn zur Gottheit" (NA XX.1/ 290, emphases in the original).

facts and fiction. If facts, indeed, can be falsified by the historian's misinterpretation, poetic imagination becomes in turn, against its appearance of untruthfulness, guarantor of an "inner truth" that provides history with a more intimate, that is more human and thus more authentic meaning. The significance and scope of this aesthetic creed will find a more extensive and innovative application in Schiller's forthcoming historical play, featuring his highly acclaimed *Maid of Orleans*.

3.2.2. *Francesca da Rimini* (1815)

In his review of Schiller's *Maria Stuart* (1800), Pellico had praised the playwright for exonerating his heroine from moral judgement and arising the spectator's compassion "a favore della colpevole ma tenera, ma non freddamente scellerata Maria" (*Conciliatore* III, 1954: 106). By disclosing her intimate motives of action – in Pellico's words: her "intimo carattere" – Schiller had managed to recreate a primarily human (rather than historically accurate), and hence more authentic, character. This merit earned him the title – despite the play's historical inconsistencies and distortions – of "cultore della verità" (*Conciliatore* III, 1954: 106). With Schiller's example in mind, Pellico had deviated in his first historical tragedy from factual truthfulness in favor of a more sympathetic portrayal of the human heart. The "delicacy of the poet's mind" – as Byron remarked in his review of the play – had "shrunk from the undisguised relation of an incestuous passion, and felt intuitively the right way of securing the reader's commiseration for the unhappy pair" (1821: 97).³⁹⁷ In his review from 1820, Byron had emphasized the replacement of tradition and its heroic subjects desumed from classical mythology with the "delineations of the heart".³⁹⁸ In his *Forward* to

³⁹⁷ Byron argued that Pellico's deviation from historicity was intended to guarantee, instead of a historical adhesion, a more authentic and compassionate portrayal of the human heart. Akin to Schiller, who had reworked the myth of the promiscuous Scottish queen, Pellico will rewrite the story of the unfaithful noblewoman Francesca da Polenta who had been immortalized by Dante for her adulterous misdeed in the fifth canto of his *Inferno*.

³⁹⁸ Byron's complete quote reads: "Why should not *Dante* be to them [*sc.* the Italians] what Homer was to the Greek tragedians? What they will lose in that conventional grandeur which our imaginations attach to the heroic and mythological ages of Greece, they may gain in the truth and natural eloquence of their delineations of the human heart" (1821: 101, my emphasis). In his reference to the Italian poet, Byron employs Dante metonymically as representative of the national theater whose lack in Italy he lamented in his review of Pellico's tragedy, dismissing though altogether the attempt to enter into further details: "We shall not pause to inquire in what manner the peculiar political circumstances of Italy may have operated to discountenance the national drama" (1821: 74). In this respect, Pellico's *Francesca* derives its value as patriotic play in the very promotion of a national dramatic production. As a matter of fact, Pellico decided to move Dante's quote excerpted from the *Divine Comedy*, from the originally fifth to the central third act (Giolli 2005: 134), that is to the dramatic

Pellico's drama as first published in 1818, Di Breme had highlighted – in the clash of Romantics against Classicists – precisely this "contemplazione dell'uman cuore" as the distinctive trait of modern Romantic tragedies for which *Francesca da Rimini* had set a model.³⁹⁹ Akin to Schiller, Pellico's psychological drama displays the illuministic dichotomy of intellect and emotions. As reason, however, succeeds in *Maria Stuart*, it sows its victims in *Francesca's* tragedy voicing, in contrast, the author's Romantic critique against the rational faculty of self-deception.

Defying former studies, which have either dismissed Schiller's influence on Pellico's tragedy or detected, instead, its affiliation with the works of earlier German playwrights, my analysis of the play seeks to explore the affinity shared between the two dramas on the thematic rather than on the more obvious level of their contents, and in relation to the authors' poetics and dramatic theory.⁴⁰⁰ Departing from the evidence that both tragedies refer

highpoint of the play. If Byron, however, had praised Pellico for citing Alighieri in the endeavor of establishing the tradition of a national Italian theater, Foscolo had strongly critized the playwright. As Pellico himself remarked: "mi rincresce che ad Ugo non piaccia la mia tragedia. Egli che mi avea consigliato di bruciarla, non perdonerà mai al cattivo gusto di Lord Byron" (letter to Luigi from 22 Nov. 1816 [Rinieri I, 1898: 205/ XLIII]); Pellico will eventually expunge altogether an entire strophe from act III, in which Paolo mentions explicitly Dante (Bellorini 1930: 17). Eventually, two manuscripts of Pellico's *Francesca* – respectively from 1814 and 1815 – were found, which are ascribed respectively to Foscolo and to di Breme, with the first manuscript annotated by Foscolo displaying a considerable discrepancy from the published edition which is instead closer to di Breme's manuscript; see Schoch (1907: 114).

³⁹⁹ See di Breme's "Forward" ("Avvertenza"), originally anonymously published in the first edition of the play from 1818 by Pirotta (Curto 1964: 341-42). It is indicative that the publication year coincided with the appearance of the patriotic literary journal *Il Conciliatore* attesting, among others, to what extent patriotic concerns and feelings were increasingly being addressed. An earlier edition of the play was published by count Porro-Lambertenghi for whom he worked as tutor of his children since the play's great success on stage. This edition, however, is not considered valid for it displays the incorrect date and place of 1818 in London, while it was instead given to the press in the Italian city of Novara and without the author's consent; for more details on this matter, cf. Curto (1964: 50). See also the author's personal comments on the apocryphal Porro edition in his polemic letter to his brother Luigi from Milan (Jan. 18, 1818), in which he explains the actual rivalry between the count and di Breme when attempting to first publish Pellico's drama (Rinieri I, 1898: 268-9/ LXI).

⁴⁰⁰ Based primarily on the tragedies' content, Mazzucchetti sees only in Pellico's *Matilda* an influence of Schiller's *Jungfrau*. According to Curto (1954: 360), the drama displays, instead, similarities with Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (1772) probably in view of the accent posed by Pellico, for obvious reasons, on the play as

to the stories of two "mythical" carnal sinners, I shall illustrate how the private motive that drives the dramatic development forward becomes, both in *Maria Stuart* and *Francesca da Rimini*, suggestive of the political context framing their actions. Although love constitutes, in fact, the central theme of Pellico's tragedy, I shall demonstrate how the play voices nonetheless an eminently political critique and patriotic commentary in which the fratricidal motif, common at once to *Maria Stuart* and *Francesca da Rimini*, results strongly allusive of the civil conflicts that were afflicting Schiller's and Pellico's countries alike. As I will examine the manner in which Pellico restores and rewrites Dante's myth of Francesca, I shall explain how he eventually rehistoricizes her purported adultery by turning it into the metaphor of a political affair strongly allusive of Italy's 19th-century circumstances.

Pellico's gradual shift from classical theater with its mythological subjects towards an increased interest for historical tragedies coincided with his incipient readings of Schiller's plays during the first half of his Milanese time, that is between 1809 and 1815. In two subsequent articles of the liberal newspaper *Il Conciliatore* that he will be editing only a few years later, Pellico will explicitly distance himself from the "fantastic monsters" of traditional mythological dramas ("siffatti favolosi mostri dell'antichità" [*Conciliatore* II, 1953: 396]). He will sanction the historical past as being more poetic than the actual present ("il passato è in

family – rather than patriotic – drama. Contrary, however, to Lessing's bourgeois tragedy which does not have per se any historical relevance, but is instead modeled upon the ancient myth of Virginia, with *Francesca da Rimini* Pellico – who mentions Lessing's drama among his readings (see letter to Luigi, 11 Dec. 1815 [LM 30]) – relies upon a historical source. Carrai, in turn, identifies the affinity between Pellico's *Francesca* and Foscolo's *Tieste* (1997: 344), whereas far from Pellico's intent to pay a tribute to Dante, Curto sees in the German playwright Kotzebue's adulterous *Eulalia*, Pellico's main influence and source of inspiration (1964: 9). If Kotzebue's play – a comedy in the tradition of the bourgeois drama whose moral teaching it actually subverts by portraying a woman who repents her adultery and is eventually reintegrated into society – may have provided Pellico with the idea to rewrite Francesca's myth into a morally positive one, he could not but resort to Dante, who had been the first one to exhume the story of Francesca da Polenta; as to Dante's importance as "historian" of Francesca, see fn. 423.

generale più *poetico* del presente" [*Conciliatore* II, 1953: 396, emphases in the original]), and set it against the immemorable mythological past to the extent that history had, in contrast, the ability to "ignite" ("infiamma"), and "move" ("commuove") the spectators' hearts: "La polvere dei nostri avi sarà quindi sempre più poetica per noi, che non la polvere degli avi di Priamo. E poesia ciò che *infiamma e commuove*; e ci commuovono assai più le ricordanze moderne che non le fanfaluche de' tempi incerti" (*Conciliatore* II, 1953: 397, my emphases).⁴⁰¹

Completed on 15 June of 1814, *Francesca da Rimini* constitutes Pellico's first medieval tragedy after *Laodamia* (April 5, 1813) and *Turno* (April 16, 1814), which featured respectively an ancient Greek and Latin subject.⁴⁰² *Francesca* thus marks a turning point in Pellico's poetics and dramatic theory. On the one hand, it adheres with its preferences for history and its focus on the Middle Ages to the Romantic rather than Classicist taste.⁴⁰³ On

⁴⁰¹ The mythological past, which he dismisses as the "realm of fairy tales ("regno della favola" [*Conciliatore* II, 396]), could not provide a realistic understanding of the contemporary tyrannical times ("tempi che nulla più hanno in comune coi costumi d'oggi" [*Conciliatore* II, 396]). If anything, myths were able to convey only an abstract example of tyranny, hence his critique in a letter to his brother from 21 June 1820 against those conservative and classicist "patriots" *à la* Alfieri who: "abborrono la tirannide ed amano la libertà, ma sempre *in astratto*, sempre guardando i greci e i romani, sempre disprezzando i moderni" (LM 218, my emphasis). Pellico and Schiller alike pleaded for a more concrete approach to history – one made by humans and distinguishing itself for being first and foremost human. Far from the abstractions of classical mythology and mythized history with its idealized heroes, their dramas portray the deeds of individuals in flesh and blood, the weaknesses of their hearts and minds. Heroes become human, and history is rendered more real and tangible.

⁴⁰² For more details on the exact dating of these earliest plays, see Rinieri's address to the reader in his collection of Pellico's inedited works (III, 1901: v-x). In choosing the Middle Ages as the historical context of his play, Pellico was setting up the stage for a patriotic drama. As Maroncelli explained in his "Additions" to Pellico's *Le mie prigioni* (1832), the Middle Ages exemplified Italy's glorious times of political prosperity and freedom: "all'epoca più gloriosa della storia moderna d'Italia, all'epoca delle repubbliche del medio evo, all'epoca che spiegò tante virtù cittadine contro il tiranno universale – Federico Barbarossa" (1861: 523/ capo ultimo, iv).

⁴⁰³ If Bellorini identifies a line of development in Pellico's literary production that goes from classical to Romantic (1916: 23-4), Schoch describes *Francesca* as subsuming both traditions: the one that goes back to the earlier dramatist Alfieri and the one that will witness its continuation and completion in Manzoni (1907: 108). It is certainly true, as argued by Taviani, that this historical medieval tragedy can be "considered Romantic in respect of its context and content [...], but not for its form" (2006: 213). If *Francesca* can be described as classic

the other hand, it exemplifies the tenets of Pellico's understanding of historical tragedies, that is those that recollect and restage "national glories", instructing the audience to action through the more immediate vehicle of Thespian representation rather than reading. As he explains in his literary journal:

[...] la più istruttiva, la più efficace, la più filosofica delle tragedie ci sembra essere la *storica*; e per storica non intendiamo quella che ci rammenta senza pro alcuni fatti d'antichissimi annali, ma quella che ci parla sovra tutto de' nostri avi, delle nostre **glorie nazionali** o dei memorabili delitti onde queste furono contaminate. **Vera istruzione si è dessa.** Il **volgo** che non ha tempo di leggere impara ivi i fatti paterni, e gl'ingegni pensanti essendo dallo spettacolo d'un'azione più fortemente scossi che dalla lettura d'un libro, raffinano le loro meditazioni sulle vicende de' mortali, e ne derivano maggior giustezza di critica ed energia di sentimento nella sociale condotta. (*Conciliatore* II, 1953: 507, emphasis in the original, bold added)

Pellico articulates in this passage a core notion of literature which he endowed with the task to instruct the people ("volgo") with the history of its fatherland. He brought, in other words,

in that it still respects the Aristotelian unities (the action is carried on by few main characters and the theme is overall a heroic one), the historical contextualization of the Middle Ages and the protagonists' sentimentalism distinguish it as eminently Romantic. In the forthcoming tragedies, Pellico will in fact increasingly distance himself from the classicist tradition and move towards a more obvious application of the Romantic literary tenets. If *Eufemio di Messina* (1820) hence displays already a gradual, but clear loosening up of the Aristotelian unities (with the action extended into the night while moving between various changes of places and the increased number of characters involved in the action), *Leoniero da Dertona* (1822-1831) will eventually be thoroughly Romantic in both content and form. According to an article of the poet G. Moir in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, Pellico actually combined both the historical tendency of the Romantic and the classical tenets of Greek and Roman Republican values. Rinieri observes how, though Romantic in his (political rather than literary) inclination, Pellico preferred to write as a Classicist (I, 1898: 23). Pellico makes a point to his syncretism in a notorious Milanese letter from Dec. 11, 1815 in which he explains to his brother that the difference between Romantics and Classicists went beyond merely formal aspects, and was instead based on different ideas that derived their origin and meaning from their specific times: "Non è l'osservanza o la violazione dell'unità di tempo e di luogo che costituisce i generi chiamati Classico e Romantico. Al primo appartengono tutte le idee derivate o modificate secondo l'antica civilizzazione greca, adottate poi come modello poetico: al secondo quelle che portano l'impronta della civilizzazione moderna [...]" (LM 30). Pellico was, undoubtedly, diplomatically cautious by avoiding to stand out among his contemporaries as particularly unconventional and innovative, as he himself wrote to his brother on 18 July 1815, that is exactly one month prior to his tragedy's stage debut: "Verrà pure un giorno, dico, che Francesca da Rimini sarà recitata. Se sarò applaudito, una sola non basta però a captivarmi il suffragio della moltitudine. Converrà essere noto per tre o quattro produzioni *ortodosse*, prima d'aver suffragi abbastanza per osar tentare innovazioni, violazioni di regole, etc. Tanto quelle foggiate alla Schiller, come le essenzialmente politiche, devono essere modeste, e lasciare la primogenitura alle altre. Tale è il mio giudizio [...]" (LM 19, emphasis in the original). Both with regard to his poetics and his politics, Pellico remained essentially a moderate.

Dante's original myth of Francesca through its dramatization to the people with the objective to inform them with a feeling of national community and belonging, consequently moving them to action.⁴⁰⁴ In a letter to his elder brother from 27 June 1815, Pellico had in fact declared: "ho riconsultate le mie opinioni sulla drammatica: l^o ch'essa debba servire a celebrare gli eroi della patria" (LM 16). According to Pellico's chief dramaturgic tenet and theory, *Francesca's* tragedy served, therefore, in the first stance the propagation of national sentiments no less than the promotion of a yet lacking national theater. Theater had to be national and patriotic, and as all art intended to provide the audience with a moral and civic teaching. In another letter to Luigi, dated 4 February 1817, Pellico would lament: "Gemo spesso di non aver patria" (LM 79).⁴⁰⁵ Premiered on August 18, 1815 at the Milan royal theatre (*teatro Re*) (LM 20) – two months after Napoleon's ominous battle of Waterloo (June 18, 1815) – the play encountered an immediate and incontestable success.⁴⁰⁶ It was obviously

⁴⁰⁴ For Pellico, literature fulfilled an eminently pedagogical role. Hence his critique in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834) against Rousseau's claim of the deleterious effects allegedly derived from education: "Il delirio di Rousseau, che il selvaggio sia il più felice de' mortali – che l'ignoranza sia preferibile al sapere – è smentito dall'esperienza" (1964: 647/ XIV). In one of his letters to Luigi, Pellico – just as Schiller before him – had praised instead literature and writers as means apt to educate the audience to their social conduct: "Io considero la letteratura come importante sotto un solo punto di vista, quello cioè della sua influenza sopra l'educazione degli uomini. [...] Or se uno scrittore ha alcun pregio, egli è dunque quando le sue opere sono un mezzo benchè piccolo, di cui si serve la Provvidenza per l'andamento arcano ma sublime della macchina sociale: fuori di lì i poeti sono vere cicale" (24 July 1817 [Rinieri I, 1898: 243/ LII.]). In this respect, a revolutionary intellectual as Mazzini would find himself in agreement with the otherwise moderate line of change envisioned by Pellico and Schiller. As he will write, in fact, in his own version of *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860): "Senza educazione nazionale non esiste moralmente nazione. La coscienza nazionale non può uscir che da quella" (2005: 925/ IX).

⁴⁰⁵ It is this very patriotic theme that will find in Pellico's next successful tragedy *Eufemio di Messina* (1820), under the same banner of politics and passion, private and public sphere, its further development.

⁴⁰⁶ As Pellico wrote to his brother on August 12, 1815: "Anche i più severi, e conosciuti per maligni, hanno detto che dopo Alfieri non s'è veduto una tragedia così" (LM 20-1). Pellico's fame went so far as to reach him even in the Spielberg prison as he will recount many years later in his prison memoirs *Le mie prigioni* (1832) throughout his encounter with the alleged Duke of Normandy. After the fame that *Francesca* had brought to Pellico and its publication, he began to work as editor for the newly founded liberal journal *Il Conciliatore* whose goal was to promote the letters and foster political critique or – as Maroncelli will put it in his "Additions" to Pellico's *Prigioni*, to act as "scuola logica di libertà" (1861: 482/ XVII., iv.). In a letter to Foscolo, Pellico will emphasize the critical and collective patriotic message of the journal by promoting

the sign of patriotic feelings that it kindled among the audience, in particular shortly after the Congress of Vienna had reestablished in June 1815 the former foreign dominions over the peninsula.

In the attempt to propagate Dante's myth of Francesca among the people, Pellico consequently historicizes it. The most significant transformation that he undertakes compared to Dante's canto of the *Inferno*, consists in that it is Paolo – no longer Francesca – who speaks up and has the word.⁴⁰⁷ Through this major change of accent, Pellico translates what was originally understood as the story of a personal passion into one in which prevails the political sentiment of patriotism. This is proven by Paolo's notorious patriotic invocation that Pellico situates as early as in the first act of the play:

PAOLO [...] Ho sparso
di Bisanzio pel trono il sangue mio,
debellando città ch'io non odiava,
[...].
Per chi di stragi sì macchiò il mio brando?
Per lo *straniero*. E non ho *patria* forse
cui sacro sia de' cittadini il sangue?
Per te, per te, che cittadini hai prodi,
Italia mia, combatterò, se oltraggio,
ti moverà la invidia. E il più gentile
terren non sei di quanti scalda il sole?
D'ogni bell'arte non sei madre, o Italia?

thinking and preserving the dignity of the Italian name: "per sostenere, finch'è possibile, la dignità del nome italiano. [Il maggior de' pericoli che sovrasta a questo paese si è il torpore, l'abitudine di non pensare. [...].]" (17 Oct. 1818 [LM 349, addition in the original]).

⁴⁰⁷ In her illuminating study, O'Grady explains in detail the inversion of the roles of silence versus speech between Paolo and Francesca in Pellico's play, setting himself clearly off from Dante's anything but gender-specific characterization at that time of the two lovers (2010: 23). As explained in an earlier study by Lund-Mead, through her "poetic voice" Dante's Francesca "subverts male expectations"; according to the scholar, Dante's Francesca only "initiates a process of discursive subversion, which will culminate in Beatrice's fully engaged, vocal leadership" (2005: 129). As a matter of fact, Pellico's Francesca, described in the play as angelic figure, results after all closer to the stilnovo representation of the "angel-like woman" or "donna angelo" than Dante's adulterous sinner. By restoring Francesca's female identity, and relocating her role of daughter and wife within the social conventions and expectations of her time, Pellico eventually *historicizes* Dante's originally mythical character.

Polve d'eroi non è la polve tua?⁴⁰⁸

The series of rhetorical questions that Paolo articulates for himself are, in reality, vicariously addressed to the audience. As a matter of fact, when Pellico concluded his tragedy in 1814, the Reign of Italy was undergoing major changes as a consequence of Napoleon's resignation in Fontainebleau (April 6, 1814), and the Italian intelligentsia was engaged in the opportunity of regaining political autonomy.⁴⁰⁹ Opening with a critique against the mercenary soldiers who had served the Greek emperor of Constantinople in his military pursuits, the quoted passage alludes – in Pellico's historical present – to France's imperialistic cause for which numerous Italian soldiers had lost their lives by serving the foreigner ("lo straniero") in its disastrous Russian campaign (1812).⁴¹⁰ The incipient invective is, thus, followed by an emotionally charged invocation to Italy ("Italia mia"), which had been addressed only a few verses earlier with the appellative of "fatherland" ("patria"), inciting the Italians – who were just attempting to regain their independence upon Napoleon's abdication – to defend and demonstrate their loyalty, instead, to their own country.

In light of its patriotic subtext, it may result the more surprising that the tragedy was able to essentially bypass the Austrian censorship, and be staged with only minor amendments.⁴¹¹ This apparently lenient scrutiny and treatment of the play can be explained

⁴⁰⁸ *Francesca da Rimini* (henceforth "FR"), act I, scene 5, p. 353, my emphases.

⁴⁰⁹ For more details on the contemporary historical context, see Mola (2005: 58-9).

⁴¹⁰ See Bellorini's comments to Paolo's patriotic apostrophe (1930: 9). Among the many victims claimed by the Russian campaign, Pellico's mentor Foscolo experienced the bitter loss of his close friend, the young count Benedetto Giovio (Rinieri I, 1898: 32).

⁴¹¹ In his letter to Luigi whom he informs of the tragedy's great success, Pellico mentions this very fourth scene of the first act: "Scena 4. Paolo. Ti ricordi della parlata sopra l'Italia? Con una *leggera correzione* la polizia me la passò: l'entusiasmo che questa parlata mosse è indicibile" (Aug. 21, 1815 [LM 20, my emphasis]).

with the strategic emphasis that the author had posed on the love motif around which the fulcrum of the dramatic action appears to revolve. As it can, in fact, be evinced by the further development of the play, Paolo's desire to fight for his fatherland finds its metaphorical enactment in his longing for Francesca who – like his country, subject to political trading upon the cession of the Lombardy-Venetia Kingdom to Austria in 1815 – had eventually resigned herself to her fate.⁴¹² It is this very passivity that distinguishes Pellico's Francesca from her predecessor in the *Inferno* as a consequence of her loosing the active voice with which Dante had endowed her heroine, contributing, in turn, to her anachronistic modernity.

Not only does the patriotic love theme introduce the actual play, it also finds its sequel in the subsequent unfolding of Paolo's and Francesca's sentimental drama with a strong reminiscence of Foscolo's *Ortis*.⁴¹³ In his decision to abandon his hometown Ravenna upon realizing Francesca's loss to his brother ("PAOLO [...] assai non era il perder... *l'adorata donna?*/ Anche il *fratello*, anche la *patria* io perdo!") [FR I.4/ 361, my emphases]), Paolo directly relates, and thus equates, the forfeiture of his beloved ("l'adorata donna") to that of his fatherland ("patria"). The reference made in the quote to his brother ("fratello")

⁴¹² In his version of the story, Boccaccio portrayed Francesca as having been deceived in marrying the handsome Paolo, whereas she had actually been promised to the less attractive brother Gianciotto. Boccaccio does not only add this detail to the records, but as he rewrites Dante's myth of Francesca, he does not shy away from questioning Dante's version of the lovers' subsequent encounter as a partial product of his imagination and invention: "Col quale [*sc.* Paolo] come ella poi si giugnesse, mai non udì dire se non quello che l'autore [*sc.* Dante] ne scrive; il che possibile è che così fosse: ma io credo quello essere più tosto finzione formata sopra quello che era possibile ad essere avvenuto, chè io non credo che l'autore sapesse che così fosse" (1965: 317). By making this point, Boccaccio addresses the very fictionalized quality of history writing to which his own version of the story additionally contributes.

⁴¹³ As a matter of fact, in both Foscolo's epistolary novel and Pellico's drama the female character turns into an instrument of political mediation against the background that displays the same basic conflict between love and duty. This controversial clash becomes particularly evident, as we have seen, in the father-daughter relationship between Teresa and Signor T*** who, despite the display of paternal feelings, sacrifices her only daughter for political interest. Francesca's father Guido will act in similar terms. However, while Foscolo dramatizes the actual moment of political "transaction", Pellico – writing several years after the Campoformio Treaty (1797) – shifts the dramatic focus to the consequences derived from it.

predicts the suitors' forthcoming conflict, and acts as forewarning against the contemporary fratricide wars which – in Paolo's admonitory injunction "Oh patrie guerre funeste!" (FR III.1/ 368) – bore the danger of the country's irretrievable loss.⁴¹⁴

The connection between politics and passion, personal and public motives is made clear in the first act as well by Lanciotto's remark regarding the practice of arranged marriage ultimately conceived as a political device:

LANCIOTTO Il padre
 pria di morire un imeneo m'impose,
 onde stabile a noi pace venisse.
 Il comando eseguii.(FR I.5/ 354, my emphasis)

It must be specified at this point, that Francesca's instrumentalization for the sake of political interest, in order to appease the conflicts persisting between the Malatesta and the Polenta noble families by means of a dynastic marriage, represents a deviation from the Dantesque myth which does not explicitly address the political nature of their nuptial arrangements. Pellico, in contrast, appears to follow henceforth Boccaccio's version of the story which portrays "madonna Francesca" as wilfully mislead into believing to be married to "Polo" while wedded, instead, to "Gian Ciotto": "E fatto poi artificiosamente il contratto delle sponsalizie e andatone la donna a Rimini, non s'avvide prima dello 'nganno che essa vide la mattina seguente al dì delle noze levare da lato a sé Gian Ciotto" (1965: 317).

⁴¹⁴ This concern and critique will be voiced also by Manzoni in his *Carmagnola* tragedy (1820) which Pellico will praise as "cosa divina" (letter to Luigi, 8 Jan. 1820 [LM 197]), not before criticizing the play however for its realism and lack of poetic invention: "Non è lettura che strascini perché gli eroi sono lasciati troppo simil al vero. *La poesia è un mondo più bello del reale*; bisogna che gli abitanti di quel mondo sieno a un grado più in su di noi, nell'amore, nell'ira, nelle virtù politiche, ecc." (undated letter to Luigi [Rinieri I, 1898: 261/ LIX, my emphasis). In contrast to Pellico who – akin to Schiller – did not shy away in combining historical and poetic truth, Manzoni considered the accuracy of and adherence to historical records as pivotal when proceeding to their dramatization.

In his relation to his daughter Francesca, Guido reminds the reader of Teresa's father in Foscolo's *Ortis*. Akin, in fact, to the charge that Ortis directs against Signor T***, Paolo accuses her beloved's parent of tyranny for expecting her daughter to marry a man whose love she did not requite, questioning – if not altogether challenging – his paternal rights: "PAOLO Più non ha diritti alla sua prole un padre/ che a sue *voglie tiranniche* l'immola" (FR V.3/ 383, my emphasis).⁴¹⁵ In contrast to Teresa's father, however, Guido abounds of affective effusions for his daughter. The play leaves, since its incipient verses, no doubt in this respect: "GUIDO men della figlia caro/ sariami il trono della terra" (FR I.1/ 345). By placing Francesca before the throne ("trono"), he distinguishes himself clearly from the traditional tyrannical father figure who immolates her daughter in the exclusive interest of the state: "Ah, quanto l'ami, il sai!/ Che troppo io viva... tu mi intendi... io sempre/ tremo" (FR I.1/ 347). In sharp contrast, for instance to Teodoro, the Sicilian sovereign and father of Lodovica in Pellico's subsequent tragedy *Eufemio di Messina* (1820) – who, by mercilessly sacrificing the daughter to his political interests, represents the authentic despot – Guido remains an affectionate father who cannot but love her daughter despite her faults: "GUIDO Padre infelice e offeso son, ma padre" (FR IV.3/ 373).⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁵ While Signor T*** remains an ambiguous figure, the relationship that Francesca entertains with his father Guido is without doubt profoundly affectionate. Francesca portrays the image of a caring and understanding paternal figure. When Francesca, for instance, is about to entrust Guido with the secret that anguished her conscience, the picture she provides of her father is far from the ambivalence that characterized instead Teresa's father: "FRANCESCA [...] Ah, tu pietoso/ consolator mi sei! ... Fuorchè tu o padre,/ non evvi alcun dinanzi a cui non tremi,/ dinanzi a cui tutti del cor i moti/ io non debba reprimere... [...] [...] Tu... più benigno guardaresti i mali/ della tua figlia... E se in periglio fosse.../ ne la trarreresti con benigna mano" (FR II.1/ 357).

⁴¹⁶ The more so at the highpoint of his anger and anguish when the father is about to curse and kill her daughter, he cannot but feel emotionally moved by her tears and display himself sympathetic towards her tragedy. On a diametrically opposite end, instead, will situate himself Lodovica's father Teodoro who does not desist from his intent to sacrifice his daughter for the sake of his throne. Inconsiderable of her tears: "TEODORO Iniqua!/ Tu piangi? – E a pianger mi costringi?" (EM III.2/146), he imparts on her, upon her reluctance, his doom:

In what does, consequently, consist the actual tyranny thematized in the play? We find it represented in abstract and anthropological terms: that is in the dilemma between political duty and personal feelings. Pellico transfigures eventually the idea of individual oppression ("PAOLO Tiranni/ gli uomini e il cielo fur con noi" [FR V.3/ 382]) into the conception of tyranny as experienced on the level of national oppression.⁴¹⁷ There are, in fact, no evident tyrants in the play. The same figure of Lanciotto is portrayed, in one of the most intimate scenes, as an affectionate husband who looks over her sleeping wife:

LANCIOTTO [...] Io pur, quando sopita
la guardo... e, chiuse le palpebre e il bianco
volto segno non dan quasi di vita,
con orrenda ansietà pongo il mio labbro
sopra il suo labbro per sentir se spiri,
e del tremor tuo tremo. [...] (FR I.1/ 347)

This loving king is in Francesca's own words described as "just" ("giusto") and "lenient" ("clemenza"): "Io t'amo/ perché sei giusto e con clemenza regni" (FR I.1/ 346).⁴¹⁸ The real tyranny then resides in the state, in other words: in a political system that deprives the individuals of their humanity by dismembering – as Schiller had formerly lamented – their intellectual and emotional harmony.

"TEODORO Oh vanne,/ Morir mi lascia: orror mi fai, t'abborro./ L'ira del ciel sul capo tuo discenda" (EM IV.1/150).

⁴¹⁷ See on this point Chimirri's analysis of the play (1972: 230); for Barolini, the very setting in the Italian region of Romagna, historically the "cradle of Italian tyranny" (2000: 20), sets the tragedy's despotic theme with more strength to the fore.

⁴¹⁸ As Francesca's father Guido, Lanciotto's role is connotated by a sentimentalism that undermines the typical despotic figure. Tears (cf. FR I.2/ 351, and FR V.1/ 379) account once more, as thematized already in Schiller's *Don Carlos*, for the sense of humanity in a king that Bellorini describes as "tiranno sentimentale" (1916: 21). As we shall see, Lanciotto stands out against real tyrant figures such as Teodoro and Enzo respectively in *Eufemio* (1820) and *Leoniero* (1822-1830).

The clash between love and duty, political interest and personal inclination – already at the centre of *Maria Stuart's* drama (1800) – directs with equal dramatic emphasis this play, reasserting itself with more strength in Pellico's following historical tragedy *Eufemio di Messina* (1820). Pellico, who inverts the lovers' active and passive roles that Dante had attributed to Francesca and Paolo, describes two different ways for them to deal with this conflictual dilemma. Whereas Francesca submits to her female role and expectations without questioning the priority of her duty over her feelings, Paolo results increasingly conflicted and initially less prone to compromise his feelings with his duty:

PAOLO [...] Amore
mi fa sordo al dover. *Sacro dovere*
saria il partir, più non vederla mai!...
Nol posso. [...] (FR III.1/ 363, my emphasis)

It is this sacred sense of duty ("sacro dovere") which Pellico views as the principal tenet that a "true patriot" must follow. As he formulates in the ninth chapter of *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834).

Non v'è buon patriota, se non l'uomo virtuoso, l'uomo che sente ed ama tutti i suoi doveri, e si fa studio di seguirli. Ei non si confonde mai né coll'adulatore dei potenti, né coll'odiatore maligno d'ogni autorità: essere servile ed essere irriverente sono pari eccesso.
(1964: 636/ IX)

Aware of his duty and yet recognizing the injustice of the violence inveighed against his feelings, Paolo's conflict displays precisely this middle way. He refuses to be servile to Lanciotto ("PAOLO Parli a fratello o a suddito?" [FR IV.4/ 373]), and respects nonetheless his brother's anguish to the point that he is willing to renounce his love for Francesca and farewell to his country. "PAOLO Per la tua donna al tuo/ fratel rinuncia... ed in eterno!" (FR IV.4/ 375). Akin to Foscolo's *Ortis*, Paolo decides to leave. Relinquishing the woman whom he loves goes for Paolo hand in hand with the renunciation of his fatherland in the

impossibility to conciliate his feelings with his duty. Both Ortis and Paolo eventually sacrifice and sublimize their feelings in the interest of the state.

Whereas Paolo blames his brother Lanciotto for marrying out of sheer political convenience ("sol per ragion di stato/ la bramasti in isposa" [FR IV.4/ 375]), Francesca never doubts her duty to submit to and act in the interest of the *raison d'État* – be it at the cost of self-deceit and silence: "Dovere è il *fingere*, dovere/ il *tacer*" (FR II.1/ 357, my emphases).⁴¹⁹ Akin to Boccaccio's Francesca, the role of Pellico's Francesca in the play results charged with a clearly political significance although in no circumstance does she emancipate herself from her utterly passive condition. Whereas in Dante she is the active female figure that speaks with the *poeta laureatus* – and is thus redeemed from the silence to which history had instead condemned her, in Pellico she tacitly submits to her role, and the social convention that expected women to be politically instrumentalized: "FRANCESCA No. Figlia e moglie esser vogl'io: men doni/ la forza il ciel. Meco il pregate!" (FR I.2/ 351).⁴²⁰ The agency that she enjoyed in Dante's *Inferno* is forfeited in the play for the sake of her passivity. She is so passive that Lanciotto speaks for her sense of duty in act one, long before she can actually do so in act two:

LANCIOTTO Io fra me spesso ben dicea: Se pure,

⁴¹⁹ As O'Grady observes in her study that the conflict between reason and feelings, which catalyzes and carries on the dramatic action, no longer displays the virtues of an enlightened reason, that has turned instead into an instrument of self-deception (2010: 17).

⁴²⁰ Nonetheless, Pellico still portrays his heroine in the act of reading the book that brought the two lovers together. Whereas in Dante, however, the act of reading is actually followed by the kiss that the lovers exchange, Pellico lets Francesca only drop a candid tear ("sul libro ti cadeva una lagrima..." [FR III.2/ 367]), before she bashfully runs away leaving her innocence intact: "Gli sguardi nostri s'incontraro... il viso/ mio scolorossi... tu tremavi... e ratta/ ti dileguasti" (FR III.2/ 367). The intertextual reference to Dante ("Insieme leggemmo/ di Lancillotto come amor lo strinse./ Soli eravamo e senza alcun sospetto..." [FR III.2/ 367]), highlighted in the play through quotation marks, indicates the intention of the author to signal – as he did already in the very motto of the play – his indebtedness to the medieval poet; at the same time, by suspending the quotation marks, Pellico underscores his own original contribution to the myth.

fanciulla ancor, *d'immacolato amore*
 si fosse accesa, e or tacita serbasse
 il sovvenir d'un mio rival, cui certo
 ella *antepone il suo dover*, qual dritto
 di esarcerbar la cruda piaga avrei
 indagando l'arcano? [...] (FR I.2/ 349, my emphasis)

Francesca exemplifies in her piety and innocence the female model of Pellico's tragedies. As a matter of fact, she epitomizes the very female ideal that he will postulate in *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834): "Ella debb'essere una di quelle anime elette che intendono eccelsamente il bello della religione e dell'amore" (1964: 659/ XX). This description corresponds to the image that Paolo's portrays of his beloved:

PAOLO [...] Un vil non son. Sedurre
 io quel *purissimo angioio* del cielo?
 Non fora mai. Chi di Francesca è amante
 un vil non è: lo foss'ei stato pria,
 più nol sarebbe amandola; sublime
 fassi ogni cor, dacché v'è impressa quella
sublime donna. Io, perché l'amo, ambisco
 d'esser uman, religioso e prode:
 e perch'io l'amo, assai più forse il sono
 ch'esser non usan né guerrier né prenci. (FR IV.4/ 374, my emphases)

Pellico alters Francesca's mythical identity of the adulterous woman, as it had been established by Dante, and transforms her into the angelic beauty of the Stilnovo writer: "Ti sia quasi un angioio tutelare; ti sia quasi una viva espressione del comando divino per allontanarti da ogni viltà, per sospingerti ad ogni opera gentile" (1964: 659-60/ XX). With this ideal in mind, he will similarly hyposticize the convicted Maddalena from the Spielberg prison into a guiltless character. Francesca and Maddalena alike are thus exonerated through poetry, that is by means of aesthetics, from their historical guilt and acquire an innocence that

transfigures her into the biblical myth of the immaculate *mater Christi*.⁴²¹ By the second half of the play the initially "santissima fanciulla" (FR I.1/ 345), will find herself stigmatized by her husband as "unfaithful wife", and degraded to the status of slave: "LANCIOTTO [...] Infame/ è l'amor tuo: più d'una schiava è finanche/ una moglie infedel" (FR IV.5/ 376).⁴²² Hence her reiterated request for forgiveness and compassion: an ethical tenet that will recur once more with insistency in his forthcoming historical tragedy *Eufemio di Messina* (1820).

Akin to Schiller who had theatrically refashioned the story and history of the Scottish Queen, Pellico will recast the story of Francesca that history had silenced. In the introductory note to *Eufemio* (1820), Pellico will formulate this aesthetic tenet of his poetics justifying the recourse to fiction on the basis of the factual discrepancies that are reported in the historical chronicles consulted for his play by asserting: "L'oscurità e la diversità de' racconti autorizzano il poeta a scegliere tra i vari fatti quegli che più si adattano al suo *concepimento*" (1861: 137, my emphasis). It is this very historical opacity that he finds in Francesca's myth of which no records survived, except for her name mentioned in a testament to her children.⁴²³ In conclusion, while the fine line that distinguishes, in Francesca's case, her

⁴²¹ Pellico's *Francesca* is far from *Maria Stuart*'s worldliness: "[...] Al cielo/ devota è assai" as Lanciotto describes her, portrays the female ideal of moral perfection. Whereas Schiller departs from history to turn the Scottish queen into a myth of aesthetic beauty and dignity, Pellico departs from Dante's myth to recast Francesca into a moral example and teaching to the people. In this respect, Francesca stands on a diametrically opposite end to Maria Stuart; as Pellico himself commented: "Niuna donna più sconsigliata fu mai veduta sedere sovra un trono; niuna fu cagione di maggiori scandalj e infortunj al suo popolo" (*Conciliatore* III, 1954: 105).

⁴²² The question of honor that had played in history such a pivotal role returns with equal emphasis on stage, but redeems, through Francesca's actual innocence, the heroine from her alleged fault.

⁴²³ It was eventually Dante, who knew Paolo Malatesta personally (Parodi 1965: 40) who, in the role of Francesca's historian, provided his heroine eventually with a voice for which history had as adulterous woman not claimed her any right; to this point, see the brilliant elucidations by Barolini (2000) As a matter of fact, Dante can be named Francesca's first historian if for "historian" one intends he who rehabilitated her from contemporary historical records that had originally silenced her, and was now in the *Inferno* granted her own

history from her myth results oftentimes porous, there are eventually as many "histories" of Francesca as there are "stories" about her – be it Dante's adulterous sinner or Pellico's unblemished saint or yet, between these two extremes, Boccaccio's story of the deceived, innocent wife-to-be. Hence, while Pellico had been originally inspired by the myth of Francesca that Dante had authored, he finally displayed his indebtedness to Boccaccio's Francesca who – in contrast to the Dantesque victim of passionate emotions – was depicted as victim of political interest. Akin to Schiller, rewriting history allowed Pellico to set his tragic accents on the heroine's psychological and human, rather than historical, motives.⁴²⁴ In the following section, we shall see with what poetic means Manzoni shall claim back his emphasis on accuracy and adhesion to historical sources.

voice. However, while Dante knew how the tragic story of the lovers had ended, he did not know its beginning. The book scene represents, therefore, Dante's own poetic contribution to the story turning history consequently into myth. In this respect, Matteini (1965) exemplifies the mythization of the historical Francesca in art, just as Giolli does in her article by comparing passages from Pellico's tragedy and its assimilation, that is reworking, in paintings (2005).

⁴²⁴ See Schoch's analysis of the play (1907: 120-21).

3.2.3. Summary

As it has been extensively illustrated, the fictionalization (or, for the matter, the dramatization) of history shifted the focus of attention from the event to the individual while the political drama would unfold against the backdrop of the characters' personal tragedy. As the titles of these works suggest, the individual had now asserted himself as chief agent of history. The reevaluation of the subject in the role of artificer of history had followed from the enlightened notion of man who found in reason the emancipation from divine authority, consequently asserting his own place and part in history. Driven by the enlightened belief in the individual's capability to perfectibility, Schiller and Pellico chose two legendary "fallen" women, Maria Stuart and Francesca da Rimini, to enact their eschatological transition from adultery to apotheosis.

Akin to the classical tragic Greek hero who expiates through death his faults and achieves glory in death, Schiller's and Pellico's protagonists are granted upon their demise heroic status. This heroization finds its legitimation and justification beyond the realm of immanent history, that is: on a metahistorical level. Despite this apparently positive dénouement, Schiller's and Pellico's tragedies mark the inception of a subtle, though sustained pessimism that manifests itself in the very conflict between history and human subjects, and their ultimate exit in death. This pessimistic perspective will gain increasingly momentum in Manzoni's and Goethe's historical tragedies. Unlike Schiller's and Pellico's "classical heroes", Manzoni's and Goethe's characters will not be granted through death heroic status: they will not leave history as victorious but rather as *victims*, that is to say more precisely as "convicted".

As a consequence of the French Revolution's aftermath, this historical pessimism brought along a devaluation of the once so praised intellectual faculty of humankind. Pellico clearly voiced his disillusioned perspective through Francesca's employment of reason as device of self-deception apt to deny with strength her feelings for Paolo. As we shall see in *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), this negative perception of history and reason will not spare Schiller's later literary production either.

3.3.1. *Die Jungfrau von Orleans. Eine romantische Tragödie* (1801)

In a letter from August 5, 1803 to Iffland, director of the Berlin theater, on whose stage *The Maid of Orleans* had been acclaimed two years earlier, Schiller commented on the uniqueness of his tragic subject for conjoining and concentrating in its eponymous protagonist altogether "das weibliche, das heroische und das göttliche" (NA XXII, 58, 69.).

In line with his dramaturgical theory, Schiller's Joan of Arc distinguishes herself from the historical Jeanne d'Arc for her pronouncedly human – or, to say it with the playwright, "female" ("weibliche") – attributes, as they will come to the fore in the dramatic peripeteia of act III. In this tragedy, contrary to his former dramas, Schiller explicitly adds a mythical component to his main character who finds in the "heroic" ("heroische") elements of Greek epics and the "divine" ("göttliche") calling of Christian doctrine, of which the play abounds in intertextuality, its expression and actualization.⁴²⁵ Challenged by Voltaire's homonymous satire – whom he blamed for having drawn "seine Pucelle zu tief in den Schmutz" – Schiller

⁴²⁵ Schiller's interest in religion, as he pointed out towards Goethe in 1795, was not animated by devoted zeal. Instead, he privileged Christianity for being an "aesthetic religion" – that is: representative of the ideal of "beautiful morality" or "moral beauty" that constituted a key concept in his aesthetic and ethical theory; for more details on his letter to Goethe, see fn. 489. As Schiller would state in his short essay "Ueber den Gebrauch des Chors" that introduces his drama *Die Braut von Messina* (1803), he saw in religion an additional subject of interest for his poetic imagination: "Und dann halte ich es für ein Recht der Poesie, die verschiedenen Religionen als ein kollektives Ganze für die Einbildungskraft zu behandeln" (NA X/ 15). As enlightened secular thinker, Schiller viewed religions chiefly as cultural phenomena with the "idea of the divine" ("Idee eines Göttlichen") being intrinsic to human nature, and the consequent belief in a metaphysical entity considered substantial component of human existence, shared therefore by all confessions. This explains ultimately the religious syncretism that distinguishes *The Maid of Orleans* in which Christian and Greek gods coexist next to each other, and that will return with major emphasis in *Die Braut von Messina* where Greek, Christian and Moorish creed will conjoin in one play: "Ich habe die christliche Religion und die griechische Götterlehre vermischt angewendet, ja selbst an den maurischen Aberglauben erinnert. Aber der Schauplatz der Handlung ist Messina, wo diese drey Religionen theils lebendig, theils in Denkmälern fortwirkten und zu den Sinnen sprachen" (NA X/ 15).

conceded to Wieland the idealization of the French heroine: "so habe ich die meinige vielleicht zu hoch gestellt" (NA XXXI/ 65, 74.).⁴²⁶

Following my thesis, I shall prove that Joan of Arc's transfiguration to a mythical figure goes hand in hand, in Schiller's play, with her reinstatement as national icon. I will illustrate how the national discourse that punctuates the play's development is underscored by a prominent religious subtext, constituting an alliance that provides a dramatic example of "religious patriotism".⁴²⁷ Objective of my argument will be to demonstrate the poetic means by which Schiller conciliates the protagonist's chauvinistic and ethnical discourse of race and religion with the universalistic claim of 18th-century cosmopolitan patriotism, as it was

⁴²⁶ In his letter to Wieland, Schiller was referring to Voltaire's parodistic verse epos *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1762), in which the French author had satyriized the national heroine. Voltaire's poem had enjoyed such an enormous success among its contemporaries that Schiller felt compelled to restore in his historical drama the pristine image of Jeanne d'Arc even at the cost – as he admits – of a disproportionate idealization: "hier war nicht anders zu helfen, wenn das Brandmal, das er [sc. Voltaire] seiner Schönen aufdrückte, sollte ausgelöscht werden" (17 Oct. 1801 [NA XXXI/ 65, 74.]). In his small treatise *Dei doveri degli uomini* (1834), Pellico will akin to Schiller blame Voltaire for deriding the patriotism of such a "sublime heroine": "Fu veduto [...] Voltaire [...] comporre lietamente un lungo poema, a scherno del femminile onore, a scherno della più sublime eroina ch'abbia avuto la sua patria, della magnanima ed infelice Giovanna d'Arco. Madama de Staël chiama giustamente quel libro: *un delitto di lesa nazione*" (1964: 658, ch. XIX); see also the footnote remarks to Pellico's comments by the editor Curto (1964). Glaser (2006) develops, in this respect, a systematic comparison between Voltaire's *Pucelle* and Schiller's *Maid*, departing from Jeanne d'Arc's historical context, and highlighting its demythization as well as subsequent remythization undertaken respectively by the French and German author.

⁴²⁷ I am borrowing this designation from Viroli (1995) who differentiates the "religious" from the "political" patriotism that, inspired by the republican ideals, had characterized – as I have extensively illustrated – Schiller's *Don Carlos* (1787). Based on Viroli's distinction, *Maria Stuart* (1800) can be described as synthesis of both a political and a religious patriotic drama. The religion-politics binom is, after all, anything but unusual in Schiller's work. Religion played, in fact, a non-irrelevant role already in *Don Carlos* where it exemplified its influential impact on politics. Whereas in *Maria Stuart* the religious motif turns into the catalyser of the political action, in *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), it develops into a political ideology that charges patriotism with a sacred value: "Religious patriotism attaches man to his country by a sacred tie. He must love it as he loves his religion, and obey it as he obeys his gods" (Viroli 1995: 19). In the course of my analysis, equal reference will be made to the work by the liberal theologian and former Chicago professor Shailer Mathews. His book *Patriotism and Religion*, the result of a series of lectures held on German imperialism during WWI, was published in 1918 and represents one of the earliest 20th-century contributions on the intersection of patriotism with religion.

rooted in and relied upon the values of freedom and peace.⁴²⁸ Equal, if not eminent, attention will be drawn, in this respect, to Schiller's enlightenment notion of *historia universalis*, more precisely to its perspectivism and relativism that I view to be at the origin of his understanding of history as alterity.

Opened in Leipzig on 11 September 1801, *The Maid of Orleans* was met with acclaim. It is legitimate to assume that the reason for its successful début, followed by other enthusiastically received productions during the same year in Berlin and Hamburg, lied in the tragedy's indubitable reference to the historical drama of Schiller's times.⁴²⁹ The motif of tyranny which, in the struggle between despotism and freedom, had been thematized since *Don Carlos* (1787) and the *History of the Netherlands' Revolt* (1788), was indeed an experience too recent to be regarded mere history – in particular if one called to mind the end of the Second Coalition War that witnessed France's victories over Austria in the battles of

⁴²⁸ In similar terms, Rieger elucidates the transposition that the national myth of Jeanne d'Arc experienced in recent times in the context of what he names "die punktuelle supranationale Globalisierung" – a globalisation that the author understands not in economic, but in cultural and explicitly cosmopolitan terms. As he explains in his illuminating article: "Jeanne d'Arc kann – gleichsam *entnationalisiert* und dennoch patriotische Wertvorstellungen transportierend – durchaus als die Werte des 'Vaterlands', der 'Einheit der Nation', des 'Widerstandes gegen Fremdherrschaft' und der 'nationalen Befreiung' repräsentierend von einer nationalen Erinnerungskultur in eine andere übertragen werden" (2004: 70, my emphasis). As a consequence of this process of "denationalization" that Schiller equally undertakes for his drama, Rieger argues that common values as freedom, self-determination and political engagement can be extrapolated from Joan of Arc's national story – in virtue of the universal potential of meanings that it bears as myth – and yet be reemployed, in turn, for the purpose of "national instrumentalisation": "Ein solcher Transfer muss aber noch keine Globalisierung im eigentlichen Sinn bedeuten, sondern kann im Stadium der rein *nationalen* Instrumentalisierung verharren. Sie gewinnt indessen um so mehr an Universalpotenzen, je mehr der Hauptakzent, nationdezentriert, auf allgemein akzeptierte Werte wie Freiheit, Selbstbestimmung, politisches und soziales Engagement, Loyalität, Reinheit, Opferbereitschaft und Leidenschaft für die Menschheit oder Authentizität gelegt werden, die in der Geschichte der Jeanne d'Arc alle problemlos abrufbar sind" (70). Following Rieger's point, it can be argued that Schiller's reading of the French myth is carried out under the banner of a cosmopolitan patriotism that excerpts those universal values that the myth enacts in function of a personal national interest and concern. Within this process of "transnational" reinterpretation, however, Wittkowski articulates, in contrast, the distinction that ought to be made between a national and a nationalistic remythization, and to the dangers that may derive from the latter, as radical 20th-century German Nationalists have proved (1995: 19-21).

⁴²⁹ For a detailed and complete overview of the play's performances between 1801 and 1806, see Martin (2005: 180-8).

Marengo (June 14, 1800) and Hohenlinden (December 3, 1800) as well as the consequential territorial losses of the German Reich to the Napoleonic empire with the Treaty of Lunéville (February 9, 1801).⁴³⁰ The national drama that Jeanne d'Arc enacted on stage was, therefore, destined to exert its pervasive relevance onto current history.⁴³¹ Shortly after *Maria Stuart's* premiere in Weimar (June 14, 1800), Schiller was announcing already to Körner his new dramatic project, inaugurated as early as in July and ended by mid-April 1801.⁴³² The alacrity and promptness with which the tragedy was conceived and completed speaks for the very urgency with which the historical play addressed, however vicariously, concerns and threats posed by the ongoing Napoleonic surge and its reconfiguration of Europe's geopolitical map.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ As Hinderer remarks, besides the considerable concession of territories to France, the Peace of Lunéville did not really eliminate the threats of subsequent wars to which the German Reich still saw itself exposed in view of the persisting expansionistic ambitions displayed over Europe by France and Britain alike (1979: 132).

⁴³¹ Houben provides an accurate report of the censorships and amendements that the play underwent in various theaters prior to be staged (1992: 558-61). The play, for instance, underwent several censorships in Vienna, where anything too strikingly reminiscent of the present – that is the Second Coalition War in which both Austria and the Holy Roman Empire had partaken, and the yet ongoing conflict between France and England, which would conclude itself only with the forthcoming Peace of Amiens in March 1802 – was outright expunged or amended.

⁴³² See Schiller's note in his calendar from July 1, 1800 ("Jungfrau von Orleans") next to his editor Cotta, and the entry that confirms its completion on April 16, 1801 ("Jungfrau v. O. fertig").

⁴³³ Alt points to the impact that the coalition wars may have exerted since 1793 on the intellectual climate fostering incipient patriotic feelings that gained momentum at the turn of the century (2000: II/ 520). Safranski compares the situation of 15th-century France – yet divided into several provinces detained in part by noble families and threatened to be absorbed by the English crown – with 18th-century Germany. While the North of the country in 1801 decided, next to Prussia and Weimar, to withdraw itself through the Treaty of Basel in 1795 from the First Coalition War (1792-1797) and was henceforth enjoying some peace, French troupes had invaded the area south to the Main river, forcing Schiller's family to flight (2004: 485-6). Glaser advances a one-to-one comparison between 15th-century France and 18th-century Germany ("Denn wie im Jahr 1429 Frankreich gegen die englischen Invasoren kämpfte, so tat dies 1800/1801 das Deutsche Reich gegen die französischen Invasoren"), by replacing the references in the play to the English invaders and the oppressed French respectively with France and Germany, by identifying Napoleon with the English sovereign Henry VI, and substituting the Loire river with the Rhine. In the French defeat by Azincourt in 1415, and the English's conquest of Paris in 1418, he sees the outcome of the battles of Marengo in June 14, 1800 and Hohenlinden in December of that same year which witnessed the Austrians' defeat by the Napoleonic troupes (2006: 454-5).

Schiller's tragedy provided, in this respect, another example of national drama which partook in – what he viewed to be – the universal history of humankind's quest for freedom. It was no other but this eminently *human*, rather than national, claim that he would emphasize in the play by shifting – as early as in act II – his dramatic focus from the heroine's patriotic fervor to her personal tragedy. Even when the protagonist's discourse acquires more pronounced national tones, it refrains from becoming nationalistic, never stressing national supremacy, but justifying warfare as a means of defense against tyranny and for the sake of liberation.⁴³⁴ It was from this unshakable belief in the pursuit of human reason for freedom from which his interest in history had originally ensued – and once his creed in the progress of human history had been shattered, Schiller found in aesthetics the means to yet envision an ideal that current historical conditions had unmistakably disclaimed.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ In her dramatic confrontation with the Welsh officer Montgomery, Joan of Arc defends her right to warfare for the sake of her country's survival from foreign carnage and conquest: "Wer rief euch in das fremde Land, den blühnden Fleiß/ Der Felder zu verwüsten, von dem heimschen Herd/ Uns zu verjagen und des Krieges Feuerband/ Zu werfen in der Städte friedlich Heiligtum?/ Ihr träumtet schon in eures Herzen eitelm Wahn,/ Den freigebornen Franken in der Knechtschaft Schmach/ Zu stürzen und dies große Land, gleichwie ein Boot,/ An euer stolzes Meerschiff zu befestigen!" (NA IX/ II.7, ll. 1636-43). The legacy of war to protect one's country from alien oppression was strongly upheld in Germany during Schiller's time. In his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797), for instance, Herder had expressed his fierce contempt and condemnation of warfare that was not conducted for reasons of self-defense: "Der Krieg, wo er nicht erzwungene Selbstverteidigung, sondern ein toller Angriff auf eine ruhige, benachbarte Nation ist, ist eine unmenschliches, ärger als tierisches Beginnen, indem er nicht nur der Nation, die er angreift, unschuldiger Weise Mord und Verwüstung drohet, sondern auch die Nation, die ihn führet, eben so unverdient als schrecklich hinopfert" (HW VII/ X.119, 720).

⁴³⁵ See also Safranski's comment on this point: "Die geschilderten lokalen Ereignisse gewinnen an Bedeutung. Sie werden dargestellt als ein Kapitel in der *Universalgeschichte der Befreiung*" (2004: 276, my emphasis). Despite his pessimism, and his disavowal from the positive idea of progressive history since the *Geschichte des Dreyßigjährigen Krieges* (1791-1793), his historical skepticism only increased his interest in anthropology and the human subject. As he comments on Wallenstein in the above-captioned work that accounts of the history of the Thirty Years' War: "Die Tugenden des *Herrschers* und *Helden*, Klugheit, Gerechtigkeit, Festigkeit und Muth, ragen in seinem Charakter kolossalisch hervor; aber ihm fehlten die sanftern Tugenden des *Menschen*, die den Helden zieren, und dem Herrscher Liebe erwerben" (NA XVIII.2/ 327-8). It is for these eminently "human virtues" ("Tugenden des Menschen") that Schiller will look in historical accounts, and to which he will

In an early letter to Körner, from the time of his incipient historical studies, Schiller had praised the national significance that the Greeks attributed to the Peloponnesian War as example to be emulated by modern historians, only to emphasize the merits that the latter enjoyed over their ancient predecessors for their ability to seek beyond their restricted national borders and look, instead, at the history of humankind:

Das Interesse, welches die Geschichte des peloponnesischen Kriegs für die Griechen hatte, muss man jeder neuern Geschichte, die man für die neuern schreibt, zu geben suchen. [...] Wir neuern haben ein Interesse in unserer Gewalt, das kein Grieche und kein Römer gekannt hat, und dem das *vaterländische* Interesse bey weitem nicht beykommt. Das letzte ist überhaupt nur für unreife Nationen wichtig, für die Jugend der Welt. Ein ganz anderes Interesse ist es, jede **merkwürdige** Begebenheit, die mit Menschen vorgieng, dem Menschen wichtig darzustellen. Es ist ein armseliges kleinliches Ideal, für *eine* Nation zu schreiben; einem philosophischen Geist ist diese Grenze durchaus unerträglich. Dieser kann bey einer so wandelbaren zufälligen und willkürlichen Form der Menschheit, bey einem Fragmente (und was ist die wichtigste Nation anders?) nicht stille stehen.

(Oct. 13, 1789 [NA XXV/ 304, 213., emphases in the original, bold added])⁴³⁶

point by stressing the humanity that distinguishes the heroes and rulers alike that feature in his historical drama; cf. on this point also fn. 471.

⁴³⁶ In his response to Schiller, Körner agreed with his friend in considering the "philosophical spirit" ("philosophischer Geist") an advantage that the moderns enjoyed over the ancients "small-mindedness" ("Mikrologie" [see also comments to letter in NA XXXIII.2/ 579]) which, as he set forth, could only be justified on the basis of the Greeks' prominent national interest: "Der philosophische Geist den Du als ein Erforderniß der neuern Geschichtsschreiber aniebst, äussert sich auch in gewissen Eigenthümlichkeiten des Stils die die Neuern vor den Alten voraushaben. Wenigstens habe ich bey den Alten eine gewisse *Mikrologie* gefunden die nur durch das National Interesse entschuldigt wird" (24 Oct. 1789 [NA XXXIII.1/ 394, 335., emphasis in the original]). On Schiller's anthropological approach to history, cf. also Haufe's comments to his letter (NA XXV/ 702). As to the author's definition of "philosophischer Geist", see his inaugural address at the university of Jena in which the author distinguishes the philosophical mind ("philosophischer Kopf") from what he calls (literally) the "bread-and-butter historian" or "Brodgelehrte" – that is, between the philosopher and the historian. Whereas the latter is only driven by material needs that are exclusively related to his profession and is unable to contemplate history beyond the scope of the practical purposes he pursues, the philosophical mind or universal historian views history in its wholeness: "Wo der Brotgelehrte trennt, vereinigt der philosophische Geist. [...] Alle seine Bestrebungen sind auf Vollendung seines Wissens gerichtet; seine edle Ungeduld kann nicht ruhen, bis alle seine Begriffe zu einem harmonischen Ganzen sich geordnet haben" (NA XVII.1/ 362). As the "Brodgelehrte" is only skilled for his profession, the "philosophischer Kopf" is engaged in the pursuit of a universal truth. On the epistemological role performed by philosophical mind in his approach to history and its narrative, see fn. 368 in section 3.2.1.

To the exclusive patriotic interest ("vaterländische Interesse") that he considered no more than the petty goal of childish, immature nations, Schiller contrasts those "noteworthy" ("merkwürdig") events that are, instead, of human relevance. He deems it a pathetic ideal to write for only "one" ("eine") nation, that is: for no more than an unsteady, random and arbitrary fragment ("Fragment") in the history of humanity.

What justifies then his choice for a history and heroine as national as Jeanne d'Arc? Schiller provides an answer in his very letter to Körner only a few lines later by specifying: "Er [sc. der philosophische Geist] kann sich nicht weiter dafür erwärmen, als soweit ihm diese Nation oder Nationalbegebenheit als *Bedingung* für den *Fortschritt der Gattung* wichtig ist" (NA XXV/ 304, 213.). National history is viewed by Schiller as premise – no less than as prospect – in the history of human progress towards freedom. His interest in history was less directed to the historical events per se, but to the extent in which these became meaningful in illustrating and exemplifying the development of humanity. It resided, more precisely, in the epistemological function that the past ought to exert, according to Schiller, upon the present. This was an objective that the dramatist met through the employment of poetry and the faculty of imagination, and that results particularly noticeable in this play which was subtitled, not incidentally, a "romantic" tragedy.⁴³⁷ Historical dramas

⁴³⁷ Much has been argued and many hypotheses were raised as to the meaning that Schiller had in mind when he named his play "Eine romantische Tragödie". Gutmann points to the marvelous elements and events as well as the supernatural appearances, such as the Black Knight, that distinguish the play (1969: 567-76) – which stand out the more within the scope of a historical drama that would rather defy such ambitious fictionalizations. Schiller's preference for poetic imagination over historical accuracy and adherence is attested by the author himself when he writes to Körner: "soweit ich es brauche, hoffe ich mit meiner eignen Phantasie auszureichen. In Schriften findet man beinah gar nichts, was nur irgend poetisch wäre" (28 July 1800 [NA XXX/ 181, 218.]). It does, in turn, not surprise that his friend who, naturally more inclined towards poetry, had originally expressed his disapproval for Schiller's interest in historical studies, would have praised precisely this "Mischung des Uebernatürlichen mit dem Wahrscheinlichen, so daß die Gränzen von beyden sich einander verlieren" (letter to Körner from May 9, 1801 [NA XXXIX.1/ 67, 72.]). According to Alt, the Romantic motifs fulfill the "psychological function" of highlighting the irrational aspects of the heroine's personal drama as well

helped, in other words, to understand and articulate what Schiller described in his *Aesthetic*

Letters to be ultimately the "Drama der jetzigen Zeit" (SW V/ 580, 5).⁴³⁸

as the characters' psyche (2000: II/ 516). For Safranski the metaphysical components of the play are perfectly in line with the play's medieval context that appears justified by the Romantics' predilection for the Middle Ages (2004: 483); Glaser argues on similar terms when he juxtaposes Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* to Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (2006: 457). In contrast to former academic research on this subject, it might be interesting to illustrate, as I shall in my forthcoming analysis, how Schiller ultimately conciliated in this play the aesthetics of Weimar classicism with German Romanticism.

⁴³⁸ In the theater, Schiller saw – as he explains at length in his essay *Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?* (1784) – the establishment responsible for the education of the public: "auf Schicksale macht uns die Schaubühne aufmerksam, und lehrt uns die große Kunst, sie zu ertragen. [...] Die Schaubühne führt uns eine mannigfaltige Szene menschlicher Leiden vor. Sie zieht uns künstlich in fremde Bedrängnisse, und belohnt uns das augenblickliche Leiden mit wollüstigen Thränen, und einem herrlichen Zuwachs an Muth und Erfahrung. [...] Sind sie [sc. die Bühnen] es nicht, die *den Menschen mit dem Menschen bekannt machen*, und das geheime Räderwerk aufdecken, nach welchem er handelt?" (NA XX.1/96-7, my emphasis). By confronting the audience with the enactment of human struggle, that is by fostering an awareness for the perception of intimate humanity, the theater pursued for Schiller a morally educative goal ("sittliche Bildung" [NA XX.1/ 97]). He considered drama particularly suited to this instructive purpose for it allowed the spectator – through the metaphysical experience of the sublime – to renew his moral autonomy ("moralische Indipendenz"): "Der letzte Zweck der Kunst ist die Darstellung des *Uebersinnlichen* und die tragische Kunst insbesondere bewerkstelligt dieses dadurch, daß sie uns die *moralische Indipendenz* von Naturgesetzen im Zustand des *Affekts* versinnlicht" (*Ueber das Pathetische* (1801) [NA XX.1/ 196, my emphases]). It is obvious that Schiller moved beyond the Aristotelian expectation of a merely cathartic effect that drama was supposed to exert on the emotions of pity and fear (τὴν τῶν τοιοῦτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν [1449b: 6]). "Darstellung des Leidens – als bloßen Leidens", Schiller argued, "ist niemals Zweck der Kunst, aber als *Mittel* zu ihrem Zweck ist sie derselben äußerst wichtig" (NA XX.1/ 196, my emphasis). Pathos turned into the means by which the spectator could experience the sublime through a deliberate act of emancipation from his emotional involvement in the dramatic representation. Schiller had named the result of this interaction between emotions and intellect in his incipient essay *Vom Erhabenen* (1793) the "pathetic sublime": "Zum *Pathetischerhabenen* werden also zwey Hauptbedingungen erfordert. Erstlich eine lebhafte Vorstellung des *Leidens*, um den mitleidenden Affekt in der gehörigen Stärke zu erregen. Zweytens eine Vorstellung des *Widerstandes* gegen das Leiden, um die **innre Gemüthsfreyheit** ins Bewußtseyn zu rufen. Nur durch das erste wird der Gegenstand *pathetisch*, nur durch das zweyte wird das pathetische zugleich *erhaben*" (NA XX.1/ 195, emphases in the original, bold added). Only through his conscious resistance against the overwhelming power of feelings, could the individual restore his "inner freedom" (innre Gemüthsfreyheit). In contrast to Aristotle's notion of catharsis, Schiller emphasized the spectator's active ("handelnd") resort to the faculty of reflection in order to reclaim his moral autonomy and awareness. As Kantian disciple, he clearly borrowed the notion of the sublime as equivalent of reason from the definition that the Königsberg philosopher provided in his *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764): "Understanding is sublime" (2011: 11) – that is "Verstand ist erhaben" (KW 2: 211). In virtue of both the *enactment* and the *experience* of the sublime that the theater procured, it constituted the ideal device for Schiller's aesthetic education. As the author explained in his sixteenth *Aesthetic* letter, the very ideal of beauty ("Idealschöne") drew upon this specific interplay of beauty and the sublime (cf. SW V/ 620-1). As I shall seek to illustrate, by partaking in the feelings of the pathetic and sublime alike, Johanna will embody this beautiful ideal, and exemplify – through her sensuous experience of beauty and her metaphysical experience of the sublime – the interplay of sensing and thinking, formal and sensual drive, in other words: Schiller's very program of aesthetic education.

The patriotic feelings that *The Maid of Orleans* awakened in its German audience were, therefore, a predictable consequence of the current political situation that the play inevitably evoked. Their pathos can be hardly overheard in verses that hail and herald the country's national defense: "JOHANNA Was ist nicht unschuldig, heilig, menschlich gut,/ Wenn es der Kampf nicht ist ums *Vaterland*?" (NA IX/ II.10, ll. 1782-3, my emphasis), in which the protagonist attempts to win the renegade compatriot Duke of Burgundy back to the national cause. By qualifying patriotic warfare as "innocent" ("unschuldig"), "holy" ("heilig"), and "humanly good" ("menschlich gut"), Johanna justifies its moral scope and asserts its validity.

The term "Vaterland" (fatherland), which recurs with insistence in various instances of the dramatic development, is reminiscent of the meaning that it held in *Don Carlos*, as it establishes an identity with the royal figure (here the French king Karl VII), and the paternal role that he performs towards his subjects whom he addresses metaphorically as "Mein Kind" (NA IX/ I.5, 823), his own children.⁴³⁹ The "Volk" or people, in turn, manifest a sense of loyalty towards their fatherland and king that, as universal destiny and law ("Schicksal und

⁴³⁹ In contrast to traditionally tyrannical sovereign figures as the Spanish monarch Philipp II and the English Queen Elisabeth, in king Charles VII Schiller depicted a ruler averse and afraid to enter the battlefield in defense of his kingdom or pose an end to the civil conflicts that raged in his country: "Nicht ich. Die rauhe sturmbelegte Zeit/ Heischt einen kraftbegabten Steuermann./ Ich hätt ein friedlich Volk beglücken können./ Ein wild empörtes kann ich nicht bezähmen./ Nicht mir die Herzen öffnen mit dem Schwert./ Die sich entfremdet mir in Haß verschließen" (NA IX/ I.5, ll. 796-801). A quixotic personage – though far from the idealism that distinguishes Cervantes's naïve character – king Karl prefers to seek refuge in a bucolic past of chivalry and knights. As Visconti will put it in his review of Schiller's drama: "Fedele alla storia egli rappresenta la mollezza di Carlo VII" (1953: 445-6). Portrayed as a frightful sovereign devoid of patriotic heroism, his outbreak in tears after Joan of Arc unveils to the public the recondite fears that he had addressed in his prayers – a reaction that in the case of Philipp II (NA VII.1/ IV.23, ll. 4465-6), and Elisabeth (NA IX/ II.4, ll. 1528-42) accounted as evidence of the tyrants' humanity – turns with Karl VII (NA IX/ I.10, ll. 1033-41; cf. stage directions) into a sign of human weakness which speaks, instead, for the lack of action, courage and determination ("Erschlaffung" [SW V/ 580, 5]) that Schiller lamented in his contemporary rulers; cf. on this last point the fifth of his *Aesthetic letters* (1795), and fn. 473. The fundamental trait that all of the three sovereigns share is that in their lack of morality and thus their flaws, they represent essentially "human" characters: that is moral subjects engaged in their existential struggle for individual freedom.

Gesetz der Welt"), acquires in the play mandatory value as highlighted by the modal verb "muß":

DUNOIS Für seinen König *muß* das *Volk* sich *opfern*,
 Das ist das *Schicksal und Gesetz der Welt*.
 [...]
 Nichtswürdig ist die *Nation*, die nicht
 Ihr Alles freudig setzt an ihre *Ehre*. (NA IX/ I.5, ll. 844-8, my emphases)

The anachronism with which Schiller employs the term "Nation" in a medieval setting still alien to both the concepts of "nation" and national "honor" ("Ehre"), speaks once more for his understanding of history as a narrative device by means of which to read, recognize, and represent on stage the historical present.⁴⁴⁰ In contrast, the notion of self-sacrifice addressed by Schiller in the first verse is inferred from an understanding of and attachment to their fatherland that Herder had praised as common practice among Greeks and Romans who regarded it as their "highest fame" and "sweetest death": "Fürs Vaterland zu leben hieß ihnen der höchste Ruhm; fürs Vaterland zu sterben der süßeste Tod" (HW VII/ V. 57, 329).⁴⁴¹ It is

⁴⁴⁰ Marwyck sees in the anachronistic contextualization of a term like "nation" the author's evident intent to implement a traditional notion of heroism within a contemporary historical setting (2010: 182).

⁴⁴¹ Herder provides an explanation of fatherland that refers ultimately to the Latin etymology of "mater patria" as – in his reference to antiquity – he explains the meaning of the German "Vaterland" (literally "fatherland") by addressing both the fatherly and motherly components of the word: "Griechen und Römern war das Wort Vaterland ein Ehrwürdig-süßer Name. Wem sind nicht Stellen aus ihren Dichtern und Rednern bekannt, in denen Söhne des Vaterlandes ihm *als einer Mutter* kindliche Liebe und Dankbarkeit, Lobpreisungen, Wünsche und Seufzer weihen?" (HW VII/ V.57, 329). The idea of self-sacrifice is considered by Viroli to be a fundamental feature of religious patriotism: "[Man] must *love [his country] as he loves his religion*, and obey it as he obeys his gods. He must give himself to it *entirely*. It is a demanding love that admits no distinctions, no conditions" (1995: 19, my emphases). On the same line, Mathews views the concept of sacrifice as the essential trait that links the very notion of patriotism to religion: "this readiness to sacrifice health and life for national ideals – what is it but a counterpart of religion?" (1918: 5). In her illuminating study, Hinze interprets this "love of country" in its original etymology and semantics of *amor patriae*, that is: as one "encompassing homeland, people, and ancestors, as well as love for the 'spiritual elements', that are the 'natural heritage' of a nation. These latter include the nation's culture, its language and literature, its artistic, technical and civic achievements, its shared historical memories, and its religion" (2007: 133, my emphasis). As Hinze argues, the ancient notion of *pietas* that goes along with the classical understanding of patriotism as "amor patriae" intended as "dutifulness" – that is: "[p]ietas pro patria, rooted in respectful gratitude and expressed in obedience and service to one's country" – was reinterpreted in Christian times as "*pietas* towards God, one's parents, and one's country" (2007:

with the same emphatic pathos that king Charles's people are willing to forfeit their lives for the honor of their fatherland: "DUNOIS Nichts schont er [*sc.* der Bürger] selber und erwartet sich/ Nicht Schonung, wenn die *Ehre* ruft, wenn er/ Für seine Götter oder Götzen kämpft" (NA IX/ I.5, ll. 837-9).

This epic form of ancient heroism is exemplified at its best by Joan of Arc who conjoins in her intrepid patriotism the idea of "Vaterland" upheld in *Don Carlos* with the relevance attributed to "Volk" in *Maria Stuart*. In the defense of her fatherland, the protagonist acts, in fact, primarily in the role of her people's representative.⁴⁴² Akin to Posa, the Maid of Orleans, acts in the interest of the collectivity rather than the individual; the love, however, that the Marquis had nurtured for the whole of humanity translates for Jeanne d'Arc in exclusive devotion for her fatherland and its people. Her engagement to free France from

132, my emphasis). This very association of Holy Father, family and fatherland was based on the identity of God and sovereign, with the latter expected to act in the interest of public welfare. On this basis, the "Catholic understanding of love of country provided grounds for condemning tyranny and for taking to task rulers who failed to serve the common good and their subjects. Devotion to country and rulers was therefore relativized to the larger orders of natural, moral, and divine law" (2007: 133).

⁴⁴² Wittkowski observes for instance that, in contrast to the "Bastard of Orléans" Dunois, Johanna never speaks of her fatherland in terms of "nation", but always identifies it with its people (1995: 21). The monition she directs to the king towards the end of the play, reminding him to be supportive and sympathetic towards his subjects, highlights once more the extent to which her love for the "Vaterland" coincides with her love for its "Volk": "Sei immer *menschlich*, Herr, im Glück, wie du/ Im Unglück warst – und auf der GröÙe Gipfel/ Vergiß nicht, was ein Freund wiegt in der Not,/ Du hasts in der Erniedrigung erfahren./ Verweigre nicht Gerechtigkeit und Gnade/ Dem letzten deines Volks, denn von der Herde/ Berief dir Gott die Retterin — [...]/ Dein Stamm wird blühn, so lang er sich die Liebe/ Bewahrt im Herzen seines Volks,/ Der Hochmut nur kann ihn zum Falle führen,/ Und von den niedern Hütten, wo dir jetzt/ Der Retter ausging, *droht geheimnisvoll/* Den schuldbefleckten Enkeln das Verderben!" (NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2085-91, ll. 2096-2101, my emphases). Johanna's plea for humanity is reminiscent of Posa's appeal to king Philipp II for the advent of "human centuries" ("menschlichen Jahrhunderte" [NA VII.1/ III.10, l. 3156-7]) as both identify the sovereign's devotion to and acknowledgment of his people with a universal ideal of human kindness: "POSA [...] Bürgerglück/ Wird dann versöhnt mit FürstengröÙe wandeln,/ Der karge Staat mit seinen Kindern geitzen,/ Und *die Nothwendigkeit wird menschlich seyn*" (NA VII.1/ III.10, ll. 3152-5, my emphases). Akin to the request of humannes that Shrewsbury directs to Queen Elisabeth ("Du bist ein Mensch und jetzt kannst du nicht richten" [NA IX/ IV.9, l. 3090]) as depending on her people's fealty and freedom, Johanna reminds king Charles of the ruin ("Verderben") that would befall his reign from the very ranks whence God had once summoned the king's and country's savior, should he fail to meet his subjects' demands.

its illegitimate English sovereign cannot be viewed separate from her endeavor to liberate the people from their condition of villeinage under the lead of their native king, "der die Leibeignen in die Freiheit führt" (NA IX/ Prolog, 3, l. 349).⁴⁴³ Johanna is opposing in this excerpt the foreign with the national sovereign who, as legitimate "father" ("Vater") of his "sons" ("Söhnen"), is deemed the only one expected to act in the interest of their freedom.⁴⁴⁴

JOHANNA Der fremde König, der von außen kommt,
 Dem keines *Ahnherren heilige Gebeine*

⁴⁴³ Glaser comments on the anachronism of Johanna's expectation that the king may exonerate his people from the burdens of a 15th-century feudal system (2006: 452). The premise that Schiller, however, intended to underline with the heroine's demand was that a country's freedom from foreign oppression could not exempt from its people's personal liberty. As Herder had put it already in *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797): "Nur Kinder können das Vaterland lieben, nicht Erdgeborene Knechte oder wie Wild gefangene Sklaven" (HW VII/ V.57, 330). Akin to Herder, count of Dunois addresses in the play the premise that it is the entire "Volk", with no exception of rank, age or status that acts in the name and for the sake of their fatherland: "Der Ackersmann verläßt den Pflug, das Weib/ Den Rocken, Kinder, Greise waffnen sich,/ Der Bürger zündet seine Stadt, der Landmann/ Mit eigenen Händen seine Saaten an,/ Um dir [*sc.* king Karl] zu schaden oder wohl zu tun/ Und seines Herzens Wollen zu behaupten" (NA IX/ I.5, ll. 831-4). Schiller reiterates, once more, Posa's fundamental premise of the alliance required between the sovereign and his subjects to guarantee a nation's strength and prosperity. In his following plays, *Maria Stuart* (1800) and *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), Schiller goes a step further and stresses the identity that the people establish with their fatherland which constitutes, in turn, the principle that reinforces the notion of nation as family. Along with this very understanding of "mater patria", moves Herder's aversion against the state and the idea of an institutionalized rather than an organic nation, made of ties that are eminently natural at their origin, which is to say alien to the very concepts of social standings and human ranks: "Unser erstes Vaterland ist also das *Vaterhaus*, eine *Vaterflur*, *Familie*. In dieser kleinen Gesellschaft leben die eigentlichen und ersten Freuden des Vaterlandes, wie in einem Idyllenkreise [...]. Sei der Boden, sei das Klima, wie es wolle; die Seele sehnt sich dahin zurück, und je weniger die kleine Gesellschaft, in der wir erzogen wurden, ein *Staat* war, je weniger sich **Stände und Menschenklassen darin trennten**, um so weniger Hindernisse findet die Einbildungskraft, sich in den Schoß dieses Vaterlandes zurückzusehen" (HW VII/ V.57, 330-1; emphases in the original, bold added).

⁴⁴⁴ In this play returns the motif of a king's monarchic legacy to the throne that Schiller had already addressed in *Maria Stuart*. Akin to the Scottish queen, king Charles is rejected by both his parliament and his people ("KARL Mein Parlament verwirft mich, meine Hauptstadt,/ Mein Volk nimmt meinen Gegner jauchzend auf,/ Die mir die Nächsten sind am Blut, verlassen, /Verraten mich – die eigene Mutter nährt/ Die fremde Feindesbrut an ihren Brüsten" [NA IX/ I.5, ll. 761-5]) and acts, once more, within a malfunctioning family that replicates metaphorically – this time, through the hostile mother-son relationship – the pattern of a divided nation or "familial" community. In contrast to *Don Carlos* and Pellico's *Leoniero da Dertona*, however, the king rejects his own mother who – after marrying a mentally deranged husband – is banned by Charles for engaging in extramarital affairs. The adulterous queen Isabeau turns, consequently, against her son by siding with the enemy, and attempts to dethrone the legitimate sovereign by replacing him with a foreign monarch. The reinstatement of the native king occurs eventually under the banner of a gracious ruler, "Karl der Gütige" (NA IX/ IV.10, l. 2949), whose legacy – in contrast to Philipp II and queen Elisabeth – is guaranteed by granting peace and mercy to both friends and foes: "Doch friedlich soll der Ölzweig sie [*sc.* die Krone] umgrünen,/ Gedankt sei allen, die für uns gefochten,/ Und allen, die uns widerstanden, sei/ Verziehn, denn Gnade hat uns Gott erzeugt,/ Und unser erstes Königswort sei — Gnade!" (NAI IX. IV.10, ll. 2944-8).

In diesem Lande ruhn, kann er es lieben?
 Der nicht jung war mit unsern Jünglingen,
 Dem unsre Worte nicht zum Herzen tönen,
 Kann er ein *Vater sein zu seinen Söhnen*?
 (NA IX/ Prolog, 3, ll. 360-5, my emphases)

What this passage highlights is, akin with the traditional concept of *patria*, its classical understanding of land housing and harboring the mortal remains of its forefathers – a notion that Foscolo had praised at length in his patriotic poem *Dei Sepolcri*, and that his friend and follower Pellico reiterated in his tragedies.

The idea that the people are bound to their national community by family ties is at the heart of the militant heroism that conjoins patriotism with religion. Johanna calls herself "Vaterlandes Tochter" (NA IX/ II.10, l. 1734) that is, daughter of a fatherland that she believes assigned to the French king by God's will: "dem es Gott gegeben" (NA IX/ I.11, l. 1219).⁴⁴⁵ It is on this basis that she can claim divine authority for her patriotic warfare – "ich muß", is Johanna's injunction as she challenges her English foe to duel.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ The explanation that Johanna delivers to the English herold to justify the divine legacy of France as the land rightfully assigned to Charles VII ("[...] Denn das sag ich euch, damit ihre wisset,/ Euch ist das schöne Frankreich nicht beschieden/ Vom Sohne der Maria—" [NA IX/ I.11, ll. 1217-8]), is reminiscent of the idea of nations articulated in the Deuteronomy. Defined as entities originally allocated by God, sovereign over all including the nations, the Bible conceptualizes an essential notion on which basis Johanna can legitimately ground her religious patriotism: "When the Most High divided their [*sc.* the elders] inheritance to the nations,/ When He separated the sons of Adam,/ He set the boundaries of the peoples/ According to the number of the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:8); see also commentary (Bible 1997: 343). This is the very notion of divinely designated and assigned nation that Mazzini would postulate in his address *Agli italiani e specialmente agli operai italiani* (1840) in which he admonished the Italian people to remember and respect its sacred value through the appropriate recognition of their national history and unity as he expressed his critique against civil dissent and inner discord: "Dio v'ha data, come casa del vostro lavoro, una bella patria [...]: questa vostra patria fu grande e libera un tempo; grande e libera quando le nazioni, ch'ora vi stanno innanzi in tutto, erano piccole e serve; e voi non la curate, non l'amate, non la conoscete, non ne sapete la storia e lasciate ch'essa si stia decaduta, avvilita, sprezzata, malmenata da principi e governi imbecilli, tiranneggiata e spolpata d'oro e di sangue da quanti stranieri hanno avidità d'occuparla e di dominarla" (2005: 540). This tenet of a divinely assigned right to nationality – "il disegno provvidenziale indicato dalle configurazioni geografiche e rivelato dalla Storia", as he describes it (SEI XXIX/ 154) – will be reiterated as well in his later essay on *Politica internazionale* (1871); cf. English transl. by Recchia/ Urbinati (2009: 233). As to Mazzini's "spiritual affinity with" and "boundless admiration of Schiller" (1997: 71), see Kostka's luminous study which has the merit to detect in Mazzini's *oeuvre* correspondences with the thought and theory of the German poet and playwright.

JOHANNA mich treibt die Götterstimme, nicht
 Eignes Gelüsten, – euch zu bitterm Harm, mir nicht
 Zur Freude, ein *Gespenst des Schreckens* würgend gehen
 Den Tod verbreiten und sein Opfer sein zuletzt!
 (NA IX/ II.7, ll. 1660-3, my emphasis).

As a daemon ("Gespenst des Schreckens") summoned by God's voice, Johanna feels entitled to spread dread and dismay:

JOHANNA Ein Zeichen hat der Himmel mir verheißen,
 Er sendet mir den *Helm*, er kommt von ihm,
 Mit *Götterkraft* berühret mich sein Eisen,
 Und mich durchflammt der Mut der Cherubim,
 Ins Kriegsgewühl hinein will es mich reißen,
 Es treibt mich fort mit Sturmes Ungestüm,
 Den Feldruf hör ich mächtig zu mir dringen,
 Das Schlachtroß steigt und die Trompeten klingen.
 (NA IX/ Prolog, 4, ll. 425-32, my emphases)

Invested with her helmet and divine forces ("Götterkraft"), the French female warrior resembles the goddess of martial prowess Minerva. Addressed as "Kriegesgöttin" (NA IX/ I.9, l. 956) by the English soldiers and naming herself "Kriegerin des höchsten Gottes"

⁴⁴⁶ According to Kaiser, Johanna interprets the inevitability of her carnage as obligation apt to the reinstate the natural, that is divine, order of things by rescuing the nation from its illegitimate holders and returning it to its rightful sovereign: "Johanna muß töten, denn sie ist als *Rache-Engel* zur Aufrichtung der Ordnung aus der Verstörtheit der Welt gerufen. Als Antwort auf die Entstellung der Welt muß in ihr die *Liebe unter der Gestalt des Zornes* erscheinen" (1966: 218, my emphases). As Tomka remarks, in the Middle Ages "there was only one, God-given, cosmic order which was established generally, and therefore also in society and political institutions" (1995: 23). Like an "avenging angel" ("Rache-Engel"), the unconditional love ("Liebe") of country has turned for Johanna into unmitigated hatred ("Zorn") against the conquerors for disrupting the divinely ordained allotment of land: "Dies Reich soll fallen? Dieses Land des Ruhms,/ Das schönste, das die ewge Sonne sieht/ In ihrem Lauf, das Paradies der Länder, Das Gott liebt, wie den Apfel seines Auges,/ Die Fesseln tragen eines fremden Volks!/ – Hier scheiterte der *Heiden* Macht. Hier war/ Das erste Kreuz, das Gnadenbild erhöht,/ Hier ruht der Staub des heiligen Ludewig,/ Von hier aus ward *Jerusalem* erobert" (NA IX/ Prolog, 3, ll. 332-7, my emphases). In this, as Kaiser defines it, paradoxical "Liebescharakter des Zornes" (1966: 219), resides the very controversial relationship of religion to war to which Johanna alludes by comparing her mission to the Holy Land crusades and assimilating the English to the "heathens" ("Heiden"). As Gutmann observes, Johanna embodies at once the vindictive God of the Old Testament and the merciful Christ figure of the New Covenant. The ambivalence that derives from her, at once, innocent and implacable character, reflects for Schiller the very ambiguity and complexity intrinsic to human nature, thus bringing on stage essentially *human* heroes.

(NA IX/ III.4, l. 2203), she sanctions the kinship of religion to warfare.⁴⁴⁷ If in *Maria Stuart*, religion had represented the cause that inflamed civil war between Catholic Scots and Protestant Englishmen, in *The Maid of Orleans*, Christianity provides the moral ground to legitimize military aggression, and turns into the ideological instrument that serves politics.⁴⁴⁸ Schiller had already elucidated this very relation of religion to politics during the years of his historical studies (1787-1792), in particular while engaged in his history lectures

⁴⁴⁷ Mathews comments on the historical relationship that religion *de facto* shared with military practice and ideology: "The conventional opinion of the relation of religion and war is that of antagonism. [...] As a matter of fact, none of the great religions has been in practice frankly anti-militaristic. As a rule, religion has been the support of the warrior [...]. It needs no argument to show that ancient religions were militaristic. Yahweh of the Hebrews was the God of battles who taught his followers the use of the bow and the chariot, and who was expected to fight with his people's armies" (1918: 80-1); Krimmer's study offers, in this respect, insightful remarks on the play's "biblical symbolism" of war (2010, 39-40). Guthke, on his part, convincingly questions the religious inspiration that Johanna claims to justify her political mission as an expedient employed to legitimize her sanguinary and savage patriotism: "kommt die Sendung zur Sprache [...] als eine selbstkonzipierte, geradezu selbstgeschaffene, nicht etwa als eine sie überfallende, berufende: 'Da rief ich die flehend Gottes Mutter an./ Von uns zu wenden fremder Ketten Schmach./ Uns den einheimischen König zu bewahren.' (V 1059-1061)" (1966: 123, my emphases). As the scholar points out, Johanna actively implores the intervention of her patroness. Along with Guthke, Greiner equally doubts Johanna's alleged vocation by stressing instead the intentional conversion of her patriotic enthusiasm into a religious calling: "Johanna hat offenbar ihre eigene vaterländische Begeisterung in eine religiöse Sendung umgebildet" (2005: 63). Whether this *virgo militans* is herself an instrument of religion or employs religion as ideological device to accomodate her bloodshed, Schiller is referring to religious violence as to a distinguishing trait in medieval religious fanaticism of which he avails himself to shift his eminent attention upon the psychological struggle whence derived and sustained by the heroine in her quest for individual freedom. As a matter of fact, in contrast to historical records of her trial according to which she had merely carried the banner on the battlefield, Joan of Arc's murderous military actions on the battlefield constitute a fictionalized poetic license that allows Schiller to bring the human tragedy and anthropological aspect of his historical drama to the fore by enacting the attainment of an individual freedom denied to humans in history and yet achievable on an *aesthetic* level through the ideal of humanity. Schiller himself had been well aware of these records, which he had extensively consulted, editing eventually the fourth volume of Pitaval's translation which he provided with an introduction (Martin 2005: 171).

⁴⁴⁸ In his research, Schilling points to the importance of the "interplay of confessionalization and the origin or reinforcement of political and especially national identities" (1995: 5). Following his argument, religion – that is "confessional identity" – contributes in *Maria Stuart* eminently to the "formation of a national consciousness as the basis for a nation-state consciousness and in the formation of political and national identities" (5). This is particularly true if one considers Burleigh's admonition towards queen Elisabeth to save England from the supremacy of the Catholic church: "— Die Seelen aller deiner Untertanen,/ Ich fodre sie von dir – Wie du jetzt handelst,/ Sind sie gerettet oder sind verloren. Hier ist nicht Zeit zu weichlichen Erbarmen" (NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 3178-81). The war that the Lord Treasurer encourages to lead is one directed against the Catholics, that is their attempt to convert the country to their confession, and thus jeopardize the very political identity of the English nation-state.

at the university of Jena where he began to compile his work on the *Geschichte des Dreyssigjährigen Kriegs* (1791-1793) – which later turned into the conceptional basis for his *Wallenstein* project (1799).⁴⁴⁹ According to Schiller, the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) exemplified in the diatribe that sparked off between Catholics and Protestants – contending respectively between Ferdinand II and Frederick IV for the dynastic succession to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire – how religion could turn into a manipulative device, or "wirksames Motiv" as Schiller puts it: "das die Nation in Leidenschaft setzte und einen Enthusiasmus in ihr entflammte, der gegen die *politische* Gefahr gerichtet werden konnte, weil er in dem nehmlichen Gegenstande mit derselben *zusammentraf*!" (NA XVIII.2/ bk. 1, 15, my emphases). It is precisely this consilience of religion with politics – in other words, the transformation of politics into religion, that is: into something in which to "believe" – that the mob could be motivated and mobilated to act in defense of the state and their country.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Written between May 1790 and September 1792, Schiller's *History of the Thirty Years' War* was published over three subsequent years, that is from 1791 to 1793 in the second number of Göschen's successful literary periodical *Historischer Calender für Damen* (*Historical Calendar for Ladies*); for more details on the editorial genesis and success of Schiller's historiographical writing, see Meise (2005: 330-6).

⁴⁵⁰ It is this politization of religion that Schiller's deemed to be the crux of the Thirty Years' War as he elucidated in further detail: "Was die entschiedenste Gefahr des Staats nicht über seine Bürger vermocht hätte, bewirkte die religiöse Begeisterung. Für den Staat, für das Interesse des Fürsten würden sich wenig freywillige Arme bewaffnet haben; für die Religion griff der Kaufmann, der Künstler, der Landbauer freudig zum Gewehr. Für den Staat oder den Fürsten würde man sich auch der kleinsten außerordentlichen Abgabe zu entziehen gesucht haben; an die Religion setzte man Gut und Blut, alle seine zeitlichen Hoffnungen" (NA XVIII.2/ bk. 1, 371). In his study, Alt detects allusions to the "political motif" of the play in the conspicuous use of religious imagery that underscores the dramatic development (2000: II/ 520). Mathews argues that the liason established by religion to politics appears to be characteristic for absolutistic regimes which used to identify the authority of the head of state with the divine will, accounting for a correspondence of social and political realms with the religious sphere: "Thus it is not strange that religious thinking is based upon the practices of a monarchical state. It is indeed only one phase of a universal mental process when men speak of God as Father and King; of a nation as his children; of misfortune as his punishment; and of happiness as his reward. As social life developed it was inevitable that the creative social minds which were finding expression in new political forms and institutions – imperialism, feudalism, nationalism – should have used the terms of the state in which they expressed their highest relations of life, for the expression of the relations of religion. That these should have been drawn from monarchy is also only what we should expect" (1918: 18-9). It is to this very identity between the kingdom of God and that of Charles VII to which the play alludes when Johanna admonishes the English to desist from their plans of conquest: "Ihr Toren! Frankreichs *königliches Wappen* hängt/ Am Throne Gottes, eher

The extent to which religion overlaps with politics and patriotism will become equally manifest in the militant conflict between Christians and Muslims staged by Pellico's *Eufemio di Messina* (1820), in which Lodovica's divinely ordained mission will strongly reminisce Joan of Arc's sacred obligation to slay.⁴⁵¹

Akin to Pellico's female character, Schiller's heroine must renounce her human feelings for the good of her country. Contrary to Lodovica, however, who had always been reluctant to accept her divinely mission, Joan of Arc's profound faith in the righteousness of her vocation would be only momentarily suspended by an inner conflict whose first signs would become manifest in the Montgomery scene. Shortly after killing the unarmed Welshman, in fact, Johanna is overtaken by incipient doubts – which only the stage directions appear, at this point, to slightly allude ("*Sie tritt von ihm weg und bleibt gedankenvoll stehen*" [NA IX/ II.8]). This initial disquiet will build up in her following

rißt ihr einen Stern/ Vom Himmelwagen, als ein Dorf aus diesem Reich,/ Dem unzertrennlich ewig einigen!" (NA IX/ II.7, 1644-7, my emphasis). It is indicative, for instance, that the Bourbonic lilies, royal emblem of the coat of arms, are in the play directly related to the white lilies – symbol of immaculacy and innocence as attributes of the Virgin Mary – carried by the angels that appeared to Johanna at the side of her patroness to entitle her of her mission: "Da ware der Himmel voll von Engelknaben,/ Die trugen *weiße Lilien* in der Hand" (NA IX, I.10, ll. 1094-5, my emphasis). These are the same angels, as Johanan reiterates, that fight for France accounting for a warfare legitimized and led by divine protection: "Der Himmel ist für Frankreich. Seine Engel,/ Du siehst sie nicht, sie fechten für den König,/ Sie alle sind mit Lilien geschmückt,/ Lichtweiß wie diese Fahn ist unsre Sache,/ Die reine Jungfrau ist ihr keusches Sinnbild" (NA IX, II.10, ll. 1767-71).

⁴⁵¹ The contradictory notion of religious warfare as being at once holy and horrific finds expression in Johanna's ambivalent demeanor as raging fury against the alien invaders and, at the same time, conciliative mediator with her compatriots, constantly oscillating between the necessity to fight the enemy and to ensure peace for her country – as Burgundy concisely describes her: "Wie schrecklich war die Jungfrau in der Schlacht,/ Und wie umstrahlt mit Anmut sie der Friede!" (NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2028-9). Whereas, according to Marwyck, Johanna's quest for national peace reflects the enlightened Kantian ideal of "perpetual peace" (2010: 185), her objective to foster reconciliation among her countrymen constitutes within the play itself the condition to guarantee a strong unified nation necessary to defy its foreign oppressors and ensure national survival and assertion. It is indicative for instance, as Alt remarks, that the appeasement between the former apostate Burgundy and the King – which historically does not occur until 1435, that is four years after Jeanne d'Arc execution – coincides in the drama with the reinstallment on the throne of the legitimate monarch (2000: II/ 514). The theme of reconciliation as sequel to an original conflict will return in Pellico's *Eufemio* (1820) in the diatribe enacted between the eponymous protagonist and Teodoro, king of Sicily, with the tragedy witnessing in the end Eufemio's regret for the initial hostility declared towards his country, and the eventual return to his fatherland.

encounter with the Black Knight, and eventually break out in a personal crisis upon her confrontation with the English officer Lionel. Dismayed by her implacable strength and merciless heart ("JOHANNA Du [Erhabne Jungfrau] rüstest den unkriegerischen Arm mit Kraft,/ Dies Herz mit Unerbittlichkeit bewaffnest du" [NA IX/ II.8, ll. 1678-9]), after her cruel murder, Johanna feels for the first time compelled to mention and muse about the most human of all feelings: compassion ("Mitleid"). Whereas she had initially denied it to Montgomery – who had begged the female warrior in vain to spare his life leaving her, however, unmoved ("Du könntest Mitleid finden und Barmherzigkeit,/ Doch tödlich ists, der Jungfrau zu begegnen" [NA IX/ II.7, ll. 1597-8]) – the virgin warrior ponders now, nearly incredulous, on her lack of humanity:

JOHANNA In *Mitleid* schmilzt die Seele und die Hand erbebt,
 Als bräche sie in eines Tempels heiligen Bau,
 Den blühenden Leib des Gegners zu verletzen,
 Schon vor des Eisens blanker Schneide *schaudert mir*,
 Doch wenn es not tut, alsbald ist die Kraft mir da,
 Und nimmer irrend in der zitternden Hand *regiert*
 Das Schwert sich selbst, als wär es ein *lebendger Geist*.
 (NA IX/ II.8, ll. 1680-6, my emphases)

In disbelief over her own prowess, Johanna – who admits to shudder at the mere sight of the polished blade – feels suddenly possessed by a miraculous audaciousness that appears to reside out of her conscious control as she realizes that the sword in her trembling grasp inflicts its stroke almost self-swayed, as if it were an animated object.⁴⁵² In the third part of his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1817-1830), subtitled

⁴⁵² The idea of a body able to act beyond the individual's conscious control was a basic concept of the somnambulism theory that developed out of the magnetic healing approaches by the German doctor Mesmer. This theory became particularly popular in the field of medicine and was met with great acclaim by the Romantic natural philosophy and literature; see on this point Barkhoff's extensive study (1995).

"Die Philosophie des Geistes", Hegel defines this state of mind – with direct reference to the French heroine – in terms of a "religious and political exaltation" stemming from "patriotic enthusiasm".⁴⁵³ Johanna's blind submission to cruel bloodlust and cold-hearted temerity, of which she is becoming aware only now, calls to mind nearly verbatim Blumenberg's definition of myth as terror – as it had been extensively illustrated already in Foscolo's and Kleist's dramas – "das heißt: als reiner Ausdruck der *Passivität dämonischer Gebanntheit*" (1971: 13, my emphasis). The variety of negative epithets with which Johanna is addressed by the Englishmen ("Satan" [NA IX/ II.1, l. 1254], "jungfräuliche[r] Teufel" [NA IX/ II.4, l. 1480], "Verdamnte" [NA IX/ II.7, l. 1674], "Teufelsdirne" [NA IX/ II.10, l. 1714]), point to her diabolic nature and portray her as a demonic creature. The heroine's proximity to myth and mythical violence is further corroborated by the frequent intertextual references to Greek epics. Johanna's vengeful demeanor towards Montgomery, whom he warns of his imminent and irrevocable death ("JOHANNA Die Rache ist gekommen, nicht lebendig mehr/ Zurück

⁴⁵³ In his work, Hegel is analyzing those human phenomena in which the individual's soul acts independently from subjective consciousness ("Die Krankheitszustände, in welchen solche Trennung des Seelenlebens vom geistigen Bewußtsein hervortritt"; *Werke*, vol. X, p. 139, henceforth cited as "HW"). Adducing as example the case of Joan of Arc, the German philosopher explains: "Auch durch *geistige* Ursachen, besonders durch **religiöse und politische Exaltation**, kann der fragliche Zustand der Trennung des Seelenlebens herbeigeführt werden. [...] Das merkwürdigste Beispiel solcher Exaltation ist aber die berühmte *Jeanne d'Arc*, in welcher einerseits die patriotische Begeisterung einer ganz reinen, einfachen Seele, andererseits eine Art von **magnetischem Zustande** sichtbar wird" (HW X/ 140, emphases in the original, bold added). Hegel's interpretation, according to which Johanna's submission to the influence of forces external to her own consciousness are the consequence of "magnetic" circumstances that account eventually for the subsequent separation between soul-like awareness and objective consciousness ("Außeinandertreten des Seelenhaften und des objektiven Bewußtseins" [HW X/ 140]), is an essential notion that the author elicits from the above-captioned somnabulist theory; see also Alt's comments to Hegel's theory (2008: 100-1). For Hegel the soul constituted that subjective spirit which distinguished the human body in its uniqueness; as to the definition of "objective consciousness", cf. fn. 463. In *Don Carlos*, Schiller had already warned through Posa's demeanor and deed of the dangers inherent to idealistic zeal. In *The Maid of Orleans*, he goes a step further and illustrates the fine line that separates idealism from fanaticism when blind emotions are left unrestrained by reason. In the Montgomery episode and the following crisis, Johanna engages in a series of considerations that attest ultimately the intervention of her reason and its interference with her emotions. She eventually becomes aware of her sense of compassion, and begins to doubt the righteousness of her actions.

messen werdet ihr das heilige Meer" [NA IX/ II.7, ll. 1648-9]), has called to mind Achilles's cruel murder committed against the Trojan Lycaon in the respective Iliad episode.⁴⁵⁴ Her assimilation to the Peledian and Pallas Athena as well as to old-testamentarian figures and literary myths, contributes to remove the biographical Jeanne d'Arc from her historical contingency, raising her to a legendary, that is, mythical status.

That this transfiguration lied in the intention of the dramatist is attested by the very the copper image of Minerva that the author requested to place on the cover of the play's first published edition.⁴⁵⁵ Episodes such as Montgomery's slaughter and – as we shall see – the Black Knight and the Lionel scenes, do not adhere to the established historical truth, but are instead additions of Schiller's poetic imagination.⁴⁵⁶ The literary defense and re-mythization

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. *Iliad*, bk. 21, ll. 68-142. Borchmeyer described the tragedy "ein mythisches Palimpsest" (1994: 440) in which Christian and ancient myth are intertwined. In his luminous interpretation, Harrison (1986) provides an extensive and in-depth account of the numerous intertextual references that the play establishes with both the Bible and Greek epics; see also Greiner's comments who detects valuable allusions as well to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* (2005: 65-6). Kollmann comments on Johanna's sense of compassion for Montgomery, holding that her drift into a state of reflection converts her from the status of ancient hero to a tragic modern subject (2004: 119). As a matter of fact – in contrast to Achilles who does not display signs of human regret towards his Trojan victim Lycaon – upon slaying Montgomery, Johanna becomes instead increasingly and inevitably aware of her self divided between her imposed sense of duty, and her recondite and repressed sensibility.

⁴⁵⁵ The *Maid of Orleans* was first published by Unger on October 12, 1801, and displayed on the title page – as Schiller had requested from his editor – the copper engraving of Minerva by Friedrich Bolt on the basis of an image drawn by Goethe's friend Heinrich Meyer (cf. letters to Unger on 28 Nov. 1800 [NA XXX/ 217, 252.], and 26 Apr. 1801 [NA XXXI/ 29-30, 35.]; see also comments to the letters by Ormanns (NA XXXI/ 253, 258). Schiller's original wish to reproduce in the engraving of Athena the appearance of the Virgin ("Zu Portrait wird sich Agnes Sorel, Carl VII. Königin Isabelle und die Jungfrau qualifizieren. Die letztere wünschte ich nach der schönen antiken Minerva gemacht"; letter to Unger from April 7, 1801 [NA XXXI/ 28, 32.]) indicate ultimately the author's intention to combine in Johanna at once the figures of the militant Minerva and the virgin Mary which speaks for the very coalescence of profane and sacred myth that distinguishes his play. For more details on the first edition of Schiller's drama, and the the debate around the engravings entertained between Unger and Schiller, see also Martin (2005: 176-8).

⁴⁵⁶ The relevance attributed to poetry situates Schiller in the Romantic tradition. In his *Lectures on Fine Art and Literature* (1801-1804), for instance, A.W. Schlegel emphasizes the creative potential that distinguishes the poetic medium poetry through the enrichment it provides to nature: "Poesie bezeichnet [...] überhaupt die künstlerische Erfindung, den wunderbaren Akt wodurch dieselbe die Natur bereichert" (1884a: 261). Yet, in his later *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1809), Schlegel rebuked Schiller's excessive use of marvelous

that Schiller's drama undertook of the historical Jeanne d'Arc must, moreover, be properly put into perspective with the heroine's antiroyalist demystification derived from Voltaire's burlesque poem of *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1762).⁴⁵⁷

episodes in a play that offered plenty of historical details upon which to rely ("Das Wunder konnte der Dichter dahingestellt sein lassen [...] und das wahre schmachvolle Märtyrertum der verratenen und verlassenen Heldenin würde uns tiefer erschüttert haben als das rosenfarb erheiterte, welches Schiller im Widerspruch mit der Geschichte ihr andichtet" [1967: 282-3]). This speaks for a relationship between the Schlegel brothers and Schiller that was not always free of contradictions and oscillated between polemic and praise (cf. also Schiller's comments against Schlegel's negative influence on the younger generation in his letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt from April 2, 1805 [NA XXXII/ 209, 237.]); with regard to the not always frictionless relationship that the Schlegels entertained with Goethe and Schiller, see Wellek's remarks (1978: 289-93).

⁴⁵⁷ In their comparative analyses of Voltaire's *Pucelle* and Schiller's *Jungfrau*, Heimann (2005) and Glaser (2006) alike emphasize the anticlerical and antimonarchical mindframe that distinguishes the poem of the French encyclopedist from the drama of the German poet. This is even more striking as both authors ultimately transpose the same medieval setting into their enlightened and republican historical present, yet with irreconcilable results –highlighting the very opposite reception of one and the same myth. As Glaser observes, although Schiller cannot be considered devoutly religious, his secularized worldview was far from being identifiable with the materialist and atheist French Enlightenment (2006: 451). Both Schiller and Voltaire portray a heroine who represents the people for whose freedom she ultimately fights. Schiller's republicanism, however, appears moderated and mediated by what Glaser describes yet to be a "royalist" heroine: "Frankreich zu befreien ist ihr identisch mit der Verteidigung der Erbmonarchie" (2006: 452). Voltaire's poem underwent, instead, contrasting interpretations in the wake of the French revolutionary era (Heimann 2005: 45-51). Frowned upon and desecrated by intransigent anticatholics and opponents of the ancien régime at the onset of the Revolution, Jeanne d'Arc was hailed as the "embodiment of the power of the people" (2005: 46) during the years of the Reign of Terror. At the onset of the 19th century when the female figure rose back to the status of national heroine, Voltaire's epos eventually met – apart from Schiller's denunciation – the critique of his own compatriots who viewed his satire as antipatriotic. The Weimar duke Karl August disapproved originally of Schiller's play for intending to set a counterexample to the unabated notoriousness still enjoyed by the French poem: "Das Sujet ist äußerst scabrous, und einem Lächerlichen ausgesetzt, das schwer zu vermeiden sein wird, zumal bei Personen, die das Voltairsche Poëm fast auswendig wissen"; see his letter to Schiller's sister-in-law Caroline von Wolzogen, written between 16 and 20 April 1801 (qtd. in NA XXXI/ 264, and NA II.2B/ 101-2). The actual reason for the duke's critique, however, was his concern that Schiller's drama would be disliked by an audience too familiar with Voltaire's popular and praised satire, compromising the image of the lead actress at the Weimar theater, Friederike Jagemann, his mistress; cf. Schiller's comment to his friend German actress Friederike Unzelmann whom he tries to win for the role of Johanna in place of Jagemann ("Hier in Weimar haben die Privatverhältnisse noch immer die Aufführung der Jungfrau verhindert, und nichts angenehmeres könnte mir begegnen, als wenn Sie durch Ihre Erscheinung in Weimar alle diese Schwürigkeiten mit einem mal heben und das Schiffchen flott machen wollten"; letter from 17. Nov 1801 [NA XXXI/ 73, 83.]). As a matter of fact, despite his initial rebuke, the duke was overall pleased by the drama's reading, although he yet insisted that the play ought not to be staged – as Schiller complained to Goethe: "so hat sie [*sc.* die Jungfrau], bei aller Opposition in der sie zu seinem Geschmacke steht, eine unerwartete Wirkung auf ihn gemacht. Er meint aber, sie könne nicht gespielt werden (NA XXXI/ 32, 37.). The *Jungfrau* was eventually staged in Weimar in the spring of 1803 under the female lead role of Amalie Miller-Malcomi and was met with an "unusual" success; cf. Schiller's letter to Körner from May 12, 1803 ("Die Jungfrau von Orleans ist vor 3 Wochen zum erstenmal hier [*sc.* in Weimar] aufgeführt und mehrmal repetiert worden. [...] das Stück ist aber auch scharmant gegangen und hat einen ganz ungewöhnlichen Erfolg gehabt. Alles ist davon electrisiert worden" [NA XXXII/ 36, 44.]; for more details on the Weimar affair and premiere, see Martin (2005: 186-8).

Schiller's fictionalized additions to the play pursue the concomitant and no less crucial goal of shifting the recipient's attention from the historical drama to the human tragedy by focusing on Johanna's personal conflict of consciousness. In her prodigious encounter with the Black Knight, Johanna is, for the first time, challenged to reflect upon the allegedly religious nature of her patriotic calling.⁴⁵⁸ In the attempt to make her desist from further pursuing her political goal, he manages in fact to challenge her confidence:

SCHWARZER RITTER Johanna d'Arc! Bis an die Tore Reims'
 Bist du gedrungen auf des Sieges Flügeln.
 Dir gnüge der erworbn *Ruhm*. Entlasse
 Das *Glück*, das dir als Sklave hat gedient,
 Eh es sich zürnend selbst befreit, es haßt
 Die Treu und keinem dient es bis ans Ende.
 (NA IX/ III.9, ll. 2420-25, my emphases)

As the Black Knight insinuates that fortune ("Glück") rather than fortitude, and fame ("Ruhm") rather than faith have thus far steered and supported Johanna's success, she is prompted to evaluate whether the divine mission that she claims to fulfill is indeed inspired by true vocation or reveals to be no more than tarnished vanity. Although Johanna hesitates yet to submit to her presentiments, her comments make clear that she is at once perplexed as she attempts to discredit the knight's appearance ("Es war nichts Lebendes. – Ein trüglich Bild" (NA IX/ III.9, l. 2446), and consequently denies to herself the truth: "Der Hölle wars, ein widerspenstger Geist,/ Herauf gestiegen aus dem Feuerpfuhl,/ Mein edles Herz im Busen zu erschüttern" (NA IX/ III.9, l. 2447-9). Intent to persevere in her goal, she pretends to talk her "noble heart" into new courage: "Siegreich vollenden will ich meine Bahn,/ Und käm die

⁴⁵⁸ Interpreted by the critics' majority as symbolic of Johanna's irrational self, the Black Knight represents for Guthrie the "inner voice that she chooses to ignore" (2009: 56).

Hölle selber in die Schranken,/ Mir soll der Mut nicht weichen und nicht wanken!" (NA IX/ III.9, ll. 2451-3).

Her self-assurance, however, is not destined to last long for it will unexpectedly and ultimately be shattered in Lionel's subsequent scene. Once more, as in her confrontation with Montgomery, the stage directions betray her emotional distress long before Johanna speaks, and reveal to be far more telling than her own words, products of her deceitful effort of rationalization.⁴⁵⁹ As soon as she disarms her English opponent and lays her eyes on his face, she is transfixed (*"In diesem Augenblick sieht sie ihm ins Gesicht, sein Anblick ergreift sie, sie bleibt unbeweglich stehen und läßt dann langsam den Arm sinken"* [NA IX/ III.10]), unable upon a second attempt to strike her sword (*"erhebt das Schwert mit einer raschen Bewegung gegen ihn, läßt es aber, wie sie ihn ins Gesicht faßt, schnell wieder sinken"* [NA IX/ III.10]).⁴⁶⁰ In her meeting with Montgomery and Lionel alike, the stage directions, rather

⁴⁵⁹ This acceptance of reason as instrument of self-deceit appears to contradict Schiller's pronounced idealism, displaying a striking kinship with Pellico's notion of human *ratio*.

⁴⁶⁰ As soon as Johanna begins to reflect and thus forsakes her primordial naïve stage, she appears to lose her natural ability to move. This condition of physical torpor is reminiscent of what Kleist will describe in his essay *Über das Marionettentheater* (1810) as the loss of the "free play of gestures" ("das freie Spiel seiner Gebärden") triggered by the acquisition of consciousness ("welche Unordnungen in der natürlichen Grazie des Menschen, das Bewußtsein anrichtet"). As Kleist specified, it is possible to verify in contrast: "daß in dem Maße, als [...] die Reflexion dunkler und schwächer wird, die Grazie darin immer strahlender und herrschender hervortritt" (cf. *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, vol. 3, p. 560-3, additional references will be quoted as "MT" followed by the page number). It results evident, as Ruprecht remarks, that Kleist borrowed the example of the dancing puppets from Schiller's essay *Ueber Anmut und Würde* (1793) (2006: 20-2). Kleist clearly restores their analogy with the concept of grace by engaging in his treatise in a fictitious conversation with the dancer "Herr C" who exemplifies his theory of grace by pointing to the dancing marionettes. Schiller and Kleist alike connect, therefore, the notion of grace with the positive idea of a natural and free movement. This premise, in turn, would prove Marwyck's assumption wrong according to which Johanna is from the onset of the dramatic action, in virtue of her unfaltering moral goodness, a "beautiful soul" which becomes manifest in the "gracefulness" that she displays in her martial manners ("anmutigen kriegerischen Handeln") (2010: 187). As the scholar argues, Johanna acts initially without being conscious of her guilt, and thus preserves her ethical integrity. If it is true that the lack of consciousness speaks, on the one side, for her feeling so at ease – that is graceful – on the battlefield, as a moral subject she is, however, expected by Schiller to act – in contrast to her original state as "sensous being" – in the full awareness of her deeds. This morality, in fact, is based – as Maria Stuart has demonstrated – on the individual's conscious will power to overcome the sensous constraints and mediate necessity with personal inclination (see fn. 392 in section 3.2.1). It is this very strength of will that accounts for

than her own thoughts – which reveal to be a byproduct of her false reasoning and *mauvaise-foi* – exhibit through her emotive, that is physical, reaction Johanna's divided self. Torn

the moral greatness of the queen's "sublime inclination" or "erhabene Gesinnung" (NA XX.1/ 289); cf. fn. 485 for a contrastive analysis between Maria Stuart and Johanna as representatives respectively of Schiller's notions of the "sublime" and the "beautiful soul". The fact that Johanna's allegedly graceful actions turn ill and clumsy as soon as she starts to reflect is, consequently, rather a sign of "false" ("falsche") than "authentic" ("ächte") gracefulness ("Anmuth"). It follows that "ächte Anmuth" is actually characterized for Schiller by the individual's full consciousness of his deeds while he merely *pretends* to be graceful: "Anmuth ist eine Schönheit, die nicht von der Natur gegeben, sondern von dem Subjekte selbst hervorgebracht wird" (NA XX.1/ 255). He must, in other words be trained (that is aesthetically educated) – as the domesticated fencing bear in Kleist's treatise – to act with grace to the point that it becomes a natural attitude that can be performed with ease and in full agreement with the individual's will. In other words, Schiller's authentic grace is, unlike Kleist's, not the result of an absent but rather an activated and augmented state of consciousness that allows the individual to mediate his sensing with his thinking, sensuous will with ethical claim – while as moral subject he strives towards his "ideal" of human beauty, that is the ideal of a morally flawless being. Hence while Schiller saw in the human ability of reasoning and reflection a step towards human emancipation, for Kleist it led on the contrary to the individual's loss of freedom, symbolized in the forfeiture of his "natural grace" ("natürliche[] Grazie"[MT 560]) as a consequence of becoming cognizant of his alienated self. In this respect, as pointed out already in the previous chapter (cf. section 2.1.2), Kleist's unfavorable acceptance of the original sin displays a stronger kinship with Vico for whom Adam's first sin sanctioned the fall of humankind into a stage of decadence. With Vico and Kleist, Schiller shared essentially a pessimistic perspective on history, albeit on different grounds. If Kleist, in fact, believed that the original sin brought along a self-awareness that had attested a detrimental impact on human history as it was at the heart of an irreparable individual alienation, Vico maintained that the expulsion from paradise had sanctioned the downfall of man from a state of *humanitas* to one of *feritas* – that is from an original condition of ideal humanity to a subsequent stage of human decay. The idealist Schiller, in contrast, saw in the individual's conquest of knowledge the first step towards human freedom and progress. Unlike Kleist, who together with Vico and Schiller, considered the paradisiac state as unretrievably forfeited, Schiller and Vico alike did not abandon their faith in man to recover his pristine humanity – be it by means of a providential guide for Vico, or in virtue of the divine disposition ("[d]ie Anlage zur Gottheit") in which man naturally partakes ("trägt der Mensch unwidersprechlich in sich" [SW V/ 603]) for the enlightened Schiller; Paparelli's (1960) luminous study provides an exhaustive insight into the Renaissance notion of *humanitas* in its juxtaposition to *feritas* and *divinitas*. Both Vico and Schiller relied on the individual's ability to strive towards his original ideal of human perfection; for more details on Schiller's notion of paradise and his acceptance of the first sin, see fn. 488. The main difference, however, between the two thinkers resided in that for Schiller such *humanitas* could no longer be attained, as for Vico, in the course of profane history – but only on the metahistorical level by means of an aesthetic sublimation. Johanna embodied, in this respect, "[d]as edle Bild der Menschheit" (NA II.1/ I. 1), that is the very image of humanity; see Schiller's three-stanza poem *Voltaire's Pucelle und die Jungfrau von Orleans* written after the completion of his drama, presumably at the end of April 1801 (NA II.2B/ 101-2), and republished in 1803 under the title *Das Mädchen von Orleans*. As Heimann remarks, the poem's publication preceded the drama's performance and print edition to prepare the audience to a reinterpretation of Voltaire's burlesque *Pucelle*; as a matter of fact Schiller's editor Unger waited for the *Jungfrau's* publication until 1802, that is after the poem was printed and the drama first staged in Leipzig (2005: 53).

between heaven and earth, supernatural forces and phenomenological world, the protagonist oscillates between appearance and actuality as she seeks for truth.⁴⁶¹

Schiller provided an answer to Johanna's dilemma in the twentysixth of his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795), in which he distinguishes aesthetic from logical appearance. As he argues, while the former remains clearly distinct from truth, the latter is often confused with it. Hence while aesthetic appearance is considered to be playful, logical appearance is disqualified as deceptive.⁴⁶² At the question as to how the individual can progress from appearance to actuality, that is to the knowledge of truth, Schiller identifies in the organs of

⁴⁶¹ The question and quest for truth ("Wahrheit") has been a common denominator of Schiller's plays. In all three dramas thus far taken into consideration, the notion of truth is closely tied to the ambiguous interplay entertained between appearance and reality ("Schein" and "Sein"), as it has been extensively elucidated in *Maria Stuart* (1800), and as it had been displayed in *Don Carlos* (1787) which portrays the king's personal drama caught in the dilemma of his allegedly adulterous queen and requests to know the truth: "erwart' ich Wahrheit" (NA VII.1/ III.4, l. 2699). Harrison speaks of a "Doppeldeutigkeit der Welt" (1986: 298) to address this very ambivalence that returns in *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801) through the ambiguity of the play's language and the plurality of meanings that it implies; for more details on the antithetic relation of appearance to reality in Schiller's aesthetic theory, see fn. 465. When Philipp II in *Don Carlos* drama looks for truth, he expects to find it in an uncorrupted open heart not driven by self-interest, but by a love for humanity as he finds it in Posa ("KÖNIG Ich brauche Wahrheit – [...] Gieb mir/ Den seltnen Mann mit reinem, offnem Herzen./ Mit hellem Geist und unbefangnen Augen./ Der mir sie finden helfen kann –" [NA VII.1/ III.5, ll. 2820-25, my emphases]), and as it resides in Johanna who, in her "purity" and "innocence", constitutes the very embodiment of truth ("DUNOIS Wenn sich die Wahrheit/ Verkörpern will in sichtbarer Gestalt./ So muß sie ihre Züge an sich tragen!/ Wenn Unschuld, Treue, Herzensreinigkeit/ Auf Erden irgend wohnt – auf ihren Lippen./ In ihren klaren Augen muß sie wohnen!" [NA IX/ V.7, ll. 3274-9, my emphases]). The pursuit of truth and the beauty of the heart thus go hand in hand, an alliance that Posa reiterates in his notorious dictum: "Die Wahrheit ist vorhanden für den Weisen./ Die Schönheit für ein fühlend Herz. Sie beide/ Gehören für einander. [...]" (NA VII.1/ IV.21, ll. 4364-6). Posa's quest for truth ("POSA [...] – Ich weiß./ Was ich – ich mit dem König soll – Und wär's/ Auch eine Feuerflocke Wahrheit nur./ In des Despoten Seele kühn geworfen –" [NA VII.1/ III.9, ll. 2967-70, my emphasis]) is one that claimed its right in the pursuit of reason. Posa and Johanna alike are animated by an idealism with which the mind – as Schiller had put it in the *Universalhistorische Uebersicht* (1790) with reference to the Middle Ages – inflames the hearts ("der Kopf die Herzen in Glut gesetzt, und die Wahrheit den Arm der Tapfern bewaffnet?" [NA XIX.1/ 19, my emphases; see also fn. 494]). It is precisely this ideal of truth led by the aegis of reason that Schiller had wished to find as well among his contemporaries: "Was es auch seyn mochte, wofür man kämpfte – es war immer ein Kampf für die Vernunft, denn durch die Vernunft allein hatte man das Recht dazu erfahren, und für dieses Recht wurde eigentlich ja nur gestritten" ([NA XIX.1/ 19, my emphases]).

⁴⁶² Schiller articulated his distinction between aesthetic and logical appearance as follows: "Es versteht sich von selbst, daß hier nur von dem ästhetischen Schein die Rede ist, den man von der Wirklichkeit und Wahrheit unterscheidet, nicht von dem logischen, den man mit derselben verwechselt – den man folglich liebt, weil er Schein ist [...]. Nur der erste ist Spiel, der letzte bloß Betrug" (SW V/ 656-7).

the eye and ear the two main senses that allow the individual to achieve this epistemological goal.⁴⁶³ He sets forth explaining that if the savage avails himself primarily of feelings, these are replaced by the eye and ear at a more advanced stage of human development. In other words, what is seen through the eye differs from emotional perception since what is apprehended through the optical organ requires the intervention of reason: "Was wir durch das Auge *sehen*, ist von dem verschieden, was wir *empfinden*; denn der Verstand springt über das Licht hinaus zu den Gegenständen" (SW V/ 657, emphases in the original). In her evolution from herder to hero, that is from nature to culture, Johanna progresses respectively from perceiving to seeing. It is through Lionel's sight that subjective self and objective reality become distinct and distant to each other, triggering in the heroine a sense of alienation. It is

⁴⁶³ As Schiller specifies: "Die Natur selbst ist es, die den Menschen von der Realität zum Scheine emporhebt, indem sie ihn mit zwei Sinnen ausrüstete, die ihn bloß durch den Schein zur Erkenntnis des Wirklichen führen. In dem Auge und dem Ohr ist die andringende Materie schon hinweggewälzt von den Sinnen, und das Objekt *entfernt sich* von uns, das wir in den tierischen Sinnen unmittelbar berühren" (SW V/ 657, my emphasis). It is precisely this kind of "distance" (as the German verb "sich entfernen" suggests) to the objective world suddenly experienced by Johanna's subjective self in the heightened awareness of her personal feelings that she had thus far repressed. Following up on Hegel's theory advanced with regard to Jeanne d'Arc's "religious and political state of exaltation" in his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1817-1830) (cf. fn. 453), the German philosopher moves on in his analysis to investigate the main forms of alienation that become manifest between the individual's "psychic character" ("Seelenhafte") and his "objective consciousness" ("objektives Bewußtsein"). Akin to Schiller, he identifies the objective consciousness with the phenomenological world as tangible reality of which one can gain knowledge through the sensitive perception of the eye, and distinguishes it from the type of subjective knowledge which results instead mediated by emotions: "daß nämlich das *objektive Bewußtsein* die Welt als eine ihm *äußerliche*, unendlich *mannigfache*, aber in allen ihren Punkten *notwendig zusammenhängende*, *nichts Unvermitteltes* in sich enthaltende Objektivität weiß und sich zu derselben auf eine ihr entsprechende, d.h. ebenso *mannigfache*, *bestimmte*, *vermittelte* und *notwendige* Weise verhält, daher zu einer *bestimmten* Form der äußerlichen Objektivität nur durch eine *bestimmtes* Sinnesorgan in Beziehung zu treten, zum Beispiel nur mit den *Augen* zu sehen vermag" (HW X/ 139, emphases in the original). In his distinction between objective and subjective knowledge, attained respectively through the sight and feelings, Hegel points out that – whereas visual perception is mediated by the organ of the eye, the emotional faculties allow for an unmediated, and therefore more direct and authentic, perception of reality: "wohingegen das *Fühlen* oder die *subjektive* Weise des Wissens die dem objektiven Wissen unentbehrlichen Vermittlungen und Bedingungen ganz oder wenigstens zum Teil entbehren und unmittelbar, zum Beispiel ohne die Hilfe der Augen und ohne die Vermittlung des Lichtes, das Sehbare wahrnehmen kann" (HW X/ 139, emphases in the original). Johanna had began to feel, that is intuitively, already her inner split in her early encounter with Montgomery and, the more so, in her subsequent confrontation with the Black Knight. However, it is not before she catches sight of Lionel that she is able to experience the full awareness of her personal alienation and crisis.

through her vision, and consequently by means of reasoning ("Verstand"), that she is provided with the faculty to recognize the deception of logical appearance that had affected and obfuscated her former perception of reality. In her initial attempts to discredit this awareness, the stage directions portray her in the act of turning her face away from Lionel ("mit abgewandtem Gesicht", "verbirgt das Gesicht" [NA IX/ III.10]).⁴⁶⁴ Upon recognizing the truth from its delusion, Johanna enters a new stage of self-awareness that will allow her to distinguish appearance from actuality, from which she can thus distance her individual self.⁴⁶⁵ After attaining this new knowledge of herself, Johanna is able to progress towards

⁴⁶⁴ According to Krimmer, the representation of warfare in the play is more than just a historical occurrence for it serves the purpose to metaphorically reproduce the struggle between "reason and emotions" (2010: 41).

⁴⁶⁵ As Schiller elucidates in his 26th *Aesthetic Letter*: "Sobald der Mensch einmal so weit gekommen ist, den Schein von der Wirklichkeit, die Form von dem Körper zu unterscheiden, so ist er auch imstande, sie von ihm abzusondern; denn das hat er schon getan, indem er sie unterscheidet" (SW V/ 657-8, 26). Upon recognizing the matter from the form, factuality from illusion, the individual is able to consciously engage in the play-drive ("Spieltrieb") as he emulates – by means of his poetic formative drive ("Bildungstrieb") – the aesthetic appearance in which to strive for that ideal of human completeness and consonance: "Gleich, sowie der Spieltrieb sich regt, der am Scheine Gefallen findet, wird ihm auch der nachahmende Bildungstrieb folgen, der den Schein als etwas Selbständiges behandelt" (SW V/ 657, 26). Through an injunction that strongly echoes the Delphic oracle γνῶθι σεαυτόν, Agnes Sorel prompts Johanna to know herself by keeping reality distinct from the appearance of her patroness: "SOREL O sie ist *außer sich!* Komm zur dir selbst! *Erkenne dich*, du siehst nichts Wirkliches!/" Das ist ihr [*sc.* der heiligen Mutter] nachgeahmtes Bild,/ Sie selber wandelt in des Himmels Chören!" (NA IX/ IV.3, ll. 2738-9, my emphases). When Johanna meets her sisters again outside of the Reims Cathedral, she believes to have just reawoken from a bad dream and that she is eventually returning to reality ("JOHANNA Ich war entschlafen unterm Zauberbaum,/ Und bin erwacht, und ihr steht um mich her,/ Die wohlbekannten traulichen Gestalten?/ Mir hat von diesen Königen und Schlachten/ Und Kriegestaten nur geträumt – es waren/ Nur Schatten, die an mir vorüber gingen,/ Denn lebhaft träumt sichs unter diesem Baum" [NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 2908-14]). In response, her sister reiterates nearly verbatim Sorel's former exhortation: "LOUISON [...] Dir hat von diesen Taten/ Nicht bloß geträumt, du hast sie alle wirklich/ Vollbracht. – *Erkenne dich, blick um dich her,/ Befühle deine glänzend goldne Rüstung*" (NA IX/ IV.9, ll. 2918-21, my emphases). As the quote makes clear, the act of self-knowledge is directly related to the act of visual perception ("blick um dich her"), in conjunction this time with the tactile sense ("Befühle"). As a matter of fact, in his 26th *Aesthetic Letter*, Schiller compares the tactile experience to a force to which the individual is nearly passively subject, and contrasts it with the active engagement of visual perception: "Der Gegenstand des Takts ist eine Gewalt, die wir erleiden; der Gegenstand des Auges und des Ohrs ist eine Form, die wir erzeugen" (SW V/ 657, 26.). Only during her exile from society – which comprises culture and history – as she wanders off in the wilderness of the wood, Johanna is eventually able to recognize her intimate self, attain self-knowledge and regain her original idyllic harmony ("JOHANNA Doch in der Öde lern ich mich erkennen" [NA IX/ V.4, l. 3170]). It is a process of catharsis that alludes, as Harrison remarks, to Christ's 40-days fasting and consequent sublimation in the Judean desert (1986: 301).

freedom as she partakes in the play-drive that harmonizes her rational with her emotional self, rejoining in balance objective with subjective reality and healing from the status of alienation derived by *blindly* following her calling. As Schiller explains in his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795): "[s]obald er [*sc.* der Mensch] anfängt mit dem Auge zu genießen, und das Sehen für ihn einen selbstständigen Wert erlangt, so ist er auch schon *ästhetisch frei*, und der Spieltrieb hat sich entfaltet" (SW V/ 657, 26, my emphasis). If within history, Johanna remained subject to the deceit of logical appearance, through the aesthetic appearance – that is, by means of the poetic truth that Schiller brings into history – she is able to emancipate herself from the estrangement in which historical immanence has kept her, and restore through the play-drive of emotions and intellect the ideal of her complete and true self, healing her fragmented psyche and achieving "Anmuth" (or "Grazie", that is "grace").⁴⁶⁶

It is indicative that Johanna's first reaction upon catching sight of Lionel and realizing her guilt is no other but that of deception. Under her enemies' original charge of imposture ("TALBOT Eine Gauklerin, die die gelernte Rolle/ Der Heldin spielt, [...] [NA IX/ II.5, ll. 1546-7]), she now blames herself for betraying her vow ("Was habe ich/ Getan! Gebrochen hab ich mein Gelübde!" [NA IX/ III.10, ll. 2481-2]), only to name herself a traitor when confronted by the king's mistress Sorel: "Sähst du mein Innerstes, du stießest schauernd/ Die Feindin von dir, die Verräterin!" (NA IX/ IV.2, ll. 2712-3). Her very designation as

⁴⁶⁶ See Curran's translation of Schiller's essay *On Grace and Dignity* (2005: 123). While I shall return, in more detail, to Schiller's concept of "Anmuth" towards the end of my analysis, suffice to say at this point that Schiller defines "grace" as expression of the "beautiful soul", that is the harmony of reason and feelings, duty and inclination; cf. fn. 484. In her study, Kollmann illustrates how Schiller's aesthetic practice has the effect to momentarily suspends history ("dabei kommt Geschichte zum Stillstand" [2004: 124]), and provide the illusion – or "aesthetic appearance" – of freedom. Schiller employed this "Illusion von Freiheit" (2004: 124), understood as an ideal pursuable beyond – rather than within – historical immanence, as a means to counteract his scepticism. Poetry offered the individual the possibility to evade from historical necessity, while fiction turned into an expedient that allowed to elude logical appearance and enter the aesthetic play.

"buhlerische Circe" (NA IX/ II.10, l. 1709) and "Sirene" (NA IX/II.10, l. 1743) speak, with negative reference to Johanna's bewitching female allures, for her aptitude to deceit – which goes ultimately along with her historical stigma as "Hexe" (witch) that the play reinforces.⁴⁶⁷

Through her vote of chastity, that Johanna feared to have infringed after seeing Lionel, she had actually renounced – for the sake of her national commitment and religious calling – her female identity, and with it her humanity.⁴⁶⁸ Hence Montgomery's implorations for mercy by calling upon the mildness of her gentle gender will result in vain ("O bei der Milde deines zärtlichen Geschlechts/ Fleh ich dich an. Erbarme meiner Jugend dich!" [NA IX/ II.7, ll. 1606-7]), as Johanna disregards along with her womanhood ("Nicht mein Geschlecht beschwöre! Nenne mich nicht Weib" [NA IX/ II.7, l. 1608]) her human heart

⁴⁶⁷ In the play, Johanna is explicitly addressed as "Hexe von Orleans" (NA IX/ V.3, l. 3108-9).

⁴⁶⁸ While critics have addressed at length Johanna's gender-crossing, highlighting the masculine traits of her personality, I argue that in place of crossing genders, the protagonist performs a fusion of contraries that renders justice to both her male and female identity. Contrary to Chouk, who denies Johanna the conciliative and sensitive "wahre Anmuth" – which Schiller had reserved exclusively to women, in his distinction between grace and dignity advanced in *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793) – and ascribes to her audaciousness a "männliche Größe", Johanna's character appears instead to share the very androgynous features that in the baroque distinguished the concept of *femme forte* – juxtaposing her, next to queen Elisabeth, to Maria Stuart's role as *femme fatale*. Maclean's in-depth study of the notion of "femme forte" in French baroque literature, emphasizes two of its main attributes: the female value of "chastity" and the male virtue of "fortitude". The scholar elucidates how the Christian reading of an originally pagan term, which in the figure of the Amazon indicated the ideal of the *femme heroique* notorious for her male valor or "fortitudo", contributed to a moralizing interpretation of the term that viewed in the ideal of chastity the female counterpart of a "passive courage" apt to desist temptations (1977: 82-3). French baroque authors, in turn, replaced the concept of female passivity with that of "female independence" best exemplified in Lucretia's suicide (1977: 85). Romero-Diaz points out, moreover, how the notion of "femme fatale" in Golden Age Spanish literature was synonymous of "patriotism, constancy, fidelity, resolution, energy, valor, true devotion, and openly heroic acts" (2007: 32-3) – mentioning among others also Queen Elizabeth of England. Apart from the patriotism and heroism that Johanna clearly exemplifies in the play, chastity becomes indispensable to the successful outcome of her patriotic mission. Hence, when king Karl offers her to marry one of her suitors, Dunois or La Hire, she is determinate to reject both their hands with the argument: "Doch nicht verließ ich meine Schäfertrift,/ Um weltlich eitle Hoheit zu erjagen,/ Noch mir den Brautkranz in das Haar zu flechten,/ Legt ich die ehre Waffenrüstung an./ Berufen bin ich zu ganz anderm Werk./ Die reine Jungfrau nur kann es vollenden./ Ich bin die Kriegerin des höchsten Gottes./ Und keinem Manne kann ich Gattin sein" (NA IX/ III.4, ll. 2197-2204). Whereas Johanna claims her independence on the basis of a selfless religious vocation, queen Elisabeth's "jungfräuliche Freiheit" (NA IX/ II.2, l. 1166) turned into a politically strategic expedient that helped her detain absolute power – a moral integrity which Schiller essentially questioned in the play through her relationship with the earl of Leicester.

("Dieser Panzer deckt kein Herz" [NA IX/ II.7, l. 1611]). Only through her suffering, that is through the display of her human weakness, is she able to regain her female nature and thus her humanness. Touched by her sorrow ("Mich faßt ein ungeheurer Schmerz um dich" [NA IX/ III.10, l. 2497]), Lionel asks Johanna to discard the tokens of her unnatural virility ("Komm! Komm! Entsage dieser gräßlichen/ Verbindung – Wirf sie von dir diese Waffen" (NA IX/ III.10, ll. 2491-2) as he is moved by the feminine beauty that he recognizes beneath her armor: "Mich jammert deine Jugend, deine Schönheit!/ Dein Anblick dringt mir an das Herz [...]" (NA IX/ III.10, ll. 2488-9, my emphasis).

It was, in fact – as Schiller had explained to his editor Göschen – to the human heart ("Herz") that his tragedy had been intended to speak: "Dies Stück floß *aus dem Herzen* und *zu dem Herzen* sollte es auch sprechen" (letter from 10 Febr. 1802 [NA XXXI/ 101, 117., emphases in the original]).⁴⁶⁹ It was "from the heart" ("aus dem Herzen"), that is from poetry rather than history, that Schiller would have recreated his myth of Jeanne d'Arc. As he wrote to Körner while he was still composing his play: "*Poetisch* ist der Stoff in vorzüglichem Grade, so nämlich wie ich ihn mir *ausgedacht* habe, und in hohem Grade *rührend*" (on July

⁴⁶⁹ Schiller is quoting from an earlier letter to his friend Körner written while he was still working on his drama: "der Stoff erhält mich warm, ich bin mit dem ganzen Herzen dabei und es fließt auch mehr aus dem Herzen als die vorigen Stücke, wo der Verstand mit dem Herzen kämpfen mußte" (5 Jan. 1801 [NA XXXI/ 1, 1.]. According to Safranski, Schiller's reiterated "heart" reference hints instead to an eminently philosophical concept about which he had originally argued with Schelling – as he explained in a letter to Goethe (27 March 1801 [NA XXXI/ 24, 29.]) – asserting (in contrast to the German philosopher) that at the onset of his creative undertaking a poet departed generally from an unconscious mindset ("dem Bewußtlosen") only to progress towards a higher level of consciousness ("um die erste dunkle TotalIdee seines Werks in der vollendeten Arbeit ungeschwächt zu finden" [2004: 481]). It was, however, the very emphasis of the mind over the feelings of the heart that Schiller had lamented in Voltaire's *Pucelle* (1762). In the invective articulated against Voltaire in *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96), in the chapter dedicated to satirical poetry, Schiller explicitly blamed the French author for lacking that idealism that had been, instead, so characteristic in Cervantes's *Don Quijote*: "Von der Voltairischen Satire läßt sich kein solches Urtheil fällen. [...] seinem Spott liegt überall zu wenig Ernst zum Grunde, und dieses macht seinen Dichterberuf mit Recht verdächtig. Wir begegnen immer nur seinem Verstande, nicht seinem Gefühl. Es zeigt sich kein *Ideal* unter jener luftigen Hülle [...]. Beynahe muß man also fürchten, es war in diesem reichen Genius nur die *Armuth des Herzens*, die seinen Beruf zur Satire bestimmte" (NA XX.1/ 448, my emphases).

28, 1800, [NA XXX/ 181, 218., my emphases]). Schiller employed poetry to fictionalize a historical account that ought for him to turn, through his emphasis on Johanna's personal tragedy, into a touching ("rührend") human drama.⁴⁷⁰ Once again, poetry had imposed its primacy over historical facts.⁴⁷¹ As he was explaining to Goethe: "Das historische ist

⁴⁷⁰ It was precisely this kind of "edle Rührung" or "Mitleiden" that Schiller had intended for his tragic heroine to evoke in the spectator (cf. letter to his editor Göschen, 15 Oct. 1801 [NA XXXI/ 64, 73.]), and which will culminate, at the moment of her death, in the pathetic-sublime. It is this noble sentiment of compassion ("edle Rührung") that ultimately accounts for Johanna's humanity and thus encourages the audience to sympathize with her personal drama – as Körner wrote to Schiller upon reading the *Jungfrau*: "Sie rückt uns Übrigen Menschen dadurch näher, daß sie die Warnung in dem critischen Augenblick nicht mehr achtet; man glaubt sie habe sich der Gränze eines Fehlers genäht; man *bemitleidet* sie und nimmt menschlichen Theil an dem unglücklichen Lauf ihres Lebens von jenem Moment an" (NA XXXIX.1/ 115, 125., my emphasis). Schiller described his notion of "Mitleid" in the chapter dedicated to the "Pathetic-Sublime" of his early aesthetic essay *Vom Erhabenen* (1793) as "theilnehmende Betrübniß, das Gerührtseyn über fremdes Unglück" and beyond that "jeder traurige Affekt ohne Unterschied": "also giebt es so viele Arten des Mitleidesn, als es verschiedene Arten des ursprünglichen Leidens giebt: mitleidende Furcht, mitl. Schrecken, mitl. Angst, mitl. Entrüstung, mitl. Verzweiflung" (NA XX.1/ 193). In his later essay *Ueber das Pathetische* (1801), Schiller had praised Greek poetry and tragedy for the manner in which they represented a human suffering that spoke directly to the hearts: "Die leidende Natur spricht wahr, aufrichtig und tiefeingreifend zu unserm Herzen in der homerischen Dichtung und in den Tragikern" (NA XX.1/ 198). To illustrate this notion, he compared it with the "nudity" employed by the Greek sculptor to reproduce the suffering of Laokoon, Niobe and Philoctet in their complete vulnerability ("Der griechische Künstler, der einen Laokoon, eine Niobe, einen Philoktet darzustellen hat, weiß von keiner Prinzessin, keinem König und keinem Königssohn; er hält sich an den Menschen. Deswegen wirft der weise Bildhauer die Bekleidung weg, und zeigt uns bloß nackte Figuren [...]. Kleider sind ihm etwas zufälliges, dem das nothwendige niemals nachgesetzt werden darf [...]. Der Bildhauer soll und will uns den *Menschen* zeigen, und Gewänder verbergen denselben; also verwirft er sie mit Recht" [NA XX.1/ 197-8, emphasis in the original]). Akin to the Greek artist, who takes off from his sculptures the unnecessary drapery, exposing through their uncovered bodies, the bare man in the full magnitude of his pathos, the dramatist must learn to dispense with unnecessary historical details to portray, instead, a more poetic – and thus more intimate, and truthful – human picture.

⁴⁷¹ In *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96), Schiller had defined "den Begriff der Poesie, der kein anderer ist, als der *Menschheit ihren möglichst vollständigen Ausdruck zu geben*" (NA XX.1/ 437, emphasis in the original). It is this poetic emphasis on the human, his emotional and spiritual dimension, rather than the actual *historia rerum gestarum*, that distinguishes the picture which Schiller portrays of heroes and heroines, and accounts for the inconsistencies and ambivalences of his characters ("wir müssen mit ihm [*sc. dem Helden*] bekannt werden, eh' er handelt; wir müssen ihn seine Handlung nicht bloß vollbringen, sondern auch *wollen* sehen. An seinen **Gedanken** liegt uns unendlich mehr als an seinen *Taten*, und noch weit mehr an den Quellen seiner Gedanken als an den Folgen jener Taten" [NA XVI/ 9, emphases in the original, bold added]). It is precisely their intimate thoughts and will power that Schiller intends to illustrate in his characters. Beiser insightfully relates Schiller's attention to his characters' psyche and mind with Kant's ethical theory and the emphasis he posed on the actual motivations behind human actions (2005: 248). In his early short-story *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre. Ein wahre Geschichte* (1792), Schiller lamented the precarious objective of historiography limited to satisfy the curiosity, rather than contribute to the education of its audience ("die Geschichte, anstatt eine Schule der Bildung zu sein, muß sich mit einem armseligen Verdienste um unsre Neugier begnügen" [NA XVI/ 8]), preventing us from recognizing in the agents of history our equals, and thus from participating in their human struggle and sorrow: "Wir sehen den Unglücklichen, der doch in eben der

überwunden, und doch soviel ich urtheilen kann, in seinem möglichsten Umfang benutzt, die Motive sind alle poetisch und größtentheils von der *naïven* Gattung" (letter from 24 Dec. 1800 [NA XXX/ 224, 261., my emphasis]). By declaring history as "overcome" ("überwunden"), and asserting in contrast the priority of the naïve genre, Schiller reiterated his distrust in a historical reason that in his inaugural Jena lecture from 1789 he had yet praised as its organizing principle.⁴⁷²

With Joan of Arc's mythization (and consequent heroization) marked by her development from shepherdess to soldier and finally savior, Schiller enacts instead his theory of the three-stage development of human history that he had newly articulated in his treatise *Ueber naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96). Arguably, Johanna's transition from nature to culture traces her progress from the naïve stage of her archaic and Arcadian world of origin into the sentimental sphere of society, sanctioned by her involvement in the history

Stunde, wo er die Tat beging, so wie in der, wo er dafür büßet, Mensch war wie wir, für ein Geschöpf fremder Gattung an, dessen Blut anders umläuft als das unsrige, dessen Wille andern Regeln gehorcht als der unsrige; seine Schicksale rühren uns wenig, denn Rührung gründet sich ja nur auf ein dunkles Bewußtsein ähnlicher Gefahr, und wir sind weit entfernt, eine solche Ähnlichkeit auch nur zu träumen" (NA XVI/ 8). With the onset of Schiller's historical pessimism, that is after losing his faith in a meaningful progress of history ("denn die Geschichte ist für den philosophischen Gebrauch zu unzuverlässig und empirisch" [NA XXXI/ 13, 17.]), and the claim that reason would suffice under the current and concrete historical conditions to secure human freedom, he had further drawn his attention to anthropology, declaring the human subject as the absolute and universal term of reference: "man mag nun das Ganze der Gegenwart anthropologisch ansehen, oder die verschiedenen Erscheinungen des Menschen rückwärts in der Geschichte aufsuchen, der Mensch ist in jeder Zeit ganz zu finden" (letter to Goethe from 10 March 1801 [NA XXXI/ 13, 17.]

⁴⁷² Schillers categories of the naïve and sentimental are not intended as literary or formal criteria. On the contrary, they rather indicate the manner in which a poet relates to the world or what Schiller named his "Empfindungsweise" (mode of feeling) or "Stimmung" (mood). As he specifies in his homonymous essay: "Das Gegentheil der naiven Empfindung ist nemlich der reflektierende Verstand, und die sentimentalische Stimmung ist das Resultat des Bestrebens, *auch unter den Bedingungen der Reflexion* die naive Empfindung, dem Inhalt nach, wieder herzustellen" (NA XX.1/ 473, emphasis in the original). Whereas the naïve poet concentrates his attention mainly on sensual reality ("bloß der einfachen Natur und Empfindung folgt, und sich bloß auf Nachahmung der Wirklichkeit beschränkt" [NA XX.1/ 440]), the sentimental poet reflects instead on the impact of reality ("Dieser reflektiert über den Eindruck, den die Gegenstände auf ihn machen" [NA XX.1/ 441]) and strives, consequently, for the ideal: "der naive Dichter hat vor dem sentimentalischen immer die sinnliche Realität voraus, indem er dasjenige als eine wirkliche Tatsache ausführt, was der andere nur zu erreichen strebt" (NA XX.1/ 474).

of her nation.⁴⁷³ In the act of seeing Lionel, she becomes for the first time aware of her loss of humanity ("Und bin ich strafbar, weil ich menschlich war? Ist Mitleid Sünde?" [NA IX/ IV.1, ll. 2567-8]), and while she attempts to identify the nature of her guilt and wonders whether pity is sinful, she realizes the extent of her self-deceit:

JOHANNA —Mitleid! Hörtest du
 Des Mitleids Stimme und der Menschlichkeit
 Auch bei den andern, die dein Schwert geopfert?

⁴⁷³ In contrast to Maria Stuart who embodies the sentimental (Metzler 2005: 165), addressed in Schiller's critique against modernity, Johanna epitomizes as "fromme Schäferin" and in her "kindlichem Geschlechte" (NA II.1/ 6-7), as Schiller describes her in her eponymous poem *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801), the naïve. Also Lampert describes Johanna, next to Tell, in their common identity of "simple country people", as naïve personages (2006: 165). Contrary to other studies and to Schiller, who had defined the pastoral world as idyll (cf. fn. 480), Marwyck identifies in Johanna's bucolic setting rather a false idyl where the ongoing war, and thus history, found its way into the characters' awareness (2010: 177). In contrast, certainly, to what Schiller maintained in his essay *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96), according to which naïve personalities "betragen sich selbst an den Höfen der Könige mit einer *Ingenuität und Unschuld*, wie man sie nur in einer *Schäferwelt* findet" (NA XX.1/ 422, my emphases), Johanna forfeits her "ingenuity" and "innocence" as soon as she enters society. For Alt, this moment coincides with the repression of her sensual self for the fulfillment of her political and patriotic enterprise (2000: 523-4). As a matter of fact, the female heroine displays her new sentimental consciousness as soon as she puts on her helmet and takes over her historical mission as the nation's savior: "Der Retter naht, er rüstet sich zum Kampf" (NA IX/ Prologue, 3, l. 303). Johanna's closing monologue at the end of the prologue constitutes the threshold that separates the naïve from the sentimental world. It sanctions the moment in which, by consciously taken over the religious mission that she was assigned by her patroness, the Virgin Mary, she arms herself and is consequently initiated into history: "In rauhes Erz sollst du die Glieder schnüren,/ Mit Stahl bedecken deine zarte Brust,/ Nicht Männerliebe darf dein Herz berühren/ Mit sündigen Flammen eitler Erdenlust,/ Nie wird der Brautkranz deine Locke zieren,/ Dir blüht kein lieblich Kind an deiner Brust,/ Doch werd ich dich mit kriegerischen Ehren,/ Vor allen Erdenfrauen dich verklären" (NA IX/ Prologue, 4, ll. 409-16). At this point, she disregards her female identity and its social expectations for the sake of her calling. It is noteworthy, in this regard, that Schiller simultaneously portrays through the character of king Karl an evolution into the opposite direction: from culture to nature. In contrast to Johanna's emphatic heroism, the French sovereign prefers to retreat to a bucolic environment and abstain himself from involvement into the war, remaining deaf to his officer's exhortation ("DUNOIS —Hier ist/ Der Fechtplatz! Kämpf um deiner Väter Krone!/ Verteidige mit ritterlichem Schwert/ Dein Eigentum und edler Frauen Ehre—" [NA IX/ I.2, ll. 545-8]). Unlike Johanna's idealism, the king's desire to retreat in a stylized idyll of the past represents a form of escapism into a utopian world of chivalry and knightly love poetry that is intended to give him the illusion of harmony in a kingdom unsettled by violence. Marwyck identifies in the aesthetic play to which Karl alludes ("KARL Das ist ein Scherz, ein heitres Spiel, ein Fest/ Das er sich selbst und seinem Herzen gibt,/ Sich eine schuldlos reine Welt zu gründen in dieser rauh barbarischen Wirklichkeit" [NA IX/ I.2, ll. 512-5]), the ideal of the aesthetic state that Schiller envisioned in his *Aesthetic Letters* "als Überwindung zivilisationsbedingter Zerwürfnisse" (2010: 180). It may, however, as well be argued that the king's idealized worldview constitutes instead a form of self-deceit – a logical rather than aesthetic appearance that expresses the critique articulated by Schiller in the very *Aesthetic Letters* against his times, which witnessed at once the barbaric violence of the French terror and the apathetic lack of action of the German Reich: "Hier Verwilderung, dort Erschlaffung: die zwei Äußersten des menschlichen Verfalls, und beide in *einem* Zeitraum vereinigt!" (SW V/ 580, 5, emphasis in the original).

Warum verstummte sie, als der Walliser dich,
 Der zarte Jüngling, um sein Leben flehte?
Arglistig Herz! Du *lügst* dem ewgen Licht,
 Dich trieb des Mitleids fromme Stimme nicht!
 (NA IX/ IV.1, ll. 2568-74, my emphases)

The concept of guilt that Johanna addresses as she questions the truthfulness of her "cunning heart" ("Arglistig Herz") becomes, in the notion of damnation that follows, allusive of the biblical parabel of the original sin: "Sobald du *sahst*, verließ dich Gottes Schild,/ Ergriffen dich der Hölle Schlingen!" [NA IX/ IV.1, l. 2580-1, emphasis in the original]). The author's intentional emphasis on the verb "sehen" (to see) – a metaphorical allusion to the character's sentimental "enlightenment" – underscores, in contrast to Johanna's original blindness of action ("JOHANNA Ein blindes Werkzeug fodert Gott,/ Mit blinden Augen mußtest du vollbringen!" [NA IX/ IV.1, ll. 2578-9]), her acquisition of knowledge as a consequence of her emancipation from the paradisiac state of nature.⁴⁷⁴ In the further sequence of the longer monologue that introduces act four, Johanna eventually realizes her fall from innocence:

JOHANNA *Schuldlos* trieb ich meine Lämmer
 Auf des stillen Berges Höh.
 Doch du rissest mich ins Leben,

⁴⁷⁴ In analogy to the fall of mankind and the ability of the first men to "see" the truth upon eating from the tree of knowledge, Schiller regarded the origins of human history as the onset of both reason ("Vernunft") and moral freedom ("Sittlichkeit") (NA XVII.1/ 401). As he writes in *Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft* (1790): "von diesem Augenblick her schreibt sich seine [*sc.* des Menschen] Freiheit, hier wurde zu seiner Moralität der erste entfernte Grundstein gelegt" (NA XVII.1/ 400). This writing counts, next to *Die Sendung Moses* (1790) and *Die Gesetzgebung des Lykurgus und Solon* (1790), to Schiller's notorious three Jena lectures written between 1789 and 1790, that is at a time when the French Revolution had just started. It does, therefore, not surprise that all three lectures portray a picture of history that witnesses the unfolding of human liberation. If – as seen already in *Don Carlos – Die Gesetzgebung des Lykurgus und Solon* had praised the people's right to self-determination and self-government, *Die Sendung Moses* exemplifies – very much in line with the religious patriotism discussed in this section – the role of religion in the process of a people's emancipation from their original state of slavery towards one of collective emancipation and national assertion: "Er [*sc.* Moses] giebt ihnen also einen Gott, um sie fürs erste aus Egypten zu befreien [...]. Als ein Priester und Staatsmann aber weiß er, daß die stärkste und unentbehrlichste Stütze aller Verfassung Religion ist; er muß also den Gott, den er ihnen anfänglich nur zur Befreyung aus Egypten, als einen bloßen Feldherrn gegeben hat, auch bey der bevorstehenden Gesetzgebung brauchen" (NA XVII.1/ 395-6).

In den stolzen Fürstensaal,
 Mich der *Schuld* dahin zu geben,
 Ach! *es war nicht meine Wahl!*
 (NA IX/ IV.1, ll. 2608-13, my emphases)

Through the acknowledgment of the sin ("Schuld") that followed her access to culture, the protagonist also recognizes the extent to which she distanced herself from her naïve ("schuldlos") pastoral life. By denying her responsibility for the consequences derived from her transition to society as an act of conscious choice ("es war nicht meine Wahl"), Johanna becomes ultimately cognizant of the self-estrangement to which her involvement in history has led her. In the sequel of the consciousness that she has acquired of her guilt, she will not impose any resistance to her father's public stigmatization as impostor and liar ("THIBAUT Der dreisten Lüge Gaukelspiel behauptet/ Womit sie Volk and König hinterging" [NA IX/ IV.11, ll. 2982-3]), and taciturnly submit to his accusation.⁴⁷⁵

In the awareness of her lost innocence, and the consequent wish "eine Hirtin will ich wieder werden" (NA IX/ IV.9, l. 2935), she longs to return to "jene Unschuld des Hirtenstandes" (NA XX.1/ 468) that Schiller had defined as idyllic "Zustand der Harmonie und des Friedens mit sich selbst" (NA XX.1/ 468).⁴⁷⁶ As he explains in his essay *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96):

⁴⁷⁵ Funke comments on how Johanna's erotic love clashes ultimately with her patriotic feelings, that is the unconditional love for her country ("Vaterlandsliebe") and people ("Volk") (2007: 67-8).

⁴⁷⁶ As Schiller sets forth in *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96), this original state of harmony and peace marked not only the beginning, but also the final purpose and thus the end of human history: "ein solcher Zustand [der Harmonie und des Friedens] findet nicht bloß vor dem Anfange der Kultur statt, sondern er ist es auch, den die Kultur, wenn sie überall nur eine bestimmte Tendenz haben soll, als ihre letztes Ziel beabsichtigt" [NA XX.1/ 467]. As a matter of fact, the ultimate goal of Johanna's mission will be to ensure peace to her nation ("Frieden stiften, Haß/ Versöhnen" [NA IX/ II.10, ll. 1779-80]) sanctioned in the play by the very reconciliation celebrated between Burgundy and the King whose "Freundesbündnis" is at once an admonition for its preservation: "JOHANNA Ihr Könige und Herrscher! Fürchtet die Zwietracht! Wecket nicht den Streit/ Aus seiner Höhle wo er schläft, denn einmal/ Erwacht bezähmt er spät sich wieder! [...]" (NA IX/ III.4, 2122-5). If Schiller thus – as Müller-Seidel remarks – portrays war as the condition paradoxically required for man to

Solange wir bloße Naturkinder waren, waren wir glücklich und vollkommen; wir sind frey geworden, und haben beydes verloren. Daraus entspricht eine doppelte und sehr ungleiche Sehnsucht nach der Natur; eine Sehnsucht nach ihrer *Glückseligkeit*, eine Sehnsucht nach ihrer *Vollkommenheit*. Den Verlust der ersten beklagt nur der **sinnliche Mensch**; um den Verlust der andern kann nur der **moralische** trauern. (NA XX.1/ 428, emphases in the original, bold added).

The forfeiture of her completeness ("Vollkommenheit") as undivided "sensuous being" ("sinnliche[r] Mensch"), is the price that Johanna paid for the freedom she gained through the use of reason – marked in the play by her shift, in the prologue, from silent resistance against marriage to assertive speech.⁴⁷⁷ In contrast to this initial submissiveness to her father's authority, her subsequent refusal to defend herself from his public indictment is in contrast indicative of her acquired self-consciousness.⁴⁷⁸ Upon accessing society and thus partaking in history, Johanna turns into a moral subject who is engaged in the constant strive to recover

strive for peace (2009: 164), he is ultimately following Kant who in the first supplement "On the guarantee of perpetual peace" of his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795) argues: "What affords this *guarantee* (surety) is nothing less than the great artist *nature* (*natura daedala rerum*) from whose mechanical course purposiveness shines forth visibly, letting **concord** arise **by means of the discord** between human beings even against their will" (1996: 331/ KW 8:361); emphases in the original, bold added. According to Lützel, all of Schiller's dramas revolve around the tenet of peace; he even considers Schiller's historical comprehensive writing on the *Thirty Years's War* (1791-1793) as the first German disquisition on peace and "Mächtebalance" – chronologically prior to Kant's very essay *Toward Perpetual Peace* (2007: 63-4).

⁴⁷⁷ This is particularly true since the German term "Mündigkeit" – from "Mund" ("mouth") – employed since Kant to indicate the individual's emancipation from his "Unmündigkeit" ("minority") indicates literally the ability of the individual to "speak" for himself; cf. Kant's celebrated quote from his short writing on *What is enlightenment?* (1784): "Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his self-incurred minority" (1996: 17/ KW 8:35). As to Schiller's definition of "sensuous being", he will specify shortly after in his essay *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96) its harmonic unity of sensing and thinking: "So lange der Mensch noch reine, es versteht sich, nicht rohe Natur ist, wirkt er als *ungetheilte sinnliche Einheit*, und als ein harmonirendes Ganze. Sinne und Vernunft, empfangendes und selbstthätiges Vermögen [...]" (NA XX.1/ 436, my emphasis).

⁴⁷⁸ As Ermes Visconti observes in his review of Schiller's *Pulcella d'Orleans*, Johanna identifies in her father's public allegation God's punishment for her guilt: "Nell'imputazione di un tale delitto la Pulzella crede ravvisare un comando del cielo che le impone di sottomettersi alla vergogna ed alla pena per espiazione dell'interna colpa nascosta ad ogni uomo" (1953: 452); Visconti's review was published on 15 April 1819 in the celebrated literary journal *Il Conciliatore* edited by Silvio Pellico.

the original and ideal state of wholeness and harmony ("Glückseligkeit").⁴⁷⁹ As Schiller concisely puts it: "Die Natur macht ihn [sc. den Menschen] mit sich Eins, die Kunst trennt und entzweyhet ihn, durch das Ideal kehrt er zu Einheit zurück" (NA XX.1/ 438); in contrast to man's original "sensuous harmony" ("sinnliche Einheit"), however, this ideal unity ("Einheit") integrates the former sensual with the moral self. It will ground, as Johanna will in the forthcoming analysis illustrate through Schiller's notion of "beautiful soul", on the reconciliation of sensuous will and ethical conduct.

There is, in other words, no possibility for her to regress to the natural environment of her pastoral life – that is to the primordial state of human childhood.⁴⁸⁰ Any effort to do so

⁴⁷⁹ In contrast to the naïve sensuous man, Schiller describes in *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1796/96) the civilized moral subject as the individual who, upon entering the sentimental stage and forfeiting his "sensuous harmony" can only still strive towards the ideal of "moral unity": "Ist der Mensch in den Stand der Kultur getreten, und hat die Kunst ihre Hand an ihn gelegt, so ist jene sinnliche Harmonie in ihm aufgehoben, und er kann nur noch als *moralische Einheit*, d.h. als **nach Einheit strebend**, sich äußern" (NA XX.1/ 437, emphasis in the original, bold added).

⁴⁸⁰ In *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795/96), Schiller described the bucolic setting as the poets' privileged idyll located at the very origin of culture and humankind: "so haben die Dichter den Schauplatz der Idylle aus dem Gedränge des bürgerlichen Lebens heraus in den einfachen Hirtenstand verlegt, und derselben ihre Stelle *vor dem Anfange der Kultur* in dem **kindlichen Alter der Menschheit** angewiesen" (NA XX.1/ 467, emphasis in the original, bold added). Schiller, in this respect, agrees with Rousseau's belief on the impossibility to regress to a pristine stage of nature: "Mais la nature humaine ne rétrograde pas et jamais on ne remonte vers les tems d'innocence et d'égalité quand une fois on s'en est éloigné; c'est encore un des principes sur lesquels il a le plus insisté" (1962: 275) – as he writes in the third of his *Dialogues* (1780). In contrast, however, to Rousseau who, akin to Vico, saw in humankind's deflection from nature (or Paradise for Vico who, unlike Rousseau, believed in the divine origin of man), Schiller praised the original sin as "die glücklichste und größte Begebenheit in der Menschengeschichte" (NA XVII.1/ 399-400) for marking his advancement towards freedom, that is his autonomy as moral subject: "der Mensch wurde dadurch aus einem Sklaven des Naturtriebes ein freihandelndes Geschöpf, aus einem Automat ein sittliches Wesen [...]" (NA XVII.1/ 400). Schiller, therefore, did not share Rousseau's call for a return to nature prior to the human conquest of knowledge, and thus shunned his notorious cry of "le retour à la nature" emphasizing, instead, the individual's obligation to leave his original state of nature once and for all behind: "Jene Natur, die du dem Vernunftlosen beneidest, ist keiner Achtung, keiner Sehnsucht werth. Sie liegt hinter dir, sie *muß ewig hinter dir liegen*" (NA XX.1/ 428); Rousseau's primitivist theory as he exposed it in detail in his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), despite its popularity among the Romantics remained alien to Schiller's approval. Although culture may have compromised the wholeness of man and led to alienation, Schiller will remain firm in his conviction that reason paved the way for the achievement of human freedom. When, with the onset of his historical pessimism, the poet will increasingly ask himself the question that he had posed already in the *Universalhistorische Uebersicht* (1790), as to whether the enlightened reason ("späte Vernunft") would eventually be able to restore this early state of freedom ("frühe Freyheit") (NA XIX.1/ 20), he

would result in a self-delusive strategy destined to last only as long as the truth were denied by individual consciousness. As Schiller explains: "Er [*sc.* der Dichter] führe uns nicht *rückwärts* in unsre Kindheit, um uns mit den kostbarsten Erwerbungen des Verstandes eine Ruhe erkaufen zu lassen, die nicht länger dauern kann, als der Schlaf unsrer Geistkräfte" (NA XX.1/ 472, my emphases). This is precisely the demeanor adopted by king Charles in his willful escapism from present reality ("KARL dieser rauh barbarschen Wirklichkeit" [NA IX/ I.2, l. 515]) in "eine" – as he describes it – "schuldlos reine Welt" (NA IX/ I.2, l. 514): a stylized past of knights, courtly love and poetry. Johanna, in contrast, will exemplify Schiller's theory of the individual's progress towards maturity ("Mündigkeit") in the reconciled unity of her self or – as Schiller concludes: "sondern führe uns *vorwärts* zu unsrer *Mündigkeit*, um uns die höhere Harmonie zu empfinden zu geben, die den Kämpfer belohnt, die den Überwinder beglückt" (NA XX.1/ 472, my emphases). In line with the autonomy of thought and individual determination upheld by German idealism, in one of his Jena lectures that appeared in 1790 in the *Thalia* journal under the title *Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft*, Schiller acclaimed the original sin as "erste Aeüßerung seiner [*sc.* des Menschen] Selbstthätigkeit, erstes Wagestück seiner Vernunft, erster Anfang seines moralischen Daseyns" (NA VII.1/ 399).⁴⁸¹ In virtue of her very sin, Johanna is able to develop into a moral subject who, by means of her reasoning faculty, is granted the freedom to self-consciousness and definition. The "moral evil", therefore, brought along by the fall of

will transpose the pursuit of human freedom in an aesthetic ideal which would find its actualization, if no longer in history, then beyond history itself – on a metahistorical level.

⁴⁸¹ The closeness that Schiller's idealism shared with Kants' thought is attested by the very author in a footnote added to the printed edition of his lecture: "Es ist wohl bey den wenigsten Lesern nöthig, zu erinnern, daß diese Ideen auf Veranlassung eines Kantischen Aufsatzes in der Berliner Monatsschrift entstanden sind" [NA VII.1/ 389]; the essay to which Schiller is referring is Kant's *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* (1786).

man, turns ultimately into the prerequisite for the achievement of a higher "moral good":

"Dieser Abfall des Menschen vom Instinkte der das *moralische Uebel* zwar in die Schöpfung brachte, aber nur um das *moralische Gute* darinn möglich zu machen" (NA VII.1/ 399).

Accordingly, two are the paradigmatic moments of individual self-determination that Schiller illustrates as he rewrites the myth of Jeanne d'Arc. While Johanna roams in banishment through barren land, she undergoes a process of catharsis that will culminate in her self knowledge ("Doch in der Öde lern ich mich erkennen"), and conclude with her renouncement of earthly fame ("Ehre") and frailty ("Schwachheit") – a demeanor that contrasts sharply with her former desire to regress into nature and remain earthbound:

JOHANNA Da, als der *Ehre* Schimmer mich umgab,
 Da war der Streit in meiner Brust, [...]
 [...] — Jetzt bin ich
 Geheilt, und dieser *Sturm* in der Natur,
 Der ihr das Ende drohte, war mein Freund,
 Er hat die Welt *gereinigt* und auch mich,
 (NA IX/ V.4, ll. 3171-7, my emphases)

From the storm ("Sturm") of her grief and troubled estrangement, Johanna emerges healed ("Geheilt") from her divided sensibility, exemplifying the individual's triumph over human sorrow by means of moral reasoning. The meteorological reference – to which the play alluded by means of recurrent thunder claps reported in the stage directions – turns into a metaphor of purification explicitly underlined by the past tense of the verb "reinigen" (to cleanse). In this initial stage of sublimation, Johanna resembles Maria Stuart's "Erhabenheit" or sublime greatness that the Scottish queen achieved through her will power in the conscious detachment from temporal and transitory pleasures. In contrast to her former heroine, however, Johanna performs a subsequent and supreme act of self-determination in the very moment that she embraces her death. Although she claims to do so by following "blindly"

God's will ("Verdient ichs, die Gesendete zu sein/ Wenn ich nicht blind des Meisters Willen ehrte!" [NA IX/ V.4, ll. 3165-6]), she is now thoroughly aware of her mission and the sacrifice it implies to take on her side, so that her own will ultimately coincides with the divine plan.

Unlike Maria Stuart's "dignity" (Würde), Johanna displays at this point a "grace" (Anmuth) indicative of her "beautiful soul" which – as Schiller specifies in *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793) – mediates "duty" ("Plicht") with "inclination" ("Neigung"): "In einer schönen Seele ist es also, wo *Sinnlichkeit* und *Vernunft*, *Pflicht* und *Neigung* harmoniren, und Grazie ist ihr Ausdruck in der Erscheinung" (NA XX.1/ 288, my emphases).⁴⁸² As Schiller points out in the continuation of this passage: "So wie die Anmuth der Ausdruck einer schönen Seele ist, so ist Würde der Ausdruck einer erhabenen Gesinnung" (NA XX.1/ 289). On the basis of this distinction, Johanna's grace, as expression of the beauty of her soul, can be clearly set off from Maria Stuart's dignity which speaks instead for her sublime predisposition. Whereas Johanna's beautiful "Anmuth" attests an unconstrained mediation of sensual will and rational necessity, Maria's sublime "Würde" expects instead reason to impose itself over her drives.⁴⁸³ As Schiller points out in *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793):

⁴⁸² As to the chronological sequence of Schiller's disquisitions on the notion of beauty, his writing *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* composed between May and June 1793 for his journal *Neue Thalia* constitutes his first elaborated essay. It was preceded by preliminary, yet pivotal, considerations on the subject in a series of six letters that Schiller exchanged with his friend Körner in the winter of 1792 and 1793 (which were originally meant to merge into a coherent project named *Kallias, oder über die Schönheit*), until between 1795 and 1796 the literary journal *Die Horen* published his second complete treatise *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*. By associating, in this last essay, "[d]as Naive der Denkart" with "eigener schöner Menschlichkeit" (NA XX.1/ 422), Johanna's naïve mindset predicts already her forthcoming apotheosis into a beautiful soul.

⁴⁸³ Scholars, such as Hinderer, emphasize Schiller's gender discourse in the distinction he makes between a "grace" that he attributes eminently to women ("Man wird, im Ganzen genommen, die Anmuth mehr bey dem weiblichen Geschlecht [...] finden" [NA XX.1/ 288]), and a "dignity" – whose action he locates in the realm of the instinctual – and thus identifies essentially as male attribute (2006: 270). Yet in the first place, both "grace"

"Bey der Würde also führt sich der Geist in dem Körper als *Herrscher* auf , denn hier hat er seine Selbstständigkeit gegen den gebieterischen Trieb zu behaupten [...]. Bey der Anmuth hingegen regiert er [*sc.* der Geist] mit *Liberalität* [*sc.* Freiheit], weil er es hier ist, der die Natur in Handlung setzt, und keinen Widerstand zu besiegen findet" (NA XX.1/ 296-7, emphases in the original).⁴⁸⁴ To the extent that Maria's sublimity is the product of a rational endeavor meant to control her sensuous inclination, it leads – as Schiller puts it in his treatise *Ueber das Erhabene* (1801) – to a mixed feeling of sorrow and serenity ("Das Gefühl des Erhabenen ist ein gemischtes Gefühl. Es ist eine Zusammensetzung von *Wehseyn* [...] und *Frohseyn*" [NA XXI.2/ 42, emphases in the original]). Johanna's grace, in contrast, is the result of a deliberate and, therefore *free*, act of conciliation between her body and her mind.⁴⁸⁵

and "dignity" represent, taking together, attributes of an ideal human harmony that goes beyond gender specificities.

⁴⁸⁴ As Schiller specifies in his essay *Ueber das Erhabene* (1801): "Bey dem Schönen stimmen Vernunft und Sinnlichkeit zusammen [...]. Beim Erhabenen hingegen stimmen Vernunft und Sinnlichkeit *nicht* zusammen" (NA XXI.2/ 43, emphasis in the original). If ideal beauty is based upon the conciliation of sensibility with reason, sensual inclination with ethical duty, the sublime in contrast is characterized by the conflict of intellect and emotions as it arises out of the triumph of reason over sensibility.

⁴⁸⁵ There is no evidence in the play that may speak – as Alt maintains – for a "gewaltsamen Willensakt" (2000/ II, 525) that Johanna must sustain to reject Lionel's advances. On the contrary, at the end of her exile and expiation of guilt, she appears already to be perfectly at peace with herself: "In mir ist Friede – Komme, was da will./ Ich bin mir keiner Schwachheit mehr bewußt!" [NA IX/ V.4, ll. 3178-9]. At one's again with herself, her will and duty in consonance, she goes thus far as to suggest to her foe Lionel to transpose their personal feelings onto a political level by fostering the reconciliation between the British and French troops: "Du bist/ der Feind mir, der verhaßte, meines Volks./ Nichts kann gemein sein zwischen dir und mir./ Nicht lieben kann ich dich, doch wenn dein Herz/ Sich zu mir neigt, so laß es Segen bringen/ für unsre Völker. – Führe deine Heere/ Hinweg von meines Vaterlandes Boden,/ Die Schlüssel aller Städte gib heraus,/ Die ihr bezwungen, allen Raub vergüte,/ Gib die Gefangnen ledig, sende Geiseln/ Des heiligen Vertrags, so biet ich dir/ Den Frieden an in meines Königs Namen" (NA IX/ V.9, 3348-59). How strikingly different to Johanna's self-containment, is instead Maria's reaction when she unexpectedly catches sight of her former suitor Leicester as she is being escorted to the scaffold. Her body language – as reported by the stage directions – speaks more clearly than her own words: "*Bei diesem Anblick zittert Maria, die Knie versagen ihr, sie ist im Begriff hinzusinken, da ergreift sie Graf Leicester, und empfängt sie in seinen Armen*" (NA IX/ V.9). Whereas Maria's "Würde" manifests the obvious conflict between her emotions and her intellect, as she attempts through her will power to accept the necessity of her death in a nearly resigned fashion, Johanna's "Anmuth" displays instead the beauty of a

In the wilful conflation of "sensitivity" ("Sinnlichkeit") and "reason" ("Vernunft"), nature and culture, Johanna epitomizes Schiller's ideal of moral integrity and beauty.⁴⁸⁶ This

"voluntary" ("willkürlich"), that is free and unconstrained self-determination: "Anmuth liegt also in der *Freyheit der willkürlichen Bewegungen*; Würde in der *Beherrschung der unwillkürlichen*" (*Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793) [NA XX.1/ 297, emphases in the original]). While Maria is, in the irreconcilable conflation of personal inclination and necessity, unable to move beyond her condition of sublimity, Johanna can easily progress from "Würde" to "Anmuth", that is from the rational mastery of her individual crisis and alienation towards a conscious mediation of her naive with her sentimental self. In the deliberate agreement between her personal will and her patriotic duty, there is no evidence in the text that would account for an effort of self-repression – or "Selbsterdrückung" as Greiser argues (2005: 66) – that Johanna performs to overcome her original divide. Her act of self-determination rather conflates with that of self-disciplination. Once she has achieved grace, she has eventually progressed towards the aesthetic ideal of holistic beauty that consists in her recovered human completeness and unity: "so muß das Erhabene zu dem Schönen hinzukommen, um die *ästhetische Erziehung* zu einem vollständigen Ganze zu machen, und die Empfindungsfähigkeit des menschlichen Herzens nach dem ganzen Umfang unsrer Bestimmung, und also auch über die Sinnenwelt hinaus, zu erweitern" (NA XXI.2/ 52). As Immer remarks, Johanna's development reproduces the stages of the theleological model of historical progress from the naive through the sentimental towards the ideal (2008: 396). As Schiller relates the aesthetic category of grace to the human – and, more precisely, to women ("[d]as andere Geschlecht, welches vorzugsweise im Besitze der wahren Anmuth ist" [NA XX.1/ 307]) – he charges "Anmuth" with an eminently ethical significance that draws its moral value upon the individual's faculty of consciousness and free determination. A decade later, Kleist's notion of "grace" will make its appearance on a diametrically opposite end. What Schiller had essentially attributed to individuals – in virtue of their capability to act as conscious beings, Kleist will instead ascribe to marionettes for, in their inanimated nature, they are essentially non-cognizant and thus deemed more graceful than humans: "daß in einem mechanischen Gliedermann mehr Anmut enthalten sein könne, als in dem Bau des menschlichen Körpers" (MT 560).

⁴⁸⁶ For a conceptual history of the "beautiful soul" and its literary reception in the 18th century, see Norton's comprehensive study (1995). It is precisely this neoclassical harmony and balanced countenance of intellect with emotions that, according to Thomas Mann, make of *The Maid of Orleans* the "Phänomen einer klassisch gehaltenen Romantik, einer romantisierenden Klassik" (1982: 416). In combining sensing with thinking, Schiller eventually overcomes the Kantian dichotomy of form and matter, mental and material sphere, phenomenal and noumenal entities for the sake of human wholeness. This is precisely what Kleist had omitted to attempt after reading Kant. Fallen victim of the inner divide that reason arises in the subject, Kleist was unable to transform the faculty of consciousness and self-awareness into a positive category able to overcome its alienating consequences. In contrast to Kant – and Kleist – the individual's capability to self-determination remained for Schiller an incontestable and inviolable right to freedom. For this very reason he stressed the individual's will power in opposition to Kant's categorical imperative – on this point, see Beiser's comments (2005: 213-32); in his literary considerations, the Italian idealist philosopher Croce observed that Schiller replaced the "ascetic and inhuman Kantian ethics" with the ideal of the "beautiful soul": "egli [*sc.* Schiller] notò quel che di ascetico e di disumano era nella moralità kantiana [...] per la quale si direbbe che la più alta figura morale sia l'uomo che, assillato da cattive tendenze naturali, tutte le ricacci, le domi e le domini, compiendo con duro animo il proprio dovere: figura d'uomo, che incute una sorta di paura e non piacerebbe avere attorno nella vita reale, perché (si pensa) che cosa sarà mai per accadere se per un istante il freno del dovere lo abbandoni? Lo Schiller dié risalto alla diversa figura dell'uomo naturalmente buono, dell'anima eletta, dell' "anima bella" (*schöne Seele*), che opera nobilmente e degnamente, attuando sé stesso in gioia, come chi soddisfa il desiderio del suo cuore" (1955: 36-7, emphasis in the original). For Schiller, moral freedom did not arise from subjecting one's will to the categorical imperative, but rather from wilfully embracing it. "Tugend", he explains in *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793): "ist nichts anders 'als eine *Neigung* zu der Pflicht'" (NA XX.1/ 283, my emphasis). In Schiller, "wollen" and "sollen", inclination and duty, sensual will and ethical norm conflate in the aesthetic and ethical ideal of beauty. In his endeavor to raise Kant's subjective definition of beauty ("Now the judgment

explains why Schiller's Joan of Arc, unlike her historical model, cannot die at the stake – resembling, as a victim of necessity, Maria Stuart's faith – but perishes on the battlefield as result of her conscious and willing sacrifice to the king and country: "Mein Volk wird siegen und ich werde sterben" (NA IX/ V.10, l. 3376).⁴⁸⁷ As it can be predicted from the concluding

of taste is an aesthetic judgment, i.e., one that rests on subjective grounds"; *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790) [2000: 112/ KW 5:228]) from its empirical realm of experience ("so wird der Geschmack immer empirisch bleiben, so wie Kant es für unvermeidlich hält"; *Kallias* letter from 25 Jan. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 175, 150.]), Schiller provides it with an essentially objectivist turn. He does so by replacing Kant's aesthetic judgement ("ästhetisches Urtheil") with an ethical claim that he identified in the moral autonomy of man to self-determination: "Diese große Idee der Selbstbestimmung strahlt uns aus gewissen Erscheinungen der Natur zurück, und diese nennen wir *Schönheit*" (*Kallias* letter from 18/ 19 Febr. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 190, 154., emphasis in the original]). Beauty, consequently, becomes for the individual – in his quality of moral subject – the actual object of his play-drive as he attempts to coalesce form with matter, formal drive ("Formtrieb") with sensuous drive ("Stofftrieb"), his mind with his body, the intelligible with the sensible sphere. To preserve the individual freedom involved in this act of self-determination, one cannot submit his will to the categorical imperative. Only from the free and harmonious synthony and synthesis of personal inclination ("wollen") and ethical duty ("sollen") can moral beauty arise: "sie [*sc.* moralische Schönheit] tritt nur alsdann ein, wenn ihm [*sc.* dem Menschen] die Pflicht zur Natur geworden ist" (*Kallias* letter from 18/19 Febr. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 198, 154., emphasis in the original]). For only in the coalescence of "wollen" and "sollen" can individual freedom and moral autonomy be guaranteed. This freedom remains, for Schiller, never fully attainable by man in the realm of nature where he is subject to its constraints: "es ist also gar keine Hoffnung da, vermittels der bloßen theoretischen Vernunft und auf dem Wege des Nachdenkens auf eine Freiheit in der Sinnenwelt zu stoßen" (*Kallias* letter from 18/19 Febr. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 192, 154.]); on Schiller's "philosophy of freedom", and its indebtedness to Kant, see Beiser's analysis (2005: 213-37). Hence Johanna's – next to Maria's and Posa's – only option to achieve freedom is in death, in other words, on a metaphysical and metahistorical level. Given the premise "daß keinem Ding in der Sinnenwelt Freiheit wirklich zukomme, sondern bloß *scheinbar* sey" (*Kallias* letter from 23 Febr. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 200, 155., emphases in the original]), even in her grace Johanna can, therefore, experience in nature only the appearance of a free will ("Freyilligkeit"). And yet, as self-determination remains the incontestable guarantor of human freedom ("Die Freiheit in der Erscheinung ist also nichts anders, als die *Selbstbestimmung* an einem Dinge"; *Kallias* letter from 18/19 Febr. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 192, 154., my emphasis]), the ideal of beauty on earth is reduced to an "appearance of freedom" ("Schönheit ist also nichts anders als Freiheit in der Erscheinung"; *Kallias* letter from 8 Febr. 1793 [NA XXVI/ 183, 152., my emphasis]), albeit an aesthetic one that derives its ethical valence from the individuals' claim to moral autonomy and actions.

⁴⁸⁷ Müller-Seidel interprets Schiller's notion of "fatherland" ("Vaterländische") not as an ideological, but as a "literary motif" ("literarisches Motiv") apt to defend the neoclassical humanist ideal of the Weimar movement for the sake of individual self-determination, and collective emancipation from tyranny and foreign oppression (2009: 159-66). On the manner in which religion relates to patriotism, Mathews observes – with explicit reference to Schiller – that "[r]eligion is needed to strengthen the heart of the patriot in days of national trial" (1918: 136). However, the very "religious heroism" ("religiösen Heroismus") which Körner had praised in Schiller's drama (NA XXXIX.1/ 67, 72.), is – following Mathews argument – not to be confused with a "conquering nationalism" which viewed God as a "national deity" (1918: 137). What Schiller, in contrast, referred to in the play is the "God of a developing humanity" who is yet in the process of "perfecting an unfinished creation", and in which "[h]uman history forecasts the course of human progress" (Mathews 1918: 137). This, however, does not exclude the emergence of a more nationalistic ideology that, as a consequence of Napoleon's hegemonic claims over Europe, acquired increasingly strength and support in the

lines of the play, Johanna will be received in heaven: "Hinauf – hinauf – Die Erde flieht zurück –/ Kurz ist der Schmerz und ewig ist die Freude!" (NA IX/ V.14, 3543-4), and thus gain access again to paradise. However, this apparent return to the beginning – to which the play's structural circularity additionally alludes – represents actually the transition towards a new paradise: one which transposes Johanna from her original Arcadia to Elysium, that is, from a paradise of "ignorance and bondage" to one of "knowledge and freedom".⁴⁸⁸

19th century. In this respect, Conzemius addresses the dangers involved in "the stylizing of nationalism as religion" which – as the scholar explains – was particularly favored during the secularized Enlightenment when the former divine creed was replaced with a national one by elevating "the throne of the nation to the throne of God which had become vacant": "The Holy Spirit was replaced by a nationalistic feeling as the power which inspired people to their highest achievements and to the sacrifice of their blood" (1995: 19).

⁴⁸⁸ Schiller had already elucidated this point in his early historical lecture held at the university of Jena *Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft* (1790) in which he had maintained: "Er [*sc.* der Mensch] sollte den Stand der Unschuld, den er [...] verlor, wieder aufsuchen lernen durch *seine Vernunft*, und als ein freier vernünftiger Geist dahin zurück kommen, wovon er als *Pflanze* und als Kreatur des Instinkts ausgegangen war; aus einem **Paradies der Unwissenheit und Knechtschaft** sollte er sich, wär es auch nach späten Jahrtausenden zu einem **Paradies der Erkenntniß und der Freiheit** hinaufarbeiten" (NA XVII.1/ 399, emphases in the original, bold added). Contrary to Rousseau's yearning for a recovery of the primordial state of nature and his critique against culture, Schiller argued, in his essay not only that a return to nature was actually practicable, but that it ought to be pursued under the very banner of human culture and reason: "Sie [*sc.* eine unscheinbare Biene, eine Quelle, ein bemoßter Stein, das Gezwitscher der Vögel, das Summen der Bienen u.s.w] sind, was wir *waren*, sie sind, was wir wieder *werden sollen*. Wir waren Natur, wie sie, und unsere **Kultur** soll uns, auf dem Wege der **Vernunft und der Freyheit**, zur Natur zurückführen" (NA XX.1/ 414, emphases in the original, bold added). In this excerpt, Schiller articulated *in nuce* that "ideal state of nature" ("Naturzustand in der Idee") that he had presented already in his third *Aesthetic* letter (1795): "So holt er [*sc.* der Mensch], auf eine **künstliche** Weise, in seiner Volljährigkeit seine Kindheit nach, bildet sich einen *Naturzustand* in der Idee, der ihm zwar durch keine Erfahrung gegeben, aber durch seine **Vernunftbestimmung** notwendig gesetzt ist" (SW V/ 574, 3). Schiller granted humanity the ability to reclaim – from an artificial ("künstlich") – that is civilized, and rational state of development – its forfeited paradise. Under the influence of 18th-century idealism, Schiller's throwback to paradise was not intended as a regression, but rather as a progression towards a more advanced stage of development in the name of human reason. As Szondi remarks in his luminous article, for Kant as much as for his follower Schiller, the philosophy of history was understood as "Geschichte nicht so sehr als Vergangenheit denn als Zukunft" (1973: 385). Lukács, in turn, points out that the very synthesis of naive and sentimental pursued by Schiller in his project of aesthetic education, reproduced ultimately this acceptance of the past as future: "dass Schiller die Antike (das Naive) nicht nur als Vergangenheit, sondern auch als Zukunft betrachtet, dass er die Prinzipien des Naiven und Sentimentalischen nicht nur trennt, sondern auch zur ihrer Synthese zustrebt. [...] Das sentimentalische Prinzip ist also das eines grossen historischen Überganges, der wieder zurück zum Naiven, zur Einheit des Menschen mit der Natur führen soll" (1947: 107). Akin to Benjamin's notorious angel of history from the ninth of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1942), Schiller's retrospective gaze into the past was one that pushed the individual towards the future: "a storm is blowing from Paradise; it got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris grows skyward. This storm is what we call *progress*" (1973: 257-8, X). As already explained in fn. 460, Schiller like Vico believed,

Spiritually transubstantiated, Johanna exemplifies as "verklärter Geist" (NA IX/ V.14, 3515) the actualization of her divine predisposition for that human ideal intrinsic to every individual. As the originally patriotic myth is rewritten into a religious myth, the historical Jeanne d'Arc has partaken in Schiller's aesthetic apotheosis.⁴⁸⁹ Through her transfiguration into a beautiful soul, Johanna exemplifies –

in fact, in the individuals' capability to regain their original *humanitas*. The kinship that Schiller's notion of history indirectly shared with Vico can be deemed derivative from the very development of historiography at the dawn of the 18th-century. The emancipation of history from the field of rhetoric, and its consequent claim to an autonomous science, fostered the association of history with nature. Herder's organic theory of human history accounts precisely for this kind of analogical reasoning in his *Idee zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1785) ("Unsere Lebensalter sind die Lebensalter der Pflanze; wir gehen auf, wachsen, blühen, blühen ab und sterben" [HW XIII/ 52]), which Schiller – former medicine student and graduate – will nearly verbatim adopt in the forward to the *Geschichte des Maltheserordens* (1792). In this writing, referring to the history of the religious order, he stated in fact: "Er entsteht, er bildet sich, er blüht und verblüht" (NA XIX.1/ 198). Schiller's understanding of historical progress was thus not strictly a linear one, but described – in particular during the years of his increased scepticism – a trajectory suggestive of Vico's cyclical notion. Vico's concept of "storia ideal eterna" allows, in this respect, for an analogy with Schiller's aesthetic ideal. While both theories are based on the awareness that they remain – in light of an unattainable ideal – in reality unfulfillable, they represented nonetheless a condition for which the individual was expected – in virtue of his very humanity – to strive on his way towards perfection. Whereas Vico's ever-recurring cycles of human history, however, witnessed the reiterative fall of man from an irretrievable state of paradise, Schiller's cyclical notion was far more optimistic for it procured, by means of his aesthetic ideal, an exit *out* of the realm of historical contingency and into the Elysium. In other words, if Vico's acceptance of human progress was one that could only be pursued *within* historical immanence, and was hence bound to fail, Schiller's cyclical understanding described a helix, rather than a strict circle, whose trajectory pointed in a direction that led out of and beyond history itself; Rubinoﬀ observes that even Vico's myth of *corsi* and *ricorsi* is not based on a strictly circular notion of history, but rather a "spiral" one in which "apparent repetitions are always differentiated by having acquired something new": "The history of institutions is not just an endless repetition or replications of forms, each one the same as the last. The history of institutions is a process in which nothing ever repeats itself in exactly the same way" (1976: 105-6). By recasting the eventful singularity of history into a natural cyclical structure, Schiller had provided it with a mythical quality. For this circularity of myth, in which the end of a story is already inscribed in its beginning, accounts the very formal construction of the play whose last act – as Schiller himself explained to Goethe – links back up with the first one: "Von meinem letzten Act auguriere ich viel Gutes, er erklärt den Ersten, und so beißt sich die Schlange in den Schwanz" (letter from 3 April 1801 [NA XXXI, 27, 31.]). Schiller and Pellico alike would find human redemption beyond history in the metaphysical realm respectively of the aesthetic ideal of beauty and of God.

⁴⁸⁹ As mentioned already in my analysis of *Don Carlos* (cf. fn. 295, section 3.1.1), albeit not religiously devoted, Schiller specified in the fourth of his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795) that he believed in the divine predisposition of every human being to the "ideal man" ("Idealmenschen") (SW V/ 577, 4). Herder had, before Schiller, articulated already in the 15th book of his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1785) this very definition of humanity as every individual's divinely nature and destiny: "Humanität ist der Zweck der Menschen-Natur und Gott hat unserm Geschlecht mit diesem Zweck sein eigenes Schicksal in die Hände gegeben" (SW XIV/ III.XV.1, 207). It was this "purely human ideal" which – as Cassirer puts it – increasingly asserted itself at the dawn of the Enlightenment in place of "the 'absolute' in the strictly

in her experience and synthesis of "Anmuth" and "Würde", beauty and sublime – the pursuit and product of Schiller's aesthetic education.⁴⁹⁰ Hence on the one hand, the story and history

metaphysical sense", that is the traditional "ideal of 'God-like knowledge'" (1960: 354). In a letter to Goethe from 17 Aug. 1795, Schiller described the Christian religion as an "aesthetic" one, privileging it over others in virtue of its specific "Anlage zu dem höchsten und edelsten" that the poet identified with human ability to free will: "Hält man sich an den eigenthümlichen Charakterzug des Christenthums, der es von allen monotheistischen Religionen unterscheidet, so ligt er in nichts anderm als in der *Aufhebung des Gesetzes* oder des Kantischen Imperativs, an dessen Stelle das Christenthum eine **freye Neigung** gesetzt haben will. Es ist also in seiner reinen Form Darstellung *schöner Sittlichkeit* oder der **Menschenwerdung des heiligen**, und in diesem Sinne die einzige *aesthetische* Religion" (NA XXVIII/ 27-8, 25., emphases in the original, bold added). By granting man free choice ("freye Neigung"), Christianity fostered, through the individual's "humanization of the holy" ("Menschenwerdung des Heiligen"), the attainment of a "beautiful morality" ("schöne Sittlichkeit") or moral ideal of beauty; for a detailed interpretation of Schiller's letter to Goethe and his notion of aesthetic morality in relation to his *Kallias* letters (1793) and *Ueber Anmuth und Würde* (1793), see Riedel (2011: 253). In the transition from an original state of trance to one of transcendence, Johanna turns into a martyr figure who bears witness of Christ's sacrifice to humanity, that is to the people of her nation. In her savior role, she clearly distinguishes herself from Maria Stuart – contrary to Locke's thesis who argues that the queen's death would speak for the "cause of human dignity and freedom" (1990: 124). The Scottish queen eventually accepted her conviction, instead, as wilful submission to a necessity that she had embraced as divine punishment required to expiate her earthly sins. This attitude does not discredit her sublime greatness. However, it does not make her a martyr either for at no point in the tragedy does she mention to act for the sake and salvation of others – let alone the whole of humanity, but on the contrary exclusively refers to her own personal drama. While Johanna's counterpart Lodovica will, in Pellico's *Eufemio* drama (1820), not have to forfeit her life for the sake of her country, the French heroine's sacrifice can be said to resemble, instead, Thomas More's fate in Pellico's homonymous tragedy *Tommaso Moro* (1833) who dies in the genuine faith for a religious creed that he sees ideologically misused and turned into a political instrument of tyranny: "MORO E di leggi tiranniche e d'eccidii,/ Rialzerà forse tra breve, io spero,/ [Arrigo ottavo] L'alterissima testa. Ahi, ma con sua/ Prosperità misti verranno indegni/ Amari frutti del presente tempo./ Vita lo scisma, e con lo scisma avranno/ Civili odi e calunnie e smembramenti/ Infiniti di culto; e prolungata disuguaglianza de' più sacri dritti./ E, chi sa, da tai germi un dì rovina!"; *Opere complete*, III.5, p. 288. If Henry VIII can be assimilated to Schiller's classical tyrant figures king Philipp II and queen Elisabeth, More's sacrifice in the name of freedom and humanity can be associated, in turn, to Posa's idealism and the futility of his heroic death.

⁴⁹⁰ Schiller's heroes and heroines exemplify the struggle of the "sentimental" or cultured man ("kultivirter Mensch") seeking to restore an ideal unity that in the transition from nature to society had been forfeited in the consequent dichotomy of feelings and thought. This self-containment and harmony could no longer be found within, but only outside of man: "Die Übereinstimmung zwischen seinem Empfinden und Denken, die in dem ersten Zustande [der Natur] *wirklich* statt fand, existirt jetzt bloß *idealisch*; sie ist nicht mehr **in ihm**, sondern **außer ihm**; als ein **Gedanke**, der erst realisirt werden soll, nicht mehr als **Thatsache seines Lebens**" (NA XX.1/ 437, emphases in the original, bold added). Pursued as mere thought, this human ideal remained for Schiller in its boundless scope ultimately out of reach within the limited confines of tangible reality: "Weil aber das Ideal ein unendliches ist, das er niemals erreicht, so kann der *kultivirte Mensch* in seiner Art niemals vollkommen werden, wie doch der *natürliche Mensch* es in der seinigen zu werden vermag" (NA XX.1/ 438). While it no longer resided in the phenomenological world, it had been transcended to an aesthetic act of sublimation whose actualization could only be pursued in a realm beyond history. Intended in terms of "pure contemplation" and "pure knowledge", Cassirer saw in Schiller's ideal of beauty ("Idealschönen") a clear indebtedness to Baumgarten's aesthetics, in his effort to "overcome the antagonism between 'sensationalism' and 'rationalism', and to achieve a new productive synthesis of 'reason' and 'sensitivity'". As Cassirer maintains: "Baumgarten too upholds the validity of sensibility; he does not, however, merely seek to release sensibility from all restraint but rather to lead it to its spiritual perfection. This perfection cannot lie in enjoyment but only

of Jeanne d'Arc, turns through Schiller's dramaturgical adaptation into an aesthetic medium meant to ethically instruct the audience to their moral autonomy and freedom. On the other hand, as embodiment of ideal beauty – which, in its synthesis of sublime and sensuous beauty as an ideal balance between form and matter that could never be achieved in reality, constituted the ultimate goal of Schiller's project of aesthetic education – the story of Jeanne d'Arc acquires the legendary traits of a historical myth.⁴⁹¹

By reclaiming, after Voltaire's political parody, her right in myth as national heroine, Johanna turned at once into the prefiguration of human wholeness and perfection. Reflecting a pressing concern for the turbulent times that followed the French Revolution and that Schiller had articulated in one of his notorious missives to prince Friedrich Christian of Augustenburg – an early draft of his *Aesthetic Letters* (1795) – by stressing: "daß derjenige noch nicht reif ist zur *bürgerlichen* Freiheit, dem noch so vieles zur *menschlichen* fehlt" (13 July 1793 [NA XXVI/ 262, 184., emphases in the original]), the play transfigures Joan of

in beauty" (1960: 356). This notion of "*sinnliche Religion*", as Schelling had put it in *Das sogenannte 'Älteste Systemprogramm'* (1796/97) of German idealism, combined the "Monotheismus der Vern. des Herzens" with the "Polytheismus der Einbildungskraft u. der Kunst" (1975: 111, emphasis in the original). For a systematic investigation on the reception and influence exerted by *Das Älteste Systemprogramm* on Schiller and Kant alike, see Hansen's comprehensive study (1989: 347-474).

⁴⁹¹ In his sixteenth *Aesthetic* letter (1795), Schiller had reiterated that this conception of supreme beauty was destined to remain a mere ideal for which to strive in virtue of the individual's intrinsic humanity to which his aesthetic program ought to initiate and instruct: "Dieses Gleichgewicht [der Realität und der Form] bleibt aber immer nur Idee, die von der Wirklichkeit nie ganz erreicht werden kann. In der Wirklichkeit wird immer ein Übergewicht des *einen* Elements über das andere übrig bleiben, und das Höchste, was die Erfahrung leistet, wird in einer Schwankung zwischen beiden Prinzipien bestehen, wo bald die Realität, bald die Form überwiegend ist. Die **Schönheit in der Idee** ist also ewig nur eine unteilbare einzige, wie es nur ein einziges Gleichgewicht geben kann; die **Schönheit in der Erfahrung** hingegen wird ewig eine doppelte sein, weil bei einer Schwankung das Gleichgewicht auf eine doppelte Art, nämlich diesseits und jenseits, kann übertreten werden" (SW V/ 619, 16, emphases in the original, bold added); on Schiller's aesthetic theory and the conceptualization of his idea of beauty, see also fn. 438.

Arc's national myth into the universal myth of individual emancipation in the historical human struggle for freedom.⁴⁹²

The Middle Ages represented, in this respect, the epoch that best exhibited the heroism and enthusiastic idealism that Schiller had seen forfeited in modern times:

Die *Heroen* des Mittelalters setzten an einen Wahn, den sie mit Weisheit verwechselten, und eben weil er ihnen Weisheit war, Blut, Leben und Eigenthum; so schlecht ihre Vernunft belehrt war, so heldenmäßig gehorchten sie ihren höchsten Gesetzen – und können *wir*, ihre verfeinerten Enkel, uns wohl rühmen, daß wir an unsre Weisheit nur halb so viel, als *sie* an ihre Torheit, wagen? (NA XIX.1/ 196, emphases in the o

Viewed in their alterity, the medieval "heroes" turned into a positive counter model that the

Enlightenment ought to emulate.⁴⁹³ In contrast to the 18th and 19th century, Schiller had seen

⁴⁹² Schiller deemed personal freedom condition indispensable to the attainment of political liberty. This human freedom consisted in the individual's realization as autonomous moral subject, that is as harmonic synthesis of reason and enthusiasm to which the theater and, in particular tragedy, educated its spectators. What other dramatic subject could thus be considered more consonant to Schiller's acceptance of theater, but the sublime object of world history. As he stated in his aesthetic essay *Ueber das Erhabene* (1801): "mir [ist] die Weltgeschichte ein erhabenes Object" (NA XXI.2/ 49), to the extent that it reproduced and reported this very human strife for emancipation. In virtue of the enlightening role ("Aufklärung des Verstandes" [NA XX.1/ 97]) that the theater thus performed by imparting – through the enactment of human history – its moral education upon the audience which was taught how to manage and master historical contingencies and their consequences, the "fervent patriot" ("feurige Patriot") could ultimately employ these historical and moral lessons to illuminate his people: "Eben hier in dieser höhern Sphäre weiß der große Kopf, der **feurige Patriot** sie erst ganz zu gebrauchen. Er wirft einen Blick durch das Menschengeschlecht, vergleicht Völker mit Völkern, Jahrhunderte mit Jahrhunderten, und findet, wie sklavisches die größere Masse des Volks an Ketten des Vorurtheils und der Meinung gefangen liegt, die seiner Glückseligkeit ewig entgegen arbeiten – daß die reinern Strahlen der Wahrheit nur wenige *einzelne* Köpfe beleuchten, welche den kleinen Gewinn vielleicht mit dem Aufwand eines ganzen Lebens erkaufen. Wodurch kann der weise Gesetzgeber die Nation derselben theilhaftig machen? Die Schaubühne ist der **gemeinschaftliche Kanal**, in welchen von dem denkenden bessern Theile des Volks das Licht der Weißheit herunterströmt, und von da aus in milderem Strahlen durch den ganzen Staat sich verbreitet" (NA XX.1/ 97, emphasis in the original, bold added). Viewed in this light, the theater turned into an instrument that the German intelligentsia would adopt to politically inform and instruct as well as patriotically inspire the masses.

⁴⁹³ With the advent of the Enlightenment, Schiller had witnessed the preference attributed to abstract conceptualizations over the idealism that had inspired the Middle Ages ("Der Vorzug hellerer Begriffe, besiegt Vorurtheile, gemäßiger Leidenschaften, freier Gesinnungen" [NA XIX.1/ 196]). In his forward to Niethammer's translation of the *Geschichte des Malteserordens von Vertot* (1792), he had compared the medieval to the modern times both rectifying the negative image that the 18th century had assigned to the past ("verachtende Blick, den wir gewohnt sind auf jene Periode des Aberglaubens, des Fanatismus, der Gedankenknechtschaft zu werfen" [NA XIX.1/ 195]), and questioning the alleged authority that the enlightened present had claimed over its predecessors from the Dark Ages: "man muß gestehen, daß wir die Ueberlegenheit *unsrer* Zeiten nicht immer mit Bescheidenheit, mit Gerechtigkeit gegen die *vergangenen* geltend machen. [...]"

in the Reformation (1517-1648) the emergence of an enlightened era that had managed to mediate the use of reason ("Licht des Verstandes") with the will drive ("Energie des Willens") inherited from its medieval predecessors (NA XIX.1/ 20).⁴⁹⁴ The Reformation, moreover, had coincided and eventually merged with the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), successfully conjoining the religious zeal of the Middle Ages with a contemporary political

Dieselbe Kultur, welche in unserm Gehirn das Feuer eines fanatischen Eifers auslöschte, hat zugleich die Glut der Begeisterung in unseren Herzen erstickt, den Schwung der Gesinnungen gelähmt, die thatenreifende Energie des Charakters vernichtet" ([NA XIX.1/ 195-6], emphases in the original). Written in 1792, that is prior to the Jacobinian Terror, Schiller was still exalting the idealistic fervor that had distinguished medieval history. What he had particularly admired in their enthusiasm had been the "*Willigkeit* des Gemüts, sich von *übersinnlichen Triebfedern* leiten zu lassen" (SW IV/ 992, my emphases), that is the emotional motivation that they had drawn upon ideals, and which Schiller had reproduced in idealistic characters as *Don Carlos* and *Joan of Arc*. It was this emotionally catalyzing role of ideas which had distinguished the Middle Ages with a sense of dignity ("Würde") that Schiller had been missing in his own times: "so war die Menschheit doch offenbar ihrer **höchsten Würde** nie vorher so nahe gewesen, als sie es damals war – wenn es anders entschieden ist, daß nur die *Herrschaft seiner Ideen über seine Gefühle* dem Menschen Würde verleiht" (NA XIX.1/ 196, emphases in the original, bold added); on the history of Schiller's forward to Niethammer's translation, see the helpful commentary by Hagen und Prüfer (NA XIX.1/ 397). The Middle Ages represented as well the era favored by German Romantics who enjoyed restoring its memory for the ideological relevance that it exerted upon the history of the German Reich. In the third section of A.W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Fine Art and Literature* (1801-1804) dedicated to Romantic literature, the author for instance ascribed to medieval Germany the political primacy over Europe while Germany was enjoying a less privileged domain on the contemporary geopolitical map. His objective was clearly to encourage his people to emulate and exhume their past glory and self-esteem: "Wie sehr andre Nationen jetzt auf uns herabsehen mögen, so ist es doch unläugbar, daß im Mittelalter (worauf ich immer als die große Zeit der neueren Geschichte zurückkommen muß) sie den Deutschen Vorrang zugestanden haben. Das Oberhaupt Deutschlands genoß das höchste Ansehen in ganz Europa, und der Name des erneuerten Römischen Reichs blieb an Deutschland haften [...]. Den Adler, dieses königliche Symbol, hat Deutschland von den Römern geerbt: kann er jemals ganz verlernen der Sonne entgegen zu fliegen?" (1884c: 36).

⁴⁹⁴ In the *Universalhistorische Uebersicht* from 1790, Schiller explicitly stressed the beneficial coalascence of reason and idealism that had driven forth the Thirty Years' War: "Die lange Waffenübung des Mittelalters hatte dem *sechzehnten* Jahrhundert ein gesundes, starkes Geschlecht zugeführt, und der **Vernunft**, die jetzt ihr Panier entfaltet, kraftvolle Streiter erzogen. [...] Wo sonst, als hier, erlebte man die Wundererscheinung, daß Vernunftschlüsse des ruhigen Forschers das Feldgeschrey wurden in mörderischen Schlachten, daß die Stimme der Selbstliebe gegen den stärkeren Zwang der Ueberzeugung schwieg, daß der Mensch endlich das *theuerste* an das *edelste* setzte?" (NA XIX.1/ 19, emphasis in the original, bold added). In his study, Safranski offers an illuminating insight into Schiller's question concerning the relationship that the Reformation entertained with the Middle Ages in mediating their "Kräfte der Vernunft" with the "vitalen Kräfte" of medieval fervor (2004: 329-31).

undertaking, setting an example to the history of humankind.⁴⁹⁵ In stark contrast to the Reformation – which Schiller deemed to be the only time in history that had witnessed the alliance of medieval faith and modern reason, heart and mind – stood the era of a slowly unfolding Enlightenment, unable to keep up with the idealistic impetus of the past.⁴⁹⁶ As he identified in the strength of will and faith displayed by the Middle Ages the ideal of the free, that is, self-determined human subject, Schiller had rhetorically wondered whether the Enlightenment would have been able to recuperate at once that example of prime freedom ("frühe Freiheit") of action that had distinguished the alleged "dark" ages, with the belated autonomy of thought ("später Vernunft"): "Wie schwer ist es also, daß die *Staaten* die *Erleuchtung* abwarten, daß die *späte* Vernunft die *frühe* Freyheit noch findet?" (NA XIX/ 20, emphases in the original).⁴⁹⁷ Viewed in this light, it can be argued that through the medieval

⁴⁹⁵ See Schiller's letter to his friend Körner in which he remarks: "Die *Geschichte der Menschheit* gehört als unentbehrliche Episode in die Geschichte der Reformation, und diese ist mit dem 30jährigen Krieg unzertrennlich verbunden" (28 Nov. 1791 [NA XXVI/ 114, 93., my emphasis]).

⁴⁹⁶ On this point, see Safranski's invaluable commentary (2004: 330-1). In his *Universalhistorische Uebersicht* (1790), Schiller had lamented the asynchronous development between the rapid formation of nation-states and the indolent reaction that he had witnessed from the Enlightenment to guide and foster their emergence: "Durch das ganze Gebiet der Geschichte sehen wir die Entwicklung der *Staaten* mit der Entwicklung der *Köpfe* einen sehr ungleichen Schritt beobachten. Staaten sind jährige Pflanzen, die in einem kurzen Sommer verblühen, und von der Fülle des Saftes rasch in die Fäulniß hinübereilen; *Aufklärung* ist eine langsame Pflanze, die zu ihrer Zeitigung einen glücklichen Himmer, viele Pflege und eine lange Reihe von Frühlungen braucht" (NA XIX.1/ 20, emphases in the original).

⁴⁹⁷ As he would point out in his *Speeches to the German Nation* (1808), for Fichte this individual freedom had been concretely reflected in the political autonomy and strength that the Germans had enjoyed in their medieval cities and who therefore, with the exception of Italy, had been standing out as exemplary "citizens" ("Bürger") among a crowd of "barbarians" ("Barbaren"): "Es entstanden [...] Städte, die durch Glieder aus dem Volke errichtet wurden. [...] In ihnen entstanden, zwar auf Kleines berechnete, dennoch aber treffliche bürgerliche Verfassungen und Einrichtungen, und von ihnen aus verbreitete sich ein Bild von Ordnung und eine Liebe derselben erst über das übrige Land. Ihr ausgebreiteter Handel half die Welt entdecken. Ihren Bund fürchteten die Könige. [...] Ich will diese Bürger der deutschen Reichsstädte des Mittelalters nicht vergleichen mit den anderen ihnen gleichzeitigen Ständen, und nicht fragen, was indessen der Adel that und die Fürsten; aber in Vergleich mit den übrigen germanischen Nationen, einige Striche Italiens abgerechnet, hinter welchen selbst jedoch in den schönen Künsten die Deutschen nicht zurückblieben, in den nützlichen sie übertrafen und ihre Lehrer wurden, – diese abgerechnet, waren nun diese deutschen Bürger die gebildeten, und jene die Barbaren" (1846: 355-6).

drama of Jeanne d'Arc, Schiller had attempted to revive in the present the memory of a time long left behind and fallen into oblivion.

To conclude, Schiller's reemployment of a historical myth as that of Jeanne d'Arc to illustrate his universal anthropological tenets of individual freedom of will and action, cannot be properly assessed and understood without stressing the very universal potential inherent to myths in their quality of timeless narratives, which makes them particularly apt to be variously interpreted throughout time. On these grounds, the stories that evolved from Joan of Arc's myth can be said to exist only as history of its reception. Blumenberg arguably insists: "that its reception is not superadded to myth, that it does not enrich it, but that instead myth is handed down and known to us in no other condition than that of always being already in the process of reception" (1985: 216-7). The constant process of reception and reinterpretation in which myth partakes, renders therefore any attempt to reduce it to an original mythologem, that is a proto-story that bears in virtue – or, to put it with Blumenberg, "in spite" – of its "iconic permanence" (1985: 217) a "consolidated [narrative] core" (1985: 150), is destined to fail.

"[I]mmer schon in Rezeption übergegangen" (1971: 28), myth distinguishes itself for its peculiarly performative nature. It consequently defies its origin, and ultimately any attempt of definition. In its metamorphic quality, a myth cannot but constantly participate in the history of humankind; in other words, its stories respond to the questions and challenges posed by the histories in which they partake. Through the story of Jeanne d'Arc, Schiller illustrated a medieval enthusiasm that he had deemed exemplary, and thus intended to juxtapose in its alterity to modern history. The religious excess portrayed in his drama, emphasized in turn demonstratively – that is, as cautionary tale – the need to restrain this

medieval idealism through the intervention of reason, preventing it from turning into pernicious fanaticism.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁸ Schiller had articulated this fundamental and never forfeited tenet as early as in his Jena lecture *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* from 1789: "Indem sie [*sc.* die Weltgeschichte] den Menschen gewöhnt, sich mit der ganzen Vergangenheit zusammen zu faßen, und mit seinen Schlüssen in die ferne Zukunft voraus zu eilen: so verbirgt sie die Grenzen von Geburt und Tod, die das Leben des Menschen so eng und so drückend umschliessen, so breitet sie optisch täuschend sein kurzes Dasein in einen unendlichen Raum aus, und führt das Individuum unvermerkt in die *Gattung* hinüber" (NA XVII.1/ 375, my emphasis). His idea of universal history was rooted in the belief that its unfolding manifested itself in a succession of various epochs, each one possessing along its temporal continuum their singularity and invaluable significance. This theory was based on an organic understanding of history that Schiller had inherited from Herder. Viewed in its various phases of development and decay accounts, consequently, for a relativization of history no longer dictated by the exemplary models of antiquity. Every era and ethnicity acquired, instead, in this universal and organic perspective its peculiar valence both for itself and in relation to others. Schiller's *Jungfrau* formally reflects this understanding of history as the result of the specific viewpoint from which it is recollected and recounted. The very unfolding of the dramatic action speaks for this (historical) perspectivism. According to Guthrie, in the play this perspectivism "relies on the presentation of a range of subjective points of view, which are subtly shown to complement or contrast with one another" (2009: 153).

3.3.2. *Eufemio di Messina* (1820)

After the successful début of his inaugural historical tragedy, *Francesca da Rimini* (1815), Pellico authors a second notorious medieval drama which he names – according to the same title pattern that combines the protagonists' proper names with their city of provenance – *Eufemio di Messina* (1820).⁴⁹⁹ In the introduction to the play, Pellico specifies the historical context within which the dramatic development will unfold as the Saracens besiege the Sicilian city of Messina: "L'irruzione de' Saraceni in Sicilia verso gli anni 825-830" (1861: 137). Upon expounding the premises of the invasion reported in the chronicles which feature the eponymous warrior – who had left his hometown after being denied the hand of the local king's daughter, Lodovica – he is portrayed in the act of leading the Arabic conquest of the Italian island. Pellico points to the political implications that evolved from the protagonist's personal motives of action against the backdrop of a religious conflict that was initiated after Eufemio had converted himself to the Qu'ran and to the cause of the holy war: "seguace del Coran me non fea la sovrumana/ Dottrina sua, ma *lo splendor dell'armi/ Per Mäometto combattenti*" (EM II.1/ 141, my emphases).

The very binomial association of religion to politics, which had driven forth the tragedy of Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* (1801), defines with major emphasis also Pellico's drama. It is not incidental, in fact, that both patriotic and religious motifs had exposed their

⁴⁹⁹ *Francesca da Rimini* (1815) and *Eufemio di Messina* (1820) are the first two tragedies with a historical subject that Pellico composed prior to his Spielberg captivity, after dedicating the first years of his literary apprenticeship to mythological dramas such as *Laodamia* (1813) and *Turno* (1814) collected, commented and published by Rinieri in the third volume of Pellico's inedited works (1901). According to Schoch (1907: 128), Pellico may have begun to work on *Eufemio* in June 1818, that is in the midst of his patriotically and politically engaged Milan years (1809-1820). According to Bellorini, instead, Pellico completed his tragedy as early as in June 1817, but decided not to publish it until 1820, that is after the appearance of Manzoni's dramatic novelty: the historical tragedy of *Carmagnola* (1916: 26).

plays to the vigilant control and censorship of the Austrian Empire.⁵⁰⁰ On this evidence, I seek to pursue a closer scrutiny of the religious patriotism that dictates Pellico's dramatic discourse, sharpening the focus on the playwrights' ethical and aesthetic ideologies to account for their distinctions and parallels, as they become manifest in the development and deeds of their characters.⁵⁰¹

It is indicative, in this respect, that both tragedies commence under the patriotic banner that announces the siege of the French city of Orleans and the Italian city of Messina respectively by the English and the Saracen. As Burgundy, fallen out with the sovereign Charles VII, besets the country by guiding the British troupes into Orleans, Eufemio invades – in alliance with the heathen foe – the kingdom of Teodoro, who withholds him from marrying his daughter: "EUFEMIO l'eccidio/ a Messina giurai, se nel mio campo/ Tratta non vien di Teodor la figlia" (EM I.3/ 140). Captured ("Di gravi ceppi/ E d'ignominia ricoperto, in negro/ Carcer sepolto, a rea scure dannato" [EM I.3/ 139]), and forsaken by his

⁵⁰⁰ For this reason, Pellico's *Eufemio* was never performed. In a letter from 25 July 1819, the author informed his brother Luigi that the tragedy would have been allowed on stage only upon the excision of forty, allegedly offensive, pages: "L'*Eufemio* m'è stato restituito coll'impudente risposta, che sarà approvato quand'io voglia mutarvi i passi segnati. Sono le pagine del manoscritto 59, e le correzioni che mi si propongono 40, il che vuol dire poco meno di 40 pagine da rifarsi sopra 59" (1899: 350-1). Pellico eventually managed to publish the play in 1820: "Con un po' di stento, ma ho ottenuto di stampare l'*Eufemio* senza mutilazioni"; see letter to his brother dated August 16, 1820 (LM 225). The play appeared in print in Milan through the typesetter Vincenzo Ferrario with the admonitory notification: "La presente tragedia è posta sotto la salvaguardia della Legge, essendosi adempiuto a quanto essa prescrive"; qtd. in Schoch (1907: 130). The German literary scholar Heinrich Hubert Houben, in turn, reports about the major amendments that Schiller's play equally underwent due to its religious and political content. The title, for instance, was frequently changed (for its direct allusion to the Virgin Mary) from "Jungfrau von Orleans" into "Johanna d'Arc", and any political inferences were expunged so that the conflict between Franks and British, allusive of their recent hostilities – that could have jeopardized the yet ongoing negotiations which would have been eventually ratified by the Peace of Amiens in 1802 with the end of the second coalition war – was no longer identifiable through the replacement of euphemisms and vague references (at the Vienna performance, for example, Charles VII was named merely king Karl, France was referred to simply as "Reich" and the British became the "Inselbewohner" [1992: 559]).

⁵⁰¹ As mentioned already in my analysis of *Francesca da Rimini* (1815), contrary to former interpretations, Mazzucchetti denies evidence of Schiller's influence on Pellico's *Eufemio* (1820) which attests, instead, the author's indebtedness to Alfieri's and Foscolo's theater: "Rammento anche questa tragedia solo per confessare di non rinvenirci quell'influsso schilleriano che altri ci videro" (1913: 311-2).

countrymen ("Dov'è chi snudi/ Fra' cittadini a mie vendette un ferro?/ Non uno... O gregge di codardi! eterno/ Abborrimento vi giurai" [EM I.3/ 139]), the once acclaimed national hero ("di Sicilia eroe" [EM I.3/ 138]) exiles to Africa and embraces the Muslim faith: "EUFEMIO [...]. Io squarcio/ L'europea veste, a' Saraceni chieggo/ Le loro bende, il lor Profeta onoro" (EM I.3/ 139). Eufemio's flight from his fatherland, corresponds to the forsaking of his Christian creed. By articulating his national identity as a consequence of his conversion, Eufemio contributes to the politicization of a religious discourse that transcends his ethnical and cultural origins.⁵⁰² Eufemio proclaims a political religion that is meant to incite patriotic activism:

EUFEMIO	[...]: "Pace All'Occidente un sacerdote intima: <i>Vil pace</i> , dissi, onde <i>codarda</i> Roma De' Cesari trattar più non sa il brando: <i>Guerra invece</i> e trionfi all'Oriente <i>Maometto proclama</i> : esso è de' forti Il profeta verace, il mio profeta!"	(EM II.1/ 141, my emphases)

As he exhorts the religious patriotism epitomized by the Saracens' belligerent faith, he expresses his critique against a pacifist Christian doctrine that, in its "coward" inertia,

⁵⁰² As seen already in other tragedies, the notion of fatherland is defined in the play in terms of "brotherhood" ("EUFEMIO Patria é il suol che fraterne alme produce" [EM II.2/ 141]), and a "humanity" ("EUFEMIO D'Africa ai liti orridi giungo... e *umani*/ *Cor* nella patria del leon ritrovo" [EM I.3/ 139]) that had been denied to the protagonist in his hometown. It is on this fundamental principle that Mazzini will voice his critique against a cosmopolitanism that had been gradually acquiring nationalistic undertones ("il moto che affaccenda l'Europa è andato vieppiù sempre definendosi, conterminandosi, ordinandosi sotto la bandiera della nazionalità" [2005: 675/ V]), undermining its original universal significance and its inclusive sense of humanity: "*Senza patria non è umanità* [...]. Le nazioni sono gl'individui dell'umanità come i cittadini sono gl'individui della nazione. [...] *Patria ed umanità sono dunque egualmente sacre*. [...] La patria è il punto d'appoggio dato alla leva che deve operare a pro' dell'umanità" (2005: 675/ V, my emphases). The term of "patria" (fatherland) thus implicated the idea of humanity: nations were supposed to stand in a relationship to each other that implied their reciprocal support and solidarity.

preaches instead a "pusillanimous peace" ("vil pace").⁵⁰³ Eufemio's religious discourse and his expectation of the influence that religion was intended to exert on politics, resembles Mazzini's program of patriotic emancipation. Mazzini, in fact, conceptualized the very notion of patriotic religion in a passage excerpted from *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860) that displays some parallels with the religious ideology and patriotic enthusiasm upheld in the play:

Il grido che suonò in tutte grandi rivoluzioni, il grido *Dio lo vuole, Dio lo vuole* delle Crociate, può solo convertire **gl'inerti in attivi, dar animo ai paurosi, entusiasmo di sacrificio** ai calcolatori, fede a chi rispinge col dubbio ogni umano concetto. Provate agli uomini che l'opera d'emancipazione e di sviluppo progressivo alla quale voi li chiamate, sta nel **disegno di Dio**; nessuno si ribellerà. [...] *Dio lo vuole, Dio lo vuole!* È grido di popolo, o fratelli; è grido del **vostro popolo, grido nazionale** italiano. Non vi lasciate ingannare, o voi che lavorate con sincerità d'amore per la vostra nazione, da chi vi dirà forse che la tendenza italiana non è che tendenza politica, e che lo spirito religioso s'è dipartito da essa. **Lo spirito religioso non si dipartì mai dall'Italia**, finché l'Italia, comunque divisa, fu grande ed attiva; si dipartì, quando nel secolo decimosesto, caduta Firenze, caduta sotto le armi straniere

⁵⁰³ It must be specified, however, that at no point in the play does Pellico associate Muslim religion with fanaticism. On the contrary, the only representative of an intransigent and intolerant faith in the play is the bishop of Messina Pacomio who, upon Almanzor's request to release Lodovica from the convent, incites the mob to defend their fatherland and thus instrumentalizes religion to foment a political revolution: " [...] 'Oh vituperio/ Dell'età mia! (proruppe). Oggi alla Croce/ Del sangue d'un Iddio tutto grondante/ Immolar nega il suo vil sangue l'uomo!'/ Voi rapireste una innocente al Cielo/ Vergin sacrata, onde in nefandi amplessi/ A eterna morte la traesse un empio?/ Voi tenta il Ciel; vostra codarda vita/ Non serberanno i sacrifici: o infida/ A' giuramenti suoi l'oste medesma/ De' Saraceni struggeravvi, o spinto/ Dalla destra di Dio sorgerà il mare/ A subbissar questa rea terra. Una evvi/ Speme di scampo: di virtù severa/ Seguir la via/ difendere a ogni costo/ La patria e il culto, ed a salvarvi allora/ Prodigio forse opererà l'Eterno.' Tacque; e la turba unanime rispose: 'Pria che offender l'altar, morte si scelga!'" (EM II.1/ 141). With his "sacerdotal fera possanza" (EM II.1/ 141), Pacomio embodies for his inhumanity – next to Teodoro's "tirannic' alma" (EM I.3/ 139) – the very opposite of the compassionate humanitarianism upheld in the play: "EUFEMIO [...] ... Ah, nota/ M'è di Pacomio la ferocia! Il manto/ Vescovil gli mertaro i superbi atti/ Suoi, quando, uscito di Tebaide, Italia/ Corse a turbar, guerra intimando a tutte/ Fralezze umane, e roghi ovunque ergendo/ A chi alla Croce e a lui non si prostrava./ Il furor suo sacerdotal pavento" (EM I.3/ 140). The merciless minister and the Sicilian tyrant resemble, in this respect, rather the dogmatic and bigoted Catholicism that Schiller depicted and denounced in *Don Carlos* (1787/ 1801) through the figures of the Spanish sovereign Philipp II and the inquisitor. It is precisely in this critique against religion which Schiller and Pellico alike voice in their dramas that lies another commonality shared by the two playwrights. Pellico's religious criticism in the play is further articulated in the contrastive juxtaposition of a Muslim divinity, qualified as "Dio de' generosi" (EM I.3/ 139), and the Christian deity defined instead as "Dio geloso" (EM I.3/ 140); see also Cimino's study (1925: 50).

di Carlo V, e sotto i **raggiri dei papi** ogni libertà di vita italiana, noi cominciammo a perdere tendenze nazionali e a vivere spagnuoli, tedeschi, e francesi.
(2005: 873-4/ II, emphases in the original, bold added)

For Mazzini, as for the young and yet politically engaged Pellico of the Milan years, religion functioned as ideological device intended to foment the fatherland's support and sacrifice.

Viewed and voiced in these terms, patriotism turns into a divine mission in which God and the nation – in other words: faith and fatherland – constitute an indissoluble bond ("Lo spirito religioso non si diparti mai dall'Italia").⁵⁰⁴ In the Mazzinian dyad of God and the people, the latter form the very idea of nation ("popolo, grido nazionale").⁵⁰⁵ His concept of nation resulted, in fact, advocated an associated brotherhood of equal and free people: "[l]a patria è una comunione di liberi e d'eguali affratellati in concordia di lavori verso un unico fine" (2005: 898/ V) – where this common goal ("unico fine") consisted, according to Mazzini's Catholic creed, in the fulfillment of a divine design ("disegno di Dio").⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁴ On Mazzini's "political religion" and its notion of the "chosen nation", see the illuminating article by Sullam (2008: 107-24).

⁵⁰⁵ This very acceptation of nation as based upon the alliance of its people and God will reecho in Mazzini's motto "*Dio e il popolo* per ciascuna nazione" (2005: 684, emphasis in the original), as articulated in his short essay on the *Organizzazione della democrazia* (1850). As to the association of the people and their nation, see his definition provided in *Nationality and Cosmopolitanism* (1847): "When we speak of Nationality, it is of Nationality such as the *Peoples*, free and brotherly associated, will conceive it" (2009: 59, emphasis in the original).

⁵⁰⁶ In the same fifth chapter of *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860), Mazzini sets forth specifying in what consisted the current Italian mission of "la patria una e libera che voi dovete fondare" (2005: 899), while in the seventh paragraph of his earlier manifesto he had postulated the instructions for the members of the *Young Italy* revolutionary society by stating: "Credente nella missione commessa da Dio all'Italia [...]. Convinto che dove Dio ha voluto fosse nazione, esistono le forze necessarie a crearla – che il popolo è depositario di quelle forze, – che nel dirigerle pel popolo e col popolo sta il segreto della vittoria" (2005: 185-6/ 7); see *Istruzione generale per gli affratellati nella Giovine Italia* (1831). In his patriotic poem *La patria* (1837), Pellico will admonish his fatherland – in a wording reminiscent of Mazzini's rhetoric – to emancipate itself from its servile status by recognizing its identity and role of God's chosen people expected to act according to His assigned plan: "Se altrove È maledetta/ L'alma che striscia come serpe abbietta./ L'alma che sorda a' grandi esempi aviti./ Incurante di senno e di decoro,/ Serva si fa a coloro./ Che a sedurre e predar vengon suoi liti;/ Quanto più reo non fôra/ Chi, aperti gli occhi sotto Itala aurora,/ A patria di magnanimi cotanta/ Non sacrasse altamente opra e desio!/ *Il popolo siam di Dio*;/ Stampiam nostr'orme nella via più santa!" (1861: 344, my emphasis).

Pellico's reference to a divinely dictated patriotic mission featuring "God's people" as its agents, is explicitly addressed in the play by Teodoro who appoints his daughter mother ("del popol di Dio madre" [EM III.1/ 145]), and savior of her people ("del popol di Dio liberatrice" [EM III.1/ 145]). In this very passage, the Jean d'Arc motif appears insinuated by Lodovica's reference to her divine calling with which she had been endowed in the convent by Pacomio and her sister nuns. This allusion finds in the conflation between love of country and erotic love, personal and political motives its dramatic focus as well as driving force of action. Akin to Joan of Arc, Lodovica attempts to deny her feelings for Eufemio and disregards him, while she recollects and renews her sacred vows:

LODOVICA Empio, ti scosta;
 Sacra al Signor sposa son io. La destra
 Su questo vel uom non de' porger mai;
 Chè di flamme invisibili tessuto,
 Incenerir può chi tant'osi. Indegna,
 Sì, lo vesti; ma da quel punto *schia*va
 Son d'un geloso onnipossente spirto,
 Che all'amor tuo ed alle tue falangi
 Mi sottrarrà. [...] (EM III.6/ 147-8)

Like the French paladin, Lodovica fears to expose herself to the sight of her beloved: "Ah, s'io 'l rimiro/ Più forza non avrò" (EM III.6/ 147-8); her inner conflict, however, is far from displaying the strength of character and volition that distinguished Schiller's heroine. In contrast to Johanna, Lodovica considers herself "slave" ("schia"va) to rather than agent of God's will, as she succumbs and submits to her personal feelings:

LODOVICA [...] ... e *t'amo*...
 E di non esser tua piango... e tradisco
 Indarno il mio *dover*. Non sarò tua
 Mai, certezza n'ho in cor. (EM III.6/ 147-8, my emphases)

In the clash experienced between love ("t'amo") and duty ("dover"), Lodovica admits to lack the heroic temperament required to perform the allotted national sacrifice ("Eroica tempra/ Non ha, non ha questo vil cor..." [EM III.2/ 146]), and eventually blames herself for betraying at once father ("genitor"), fatherland ("patrie mura"), and Holy Father ("Iddio"): "Tradito/ Ho il genitor, le patrie mura, e Iddio" (EM III.6/ 148).⁵⁰⁷ Arranged in a climatic progression, Lodovica's emphatic rhetoric clearly links the patriotic with the religious cause. Contrary to the French Revolution in which the idea of collective freedom was envisioned and endorsed by the masses – in other words: from below – Johanna's and Lodovica's insurrectional calling is, instead, advocated directly from God – that is to say: from above.⁵⁰⁸ In this respect, the sacred mission that Lodovica is expected to carry out for the sake of her country's salvation from foreign destruction results opposite to Eufemio's holy warfare, animated instead by an expansionist rather than emancipatory intent: "EUFEMIO Strugger

⁵⁰⁷ As to the tragedy's allusion to the myth of Jean d'Arc, and in particular to the experienced conflict of love and duty, see Schoch's comments (1907: 132). The affinity displayed by Pellico's *Tancredi* with the French national heroine reveals to be much more obvious than Lodovica's. The comparison appears also insofar legitimate for the evident analogies in content and character that, according to Cimino, the homonymous poem displays with Pellico's *Eufemio* (1925: 70-2). *Tancredi* named in the poem "celeste amazzone" (1861: 372), in fact, resembles more closely Jean d'Arc for her warrior-like nature and braveness with which Pellico's Lodovica seems to have little in common as she walks through the battlefield in fright and fear, horror and hesitation for the death spectacle that she witnesses ("[...] In fiamme/ Veggo la patria: le insultanti grida/ Del vincitor frammiste a' gemiti odo/ De' moribondi cittadini: il piede/ Ho guazzante nel sangue: il vel, le mani/ La faccia... intrisa son tutta di sangue!/ E non m'uccide lo spavento? [...]") [EM IV.1/ 148]. The fact, moreover, that both male characters share the same name of Lionel/ Lionello, that *Tancredi* and Johanna alike decide to remain faithful to their mission and preserve their virginity, and that both heroines finally save their town and nation from foreign destruction and dominion are significant indicators of their resemblance.

⁵⁰⁸ This higher form of legitimation that sets God at the top of a hierarchy whose basis is constituted by the equal masses of the people, is a typically Mazzinian thought. As early as in 1836, Mazzini had in fact described in his essay on *Humanité et patrie* the pyramidal structure that related the whole of humanity to God "en sorte que l'édifice gigantesque que les siècles et les peuples ont mission d'élever, peut, quoiqu'inexactement, se comparer à une Pyramide, dont la pointe toucherait au ciel et la base embrasserait l'Humanité toute entière. – L'oeil de Dieu flamboyera au haut de cette Pyramide" (1910: 209-10). This hierarchic disposition will be reiterated in his later writing on *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860), in which Mazzini will maintain once more: "La patria deve essere il vostro tempio. Dio al vertice, un popolo d'eguali alla base" (2005: 898/ V).

l'are di Roma, e sovra tutta/ Europa del Coran sparger la luce" (EM I.3/ 139).⁵⁰⁹ Despite Pellico's attempt to challenge the Austrian charge of censorship against the play's alleged political content and critique (which appears instead well concealed by the lovers' storyline), the patriotic call could be hardly overheard in the verses voiced after the protagonist regrets the city's carnage, and reestablishes his affiliation with his hometown:⁵¹⁰

EUFEMIO [...]. Sederà il Moro
 Dominator di queste piagge indarno;
 Addormentar con l'ignoranza e il ferro,
 E il torpor de' suoi barbari costumi
 Egli vorrà la conquistata gente:
 Ma folle speme fia la sua; [...] (EM V.2/ 152)

What is, in fact, presented as a personal strife that Eufemio undertakes against an authoritarian father who instrumentalizes her daughter to protect the city and preserve his crown, corresponds in reality to a war led against a Greek despot who, upon seizing Sicily, had installed his absolute power in the Italian island:⁵¹¹

EUFEMIO Usurpator del Siciliano impero...
 Sprezzator d'ogni diritto... orribil padre,
 Che a lagrime perenni unica figlia
 Dannò... l'autor di mie sciagure... il solo
 Sovra cui delle mie *parricide armi*
 Cadrà l'orror! (EM I.3/ 138, my emphasis)

⁵⁰⁹ Akin to Pellico, Mazzini's religious patriotism justified the undertaking of a sacred war only "when other states oppose a people's freedom to achieve its own mission", which the Italian thinker identified with their pursuit of "long-term international *alliances*" while he deemed any other reason for warfare a "fratricidal crime"; cf. his *Principles of International Politics* from 1871 (2009: 226-7).

⁵¹⁰ In his letter from May 31, 1816 to his older brother Luigi, Pellico decisively denied the censorship's charge issued against his tragedy and expressed his intent to publish the play in the city of Genoa, far from the austere restrictions of the Austrian empire: "Io voleva anche far recitare l'*Eufemio*, ma la Censura l'ha escluso: ne capisci la ragione? quella non è tragedia politica; perchè dunque proibirla? Ne fui tanto arrabbiato che reclamai al Governo, lagnandomi della ingiustizia del Censore: e spero che il Governo non avrà difficoltà di nominare un'altra apposita revisione onde decidere. Se non sarò esaudito stamperemo l'*Eufemio* a Genova" (Rinieri I, 1898: 177/ XXXVI, emphases in the original).

⁵¹¹ See the play's prologue for Pellico's personal reference to the historical sources consulted prior to the tragedy's composition (1861: 137).

chiastic verse construction – that juxtaposes Lodovica's identities as royal daughter ("figlia di re") and divine bride ("d'Iddio sposa") – earthly and heavenly king. These find in the secular and sacred father figures their ideological coincidence and legitimation, as ultimately suggested by Teodoro's very name which entails in the Greek word θεός its direct reference to God.

As a matter of fact, if the tragedy merely alludes to the historical Joan of Arc's myth, it relates in contrast explicitly to the biblical myth of the Jewish female warrior Judith and her beheading of Holofernes. In the role of "holy liberator", of which Lodovica is invested and called upon to defend her hometown ("Scelta da Dio *liberatrice santa*" [EM III.1/ 145, my emphasis]), meet and merge actually the historical and biblical heroines alike. With Lodovica identified as "Giuditta" (EM III.1/ 145), and Eufemio as "novo Oloferne" (EM IV.1/ 149), Teodoro reiterates towards his daughter the divine mission with which she had been originally endowed by her Holy Father:

TEODORO [...]. Religïon t'infihammi
 Religïon che le fanciulle adegua
 Ai fortissimi eroi; ch'unica sparge
 Di prodigi la terra, onde anzi morte
 Concittadino l'uom quasi è del Cielo. (EM III.2/ 146)

The religious discourse serves him to justify Lodovica's commitment to defend, at once, her father, fatherland and faith ("TEODORO Con quel sacro pugnol vendica, o figlia,/ Il *genitore*, i *cittadini*, il *culto*" [EM IV.1/ 151, my emphases]), leading finally – against the backdrop of a patriotic impetus that becomes cosmopolitan – the whole of Italy and ultimately Europe to its liberation and salvation:

TEODORO Ma dall'arabe catene
 Sottrar Sicilia forse puoi; fors'anco,
 Spegnendo Eufemio, dal servaggio scampi

Non che l'Italia, *Europa tutta*. (EM IV.1/ 151, my emphasis)⁵¹³

Against his daughter's reluctance to take over the role of the brave Judith ("LODOVICA Senza lena... smarrita... io dell'eterna/ Morte tremai" [EM III.1/ 145]), and the revelation of her feelings towards Eufemio ("LODOVICA Rea/ Di scellerato amor sono" [EM III.2/ 146]), Teodoro sets forth contrasting the sacred biblical story with the profane historical myth narrated by Livy in the first book of his monumental annals *Ab urbe condita*:

TEODORO [...]. Il cocchio
 Sul cadaver paterno una *Romana*,
 Esempio illustre alla femminile prole,
 Guidava; e intrisa alle infrante membra
 Giungea più grata al caro drudo in seno. (EM III.2/ 146, my emphasis)

The crime of patricide epitomized, since Livy's accounts, by the Roman noblewoman Tullia Minor – daughter of Rome's king Servius Tullius – stands in the play as *exemplum* of arch-treason against one's father ("del genitor"), hence one's fatherland ("di sua patria") – that is the established authority and order that he represents.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ Pellico's prospect of a transnational – however eurocentric – emancipation from servitude resembles once more Mazzini's project of an Italian mission intended to guide the whole of Europe towards its political freedom and assertion. In *Dei doveri dell'uomo* (1841-1860), in fact, he admonishes the Italian people: "ricordatevi che quella missione è l'unità d'Europa" (2005: 899). Akin to Schiller, who had envisioned in the cultural unity of Germany the nation's eminent role of European leadership, Mazzini reminded his people that the unification of the nation ("la patria una e libera che voi dovete fondare") represented the imperative prerequisite for the actual unity of Europe: "Il presentimento di questa missione agita l'Europa e tiene incatenati all'Italia l'occhio e il pensiero della nazioni" (2005: 899).

⁵¹⁴ As to the Livian narrative of Tullia's parricidal atrocity, cf. *Ab urbe condita*, bk. 1, chaps. 46-48. Livy describes Tullia as "ferox" (I/ 46), and depicts her as driven in a fit of madness ("amens") by the Furies to commit her bloody murder: "Foedum inhumanumque inde traditur scelus [...] amens, agitantibus furiis sororis ac viri, Tullia per patris corpus carpentum egisse fertur, partemque sanguinis accaedis paternae cruento vehiculo, contaminata ipsa respersaque" (I/ 48). The notorious myth of the heartless Tullia running her carriage over her father's corpse lying in the Roman forum, prior to establishing with her husband the despotic reign of Tarquinius Superbus, had also been prolifically portrayed in contemporary works of art that Pellico may have been familiar with, as for instance Bartolomeo Pinelli's famous engraving from 1816 illustrating Tullia riding her chariot over her father's dead body; see Colonna's (2006) facsimile collection of and instructive comments to the Roman artist's masterpieces. As demonstrated already in the previous chapter, with reference to numerous paintings that contributed to Napoleon's mythization, the increased interest witnessed during the 19th century in historical rather than classical mythological subjects invested with equal

Oh me beato!... Che vaneggio?

(EM II.1/ 142, my emphases)

By associating his love of country with his longing for his beloved, private and political motifs result so tightly interwoven that the former functions as allegory of the latter.

Eufemio's very ambivalent feelings for Lodovica, oscillating between attraction and acrimony, reflect his sentiments of fealty and fury towards Messina.⁵¹⁵

EUFEMIO [...] sopra costui [*sc.* Teodoro] pende il mio brando
 Pronto a svenarlo; il brando mio che a niuno
 Perdonerà: non all'età canuta,
 Non agli infanti, nè a lor madri! Intera
 Seminerò la vasta isola d'ossa
 E di ruine, sì che mai più aratro
 Non la fecondi, ove negar si ardisca
 L'unico don [*sc.* Lodovica] ch'alla patria io chieggo! (EM I.3/ 140)

Eufemio, who in the last scene of the first act had announced the city's uncompassionate devastation and destruction that would eventually reduce his hometown to a desolate wasteland, in the very following introductory scene of act two, doubts and declares the illegitimacy of his conduct: "il braccio/ Uom non de' alzar contro a sua patria mai" (EM II.1/ 142).⁵¹⁶ Initially dominated and driven by incommensurable rage ("in petto/ D'eroe sterminator loco non abbia/ Altro affetto che l'ira" [EM II.1/ 142]), Eufemio is soon moved

⁵¹⁵ Cf. for instance the passage in the play in which Eufemio first wishes Lodovica's death ("[...] –All'amor mio,/ Donna, toglieanti l'are; oggi coll'are/ Cadi tu dunque! Essere mia non puoi;/ Nessun di te, non Dio medesimo, esulti!/ Muori! Che dico? Oh forsennato! Ah vivi/ Infelice donzella, e a te Messina/ La non mertata sua salvezza debba" [EM II.1/ 142]) with the consequent regret of his invasion: "[...] Appien consunto/ Il sacrificio io non volea; le porte/ Come atterrate aveva io di Messina,/ E il piede vincitor posto nel sangue/ De' cittadini miei, ratta sentii/ Placarsi l'ira mia; mi franse il core/ Improvvisa pietà, supplici udendo quelle prostrate turbe; [...]" (EM V.2/ 152). Eufemio results just as conflicted towards his enterprise ("Opposte furie orrendo/ Fan di me strazio" [EM II.1/ 142]) as Lodovica who, in the monologue that follows the failed attempt to kill his beloved, voices her repentance as the result of a struggling conscience: "Dove m'aggirò? Me fuggir non posso,/ I miei rimorsi, la rovente spada/ D'un angelo infernal che mi persegue.../ Ed ah! m'afferra... e mi trafigge... e unita/ All'ingombro terren lascia quest'alma/ Per più orrendo martire, onde i miei sensi/ Tutti inaudito abbian supplicio" (EM IV.1/ 148). In contrast to Schiller's Johanna and Pellico's Tancreda, Lodovica stands out for lacking their resoluteness of purpose and action.

⁵¹⁶ Eufemio's initially retaliating wrath is reminiscent of the very revenging God from the Old Testament which will only in the later development of the drama turn into the merciful one of the New Testament.

by the sense of remorse for a war that he had been accused from the king to lead against his "paternal sanctuaries" ("paterni templi" [EM I.3/ 139]). It is significant, in this respect, that it is the vision of his parents' grave – emotionally heightened by the rhetorical employment of the synecdoche of "marmo" in which he unexpectedly runs – that finally validates his repentance:

EUFEMIO Fuggo tra l'ombra, a freddo *marmo* appoggio
 Il vaneggiante capo: oh spaventose
 Voci! quel *marmo* riconosco; ei serra
 D'ambo i parenti miei l'ossa onorate.
 Che dicesser non so; ben mi ricorda
 Che m'appellavan scellerato, e lunghi
 Mettean singulti, e nell'avel fremeano...
 (EM V.2/ 152-3, my emphases)⁵¹⁷

From the vengeful and merciless old-testamentarian God, whom he had initially resembled, Eufemio turns into the condoning and gracious Christ of the Gospel: "E il perdonar?... ah, virtù questa è arcana/ Al cor dell'uom, se in lui mai non discese/ La pietà santa del *Vangel!*" (EM V.2/ 152).⁵¹⁸ With these words, the eponymous protagonist eventually announces his return to Christianity: a conversion to his original faith which ultimately coincides with

⁵¹⁷ Next to Foscolo's epistolary novel of *Ortis* (1801), his patriotic poem *Of the Sepulchres* (1807) was undoubtedly among the works that exerted their original fascination and major influence on the poetry and thought of his young disciple Pellico.

⁵¹⁸ As Lodovica juxtaposes the avenging God of the Hebrew bible to the essentially Christian ethics of mercy as guarantor of the humanitarian tenet of forgiveness ("Ma lascia il compier sue vendette a Dio;/ Uomo, padre tu sei; solo il *perdono*,/ Non il *punir* s'aspetta all'uom" [EM IV.1/ 150]), Eufemio contrasts the compassion and clemency that allegedly distinguishes Western culture with the ferocious aggressiveness of the Islamic world: "[...] Ah quanta/ Sia la ferocia vostra, afriche belve,/ Contro i cristiani io nella strage vidi!/ La donna mia voi m'uccideste!" (EM V.2/ 152); as to the opposition of Christian and Muslim creed, see also Cimino's comments to the play (1925: 68-9). It is, undoubtedly, a white and Western hegemonic discourse that Eufemio employs to justify his eventually erroneous charge against the Saracens for killing Lodovica. His prejudice goes, in fact, thus far as to accuse his former allies for the atrocities of a war that he himself had instigated and initiated as the Saracens' chief commander Almanzor reminds him: "[...] nemica/ Ti fu Messina, a dritto l'atterrammo" (EM V.2/ 152). In the play, the Muslim are not only blamed for being alien to the very idea of Christian humaneness, but are also portrayed – in their quality of itinerant, nomadic tribes – as foreign to the sacred notion of fatherland: "[...] È insania/ Degl'idolatri l'adorar le mura/ D'una città; di Maometto i figli/ Patria non hanno altro che il campo e il cielo" (EM V.2/ 152).

Eufemio's political reconciliation, conjoining once more the religious with the patriotic cause under the Christian banner of forgiveness – the very same one that in Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* had eventually reunited the Duke of Burgundy with the French King.⁵¹⁹

It is this ethics of forgiveness that distinguishes Pellico's creed and explains the actual submissiveness with which his characters meet the course of their dramatic action. Based on the Christian remission of sins, Pellico's religious patriotism is thus radically opposite to the principle of action that underscores the religious patriotism enacted in Schiller's *Maid*, and which will characterize Mazzini's insurrectional ideology.⁵²⁰ Eufemio's willingness to die

⁵¹⁹ Written in the years of his religious crisis, Eufemio can be seen as Pellico's *alter ego* – which will find in the fictional irreligious character of Giuliano from *Le mie prigioni* (1832) its major expression; cf. also Cimino's analysis of the play which establishes a close analogy between the author's and his character's dramatic experience (1925: 62-5); as to Pellico's confrontation in prison with Giuliano and the allegorical conflict with his former anti-Christian self, see Milani's remarks (1984: 38-9). In a letter to Luigi, he asserted that Christianity was but a "deficient outline" of the "veracious religion" that he identified with philosophy: "Il Cristianesimo era un imperfetto abbozzo della vera religione, cioè del vero; del culto che oggi la *filosofia* sparge su tutta la terra, e questo culto non ha altra vita che l'analisi, la discussione e l'equità" (Rinieri I, 1898: 320/LXXXIII, my emphasis). Pellico addresses this very differentiation between authentic and superstitious creed in his play through Eufemio's distinction between the Christians' "false God" and the Muslims' "true divinity" as he attempts to make, in turn, Lodovica desist of her vocation to become a nun: "No Lodovica: più che a te m'è nota/ L'amante anima tua; [...] Vana la cinge/ Di superstizion nebbia leggiera,/ Che a te vorria trasfigurarmi; [...] un *falso Iddio*/ Scerni in quel che io abiurava, in quel che espulso/ M'ha dal paterno suol, che dal mio seno/ Te, per me nata respingea, ch'a eterno/ Romito carcer tuoi giorni innocenti/ Per folle ira tirannica dannava/ Testimon d'un *Dio vero* ecco il ridente/ Ciel... [...]" (EM III.3/ 147, my emphases). Only during his Spielberg captivity will Pellico reconvert to his Christian creed from which he had been temporarily alienated since his sojourn in Lyon (1806-1809).

⁵²⁰ Pellico saw, in fact, in the Gospel the Christian teaching and tenet of peaceful coexistence, which explains the very passivity that distinguishes his characters' dramatic development and deeds. In the *Capitoli aggiunti* (1843/ 1851) to his prison memoirs, the author points out: "Fra i motivi che mi facevano condannare le ultime rivoluzioni eseguite o tentate, entrava senza dubbio la mia adesione assoluta al Vangelo che vieta siffatte imprese della violenza. Non già ch'io fossi diventato partigiano della servilità o nemico dei lumi, ma bensì giudicava che i lumi si debbano promuovere con mezzi legittimi e santi, e non mai col rovesciare un potere stabilito alzando stendardo di guerra civile. Dacchè cessarono i miei dubbii sulla religione e rimasi convinto della verità di Fede cattolica, non ho più creduto che *l'amor patrio* debba aver altra ispirazione che *l'ispirazione cristiana*, cioè un verace odio dell'ingiustizia unito allo zelo della pubblica utilità, ma colla ferma determinazione di non commettere mai il male per la speranza di produrne il bene. Dove un governo è malvagio, bisogna o emigrare, o *star sott'esso*, senza prendere parte alle sue colpe ed esercitando tutte le possibili virtù, anche quella d'esporsi a perire, prima di farsi reo di alcuna iniquità" (1964: 598/ IV, my emphases). While he laments the latest manifestations of violence and revolt that the country had been witnessing, Pellico reiterates, in the embracement of his original Catholic creed, a religious patriotism based in the belief of a conflict-free, if not overtly submissive ("*star sott'esso*"), resistance against a repressive regime.

stabbed by the hand of his beloved, lacks consequently Leoniero's heroism.⁵²¹ It resembles, in contrast, Maria Stuart's embracement of a death viewed as God's will and punishment. Eufemio, likewise, accepts his demise in expiation of the treason committed towards his fatherland: "io sono/ Di mia fraterna gente il parricida:/ Un infame son io" (EM V.4/ 155). Yet, by consciously acknowledging his death as the providential acting of God in history ("Iddio/ Mi colpì! non biasimarlo" [EM V.5/ 155]), he acquires a moral significance that Lodovica will fail to achieve.⁵²² Contrary to Eufemio, in fact, her exit from stage sanctions,

As already specified in fn. 506, Mazzini's Catholic faith was in contrast rooted in the Christian ethics of human equality and freedom rather than in its ethics of forgiveness, far from a passive acceptance of the political *status quo*. In this regards, the nature and scope of Mazzini's religious belief resembled Schiller's deism. As Cimino remarks, Eufemio himself – although he denies his Christian faith – never recognized his adhesion to the Muslim doctrine and divine entity; his "theism" cannot thus be identified with any specific orthodoxy (1925: 67). One should call to mind, in this regard, that Pellico wrote his tragedy after he had temporarily distanced himself from his original Christian faith. Pertici, moreover, observes that the younger Pellico, who had returned from his French years, had after all embraced a "cristianesimo filosofico" (2004: 696) which – void of any dogmatism – corresponded to a rather deistic creed to which he remained faithful until his captivity at the Spielberg: "Ma il Pellico degli anni del carcere e del ventennio successivo supera decisamente il *deismo* a sfondo cristiano della sua giovinezza, recupera un rapporto diretto con Dio-persona [...] e torna a sentirsi totalmente inserito nell'istituzione ecclesiastica, nelle sue pratiche di culto, nella frequenza dei sacramenti" (2004: 698, my emphasis). Upon his release, however, from the Spielberg fortress, Pellico will eventually reject his deistic views, as the Christian devotion that inspired *Le mie prigioni* (1832) attests.

⁵²¹ Keen to dismiss any evidence of Schiller's influence on Pellico's *Eufemio*, Mazzucchetti identifies in Lodovica's act of stabbing Pellico's obvious indebtedness to Foscolo's theater, in particular to his *Ricciarda* (1813) (1913: 311-2) – an affinity that Mazzoni equally underscores (1943: 920). This classical motif shall not be viewed as an essential inconsistency to an otherwise Romantic tragedy which – for its medieval context, the images of slaughter that portray the cruel violence of warfare as well as the supernatural elements that are no less manifest in Pellico's drama, as for instance when Lodovica imagines to see and hear her deceased father inciting her to kill Eufemio (EM IV.1/ 151) – cannot but recall Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* (1801); for more details on the Romantic elements in Pellico's tragedy, see also Schoch's analysis (1907: 130). Pellico himself – though he defended the cause of the Romantics in the contemporary dispute that they entertained with the Classicists – equally recognized the latter and their merits to the extent that they both contributed "al miglioramento morale della nazione": "e se dureranno in Italia le denominazioni di *classico* e *romantico*, esse non accenneranno più due partiti discordi su questo punto, ma soltanto [...] due dottrine letterarie, l'una delle quali cerca d'emulare gli antichi in quella specie di *bello*, di cui l'attributo principale è il *semplice*, e l'altra nel rinvenire un'altra specie di *bello*, di cui l'attributo principale è il *singolare*"; cf. his article on *Gertrude of Wyoming* published by *Il Conciliatore* in 1819 (1953: 51, emphases in the original).

⁵²² As to Pellico's providential notion of history, see the author's final remark at the end of his prison memoirs in which expresses his gratitude towards a providential entity that employs men as instruments for its meaningful plan and purpose: "Ah! delle passate sciagure e della contentezza presente, come di tutto il bene ed il male che mi sarà serbato, sia benedetta la Provvidenza, della quale gli uomini e le cose, si voglia o non si voglia, sono mirabili stromenti ch'ella sa adoperare a fini degni di sé" (1964: 590/ XCIX).

through her ultimate withdrawal into the nunnery, her actual retreat from history and the very failure of her patriotic vocation as designed and decreed by God himself.⁵²³

Whereas Schiller's notion of religion possessed a chiefly aesthetic valence that relied upon the ideal of beauty as the realization of human perfection, Pellico attributed to Christianity an eminently ethical value. Despite the moral dignity, in fact, that Eufemio achieves through his death, neither he nor Lodovica can be considered "sublime" characters in Schiller's sense of the word: that is in the mediation of emotional needs and intellectual faculties. Both remain, instead, equally victims of their feelings, hence subject to the constraints of the sensual and physical sphere. Eufemio's very inclination to die is a consequence of his belief in his beloved's demise: "[...]: ah! qui la perdo/ Qui cessa ogni mia speme, ogni mia forza,/ Ogni sete di gloria e d'uman sangue:/ Compiuto è il mio destin! [...]" (EM V.2/ 154). Lodovica, on her part, stabs her suitor to death fully oblivious of her deed as the stage directions that describe her appearance shortly before the tragedy's dénouement suggest: "*scapigliata, fuori di sé, comparisce in fondo della scena col pugnale brandito, e vede Eufemio nell'atto che egli, curvandosi vicino a Teodoro, cerca una spada*" (EM V.4/ 155). Only upon awakening as if from her father's spell, does she realize the actual consequences of her action: "LODOVICA (*vorrebbe, ma non può parlare: finalmente le escono le seguenti grida con voce di terrore*). Il padre!/ O Eufemio, il padre!" (EM V.4/ 155).

⁵²³ Mazzini identified in the fulfillment of this divinely dictated patriotic mission, the moral duty of man based on the indissoluble unity of thought and action ("pensiero e azione") that is of faith and the enforcement of the divine Verbum intended to redeem the individual nations and the whole of humanity from its servile status, and reclaim its right to basic freedom: "Credete e operate. L'azione è Verbo di Dio: il pensiero inerte non n'è che l'ombra. Quei che disgiungono il pensiero e l'azione, smembrano Dio e negano l'eterna unità. Respingeteli dalle vostre file; però che coloro che non sono pronti a testimoniare della loro fede col sangue non sono credenti" (2005: 482-3/ X); cf. *Fede e avvenire* (1835). In this providential *telos*, Mazzini saw the very path paved by God for Italy's emancipation.

If Schiller's Johanna and Pellico's Lodovica alike are entitled to their roles of liberators by a divine calling, Pellico's tragic character never achieves the degree of self-consciousness that distinguished Schiller's heroine. Lodovica remains, in this respect, an antihero. In contrast to Johanna, who is fully aware of her national sacrifice, Lodovica acts in state of delirium from when she first leaves the convent ("LODOVICA [...]. *Semiviva uscii dal chiostro*" [EM III.1/ 145]), to her final murder of Eufemio who must eventually realize that she acted out of her mind: "*Fuor di te sei? ...tu inorridisci...*" (EM V.4/ 155, my emphasis).⁵²⁴ Inscribed in three historical myths – the national French of Jean d'Arc, the biblical of Judith and the Roman of Tullia – Lodovica's drama does not share with any of these female warriors their distinctive heroism or resolution. Her story resolves, instead, into the tragedy of a *failed* myth that reflects in its scepticism the historical drama of Pellico's contemporary times.

⁵²⁴ In a letter dated 27 May 1846 directed to the anti-Austrian poet and writer Domenico Carutti di Cantogno, Pellico articulated his tragic theory while he criticized Carutti's much admired tragedy *Velinda*: "E così avrei bramato che Velinda, scossa, turbata, promettesse il barbaro atto, ma tutta poi si adoperasse a non compierlo, e scegliesse di *morire* [...]. Dipingendo anime esasperate, selvagge, forsennate, ma alte, bisogna salvarle da colpe di perfidia, a farle amare per questa altezza loro. Così vuolsi nella tragedia: il *bello ideale* lo richiede. O se, per natura del soggetto, si dipingesse un'anima grande e buona spinta orrendamente ad inferocire, convien porla sotto l'azione manifesta del *delirio*" (1863: 124/ 251., my emphases). Akin to Schiller, Pellico sees in death ("morire") the dramatic expedient to the achievement of "ideal beauty" ("bello ideale") and the requirement to preserve the hero's moral greatness. In this sense, Eufemio can be seen as redeemed of his faults through his demise, whereas Lodovica remains a "great and good soul" ("un'anima grande e buona") by perpetrating her murderous deed in an oblivious state of mind ("delirio") that exonerates her from the viciousness, for instance, of a Tullia. In contrast to Schiller, however, who ascribed to his aesthetic concept of "ideal beauty" the ethical value of absolute human freedom, Pellico's notion of liberty remains yet strictly subject to God's guide and control. In a letter to his elder brother Luigi from December 1816, Pellico compares man to a puppet-like child on strings who ignores the mysterious, divinely plan that he is expected to follow: "Considera l'uomo come un bambino, a cui un ente più forte e più sapiente concede di poter giuocare coi pochi oggetti che lo circondano; mentre questo stesso ente lo trae qua e là colle legaccio alle spalle, non senza scopo benefico, ma del quale il bambino non può aver idea. Il libero arbitrio esiste, ma in un circolo strettissimo d'operazioni" (Rinieri I, 1898: 210/ XLIV). Although Pellico grants the individual his free will, yet it remains under the control of a superior divine entity whose design stays out of reach.

3.3.3. Summary

The mythical subtext(s) to which Pellico subtly alludes in *Eufemio*, and which Schiller specifically adopts to reinstate the national myth of his French *Maid* derive, in their quality of historical myths, their meaning from the Middle Ages that frame their dramatic action. In the years that immediately preceded the completion of Pellico's first historical tragedy *Francesca da Rimini* (1815), the author had expressed the demand to replace mythical with medieval subjects to illustrate ("di mostrare") " quanti bei temi a poesia possa offerire la vita del medio evo".⁵²⁵ In this new endeavor, Pellico was following the call of his mentor Foscolo who " bramava che ci dividessimo l'assunto di dipingere que' secoli, egli con una serie di tragedie della qualità della sua *Ricciarda*, ed io con poesie narrative" (1861: 404, emphasis in the original).⁵²⁶ The cult of ancient Rome, from which Italians had traditionally claimed the origin of their lineage, was increasingly associated with the Napoleonic imperialistic era, acquiring a retrograde neoclassical taste. It was thus supplanted by a historical time that displayed a closer affinity with a present-day Italy afflicted by foreign domination.⁵²⁷ Just as Schiller sought for the Enlightenment the very idealistic fervor that had characterized the Middle Ages, Pellico identified in the exemplary figure of Dante, " maestro [...] di virtù

⁵²⁵ See Pellico's forward to his historical poem titled *Rafaella* (1861: 404).

⁵²⁶ The narrative poems to which Pellico is referring are – apart from *Rafaella* itself – *Ebelino*, *Ildegarde*, *Aroldo e Clara*, *I Saluzzesi* followed by the ones that the author composed during his prolonged sojourn in prison (*Tancreda*, *Adello*, *Rosilde* to mention only a few); cf. also Schoch's study (1907: 106).

⁵²⁷ The political picture provided by the Middle Ages, at a time when Italy was weakened by internal discords and dominated by the figure of Dante, as the epitome of political exile, offered enough epic material for Pellico to exemplify contemporary history.

religiose e civili", a political idealism that he had strived to promote among his contemporaries.⁵²⁸

The past had henceforth turned into a *locus* of alterity for the present which it indirectly evoked. Every reference to the now that the enactment of this historical camouflage suggested, aimed at instructing and inspiring the audience.⁵²⁹ In this role, the past served to illustrate Schiller's envisioned progress of humanity towards freedom as much as Pellico's deprovincialized program of liberation from the practice of foreign invasion and domination that encompassed all of Europe. Within this prospect of cosmopolitan patriotism, history relinquished its temporal contingency and geographical situatedness to acquire cross-generational and ubiquitous status.

Whereas the dramatization of history allowed Schiller to enact on a metahistorical level (that is, on one that transcended its immanent and contingent circumstances) that universal principle of individual freedom which he considered inviolable and inherent to every human being, it served Pellico, instead, to inform and inspire the people (fellow-countrymen or European) of their right to national emancipation. The ethical claim of this aesthetic undertaking lied for Schiller in the human subject, while Pellico located it in God who had elected the Italian people to free Europe. If Schiller's Maid dies, consequently, as embodiment of the very beautiful soul that is representative of the "whole man", Pellico's Eufemio exits the stage as "parricida [di mia fraterna gente]" (EM V.4/ 155). Stigmatized as violater of a divinly ordained committment to national fealty, he bits farewell in the

⁵²⁸ See the author's forward to his poem *La morte di Dante* (1861: 465).

⁵²⁹ Alt provides an indicative example of this form of historical disguise by illustrating the tactfully concealed critique that Schiller undertook of Napoleon as exemplified, for instance, by his dramatic fragment featuring the short-term Russian zar *Demetrius* (2002: 235).

awareness of his infringement of faith to God and the nation, if nothing else by granting Lodovica an act of worship that ought to be exclusively reserved to his country and Creator: "[...]. Io per la mano/ Muoio di chi adorai... come Dio solo/ Adorato esser dee!" [EM V.4/ 155]. By putting his individual passion over his love for the nation and its people, Eufemio – akin to Don Carlos, and not last Posa – failed to conciliate subjective and objective (or collective) motives of action, personal and political reason, intellect and emotions. He does not debase as Schiller's exemplary "whole" man, his death is anything but commendable.⁵³⁰ It is the critique voiced against a yet divided nation contended by factional interests and ideologies of power.

⁵³⁰ According to Schneider, Schiller's heroine is, in her quality of "beautiful soul" essentially the embodiment of the enlightened notion of human perfection rather than the national icon of a Postromantic era (2011: 229). In his study, Schneider points out, in fact, how the "grace" ("Grazie") that distinguishes the physical beauty of Schiller's women is symbolic of the political utopia that he envisioned (223). For the distinction between "Grazie" or external beauty and "charm", that is "Anmut" or inner moral beauty, see the author's comments on pp. 203-4, and 207.

3.4. Closing Remarks and Outlook

"Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht".⁵³¹ With this line, Schiller concludes the penultimate strophe of his earlier poem *Resignation* from 1786 (NA II.1/ 403, l. 85).⁵³² This pregnant verse points to the *crux* of a new historical understanding which identified no longer in God, but in history itself, the ultimate judge that survives and surveils all times.⁵³³ The secularization of the traditional salvific notion of history had brought along what the German historian Muhlack named the "*humanization of history*" ("*Vermenschlichung der Geschichte*" [1991: 294]), which set its major emphasis on the individual as its chief actor and agent.⁵³⁴ This development can be traced back to Foscolo's and Kleist's theater where the names of the mythological heroes and heroines that had originally featured, were replaced at first by the historical events (such as the *Battle of Hermann*) before their historical protagonists came to the fore, only to acquire exclusive status since Schiller's early masterpiece *The History of the Thirty Years' Wars* (1791-93).⁵³⁵ Schiller's and Pellico's pronounced interest for the past went hand in hand with this novel notion of history. They were equal manifestations of one and the

⁵³¹ "The world history is the last judgment", my translation.

⁵³² This notion of history stemmed obviously from a new *Weltanschauung* that the poem itself thematizes in its introductory verses as the sequel to two contrasting world views (an optimistically theosophical and a pessimistically materialistic one) that Schiller had already addressed in his former poetry; see remarks to the poem in NA II.2A, p. 144.

⁵³³ Schiller will rephrase this very thought in less axiomatic terms during his later Jena lecture from 1789: "Der Mensch verwandelt sich und flieht von der Bühne; seine Meynungen fliehen und verwandeln sich mit ihm: die Geschichte allein bleibt unausgesetzt auf dem Schauplatz, eine unsterbliche *Bürgerin* aller Nationen und Zeiten" (NA XVII.1/ 375, my emphasis).

⁵³⁴ Muhlack points out, moreover, how individual historical protagonists were often conditioned in their deeds by the impact of supraindividual factors ("überindividueller Faktoren") such as the nation which led – on the same line as history – to the consequent personification of their nations (1991: 296-7). This "humanization" of the nation will find its most obvious concretization in the female representations of the Romantic *Germania* and the *Italia Turrita* from the Risorgimento – a phenomenon that will go along, as we shall see in the forthcoming section, with an allegorization of history itself.

⁵³⁵ See on this point, Bösmann's remarks in his study on Schiller's role as historian (2007: 66-7).

same phenomenon in the 19th century which Blumenberg addressed as: "the 'turning back' of man who has been promoted to the status of the subject of history" (1985: 52). This belief in the individual's capability of self-determination was at the root of the Romantics' new mythology.⁵³⁶

Schiller's dictum, however, is anything but disambiguous. The term "Weltgericht" does, in fact, also (literally) mean "last judgment": a definition that would turn world history into the expression of divine justice. Rather than contradicting what has thus far been asserted, this interpretation ultimately reiterates and reinforces it. Viewed in this light, Pellico's providential notion of history does not deny to humankind its eminent role of agent despite the belief in a divine presence and judgment.⁵³⁷ It endows, in contrast, the individuals with a higher sense of responsibility. Both Schiller's and Pellico's views speak for that very enlightened belief in an unbroken and continuous historical development which was driven

⁵³⁶ In his extensive study, Voßkübler elucidates in details, as core thought of the Romantics' new mythology, their claim for a "transcendent" free human subject, that is one placed beyond (historical) immanence, who resembles in its perfection the very divine which had been relocated from outside, *within* man (2004: 14-17). With the historical truth replaced by the poetic one, and the focus of attention directed onto the individual, it was *within* the human subject that Schiller equally transposed – through poetry and the consequent aesthetization of history – the very "telos" of history. The events, in other words, unfolded no longer within the framework of historical contingency, but as a consequence of human action. Dörr explains how the reconceptualization history on the basis of this entelechial principle ended up negating, through the assertion of human agency, historical contingency and with it history altogether – setting the premise for the historian to become a mythologist. Although the scholar exemplifies his point on the basis of Schiller's later drama *Wilhelm Tell* (1804), his argument may equally apply to *Maria Stuart* (1800) and *The Maid of Orleans* (1801). Both are legendary figures that through a mythopoetic process are further transcended from history. Through Schiller's emphasis on their familial and personal drama, the events appear to unfold from the very characters: from their personal (hi)stories, rather than from History. They are the ones who carry the thelos of the dramaturgic (thus historical) development of events in themselves. It is in virtue of this "mythopoetic" process, explains Dörr, that the historical dramaturg turns into a mythologist (2006: 206-8).

⁵³⁷ On Pellico's notion of historical Providence, see Bertacchini's article (1989: 827). Pellico believed in a providential entity and influence that was equally active in the social context. In a letter to his brother Luigi from July 24, 1817, he specified the identity, and thus moral duty, of the writer as an instrument of God's plan and doing for the improvement of society: "Or se uno scrittore ha alcun pregio, egli è dunque quando le sue opere sono un mezzo benchè piccolo, di cui si serve la Provvidenza per l'andamento arcano ma sublime della macchina sociale: fuori di lì i poeti sono vere cicale" (Rinieri I, 1898: 242/ LII).

forward by a purpose that they deemed lay beyond a mere mechanism of cause and effect. It is on the basis of this conviction that poetry turned for the two playwrights into their aesthetic device of historical interpretation. They both were confident that what was yet imperfect would have been vindicated by a perfectable humanity. Pellico placed this faith in God, Schiller respectively in man, that is: in the *ideal* man.⁵³⁸

Drama, as the aesthetic dimension through which the memory of the past could be restored and its meaning renewed in the present, was charged with the role of promoting national collectivity and cohesiveness that was named in German "Geist": "spirit" of the nation and its people.⁵³⁹ Schiller derived the idea of history's relevance and relationship to the

⁵³⁸ Schiller did not renounce his human protagonists to attain the same transcendent status otherwise exclusively claimed by the divine. Schiller's ideal of the free and "whole" man remained a human potential towards which to strive and whose ultimate actualization resided beyond the very realm of immanent history. This "aesthetic of the sublime" ("Ästhetik des Erhabenen") – as Hofmann puts it – which distinguished Schiller's anthropological theory, became the guarantor, within "historical bondage", of a human freedom yet to follow ("die eine Bewahrung der Freiheit des Menschen im Angesicht einer geschichtlichen Unfreiheit garantieren soll" [2006: 180-1]). The poet was therefore for Schiller, as Mazzini had noticed, the man that did not dwell in the past, but – without losing sight of his own time – auspicated for its advancement towards a better future ("Per lui [sc. Schiller], il Poeta era – ed è veramente – un uomo che sta fra il passato e il futuro; prima d'essere artefice, era cittadino dell'epoca in ch'egli era nato, e ne presentiva i destini. [...] retrocedendo, in uomini del secolo XIV o XV, egli si sentiva consacrato dal genio alla missione religiosa di cacciar sulla terra e fra le moltitudini de' principii fecondi e luminosi di sublimi speranze, perché l'epoca, compiuta quasi l'opera di distruzione, non si rimanesse incerta, e scettica d'avvenire" [SEI I/ 322]).

⁵³⁹ Herder will reiterate his notorious notion of "Volksgeist" in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-97) indicating the sum of popular songs, traditions and stories that make up the "spirit" of the Volk or a nation's people. Using the same term, Schiller specified already in his early dramatic reflections on *What Can a Good Permanent Theater Actually Achieve?* (1784): "Unmöglich kann ich hier den großen Einfluß übergehen, den eine gute stehende Bühne auf den Geist der Nation haben würde. *Nationalgeist* eines Volks nenne ich die Ähnlichkeit und Uebereinstimmung seiner Meinungen und Neigungen bei Gegenständen, worüber eine andere Nation anders meint und empfindet. Nur der Schaubühne ist es möglich, diese Uebereinstimmung in einem hohen Grad zu bewirken, wie sie das ganze Gebiet des menschlichen Wissens durchwandert, alle Situationen des Lebens erschöpft, und in alle Winkel des Herzens hinunter leuchtet; weil sie alle Stände und Klassen in sich vereinigt, und den gebahntesten Weg zum Verstand und zum Herzen hat" (NA XX.1/ 99, my emphases). In contrast to Herder, Schiller defined "national spirit" in more abstract terms as the agreement of mindset and affinity of inclinations that an institution like the theater had the ability to foster by speaking to the people's minds and hearts indistinctive of their social class or rank. It was this belief that consequently justified the appeal for the establishment of a national theater ("wenn wir es erlebten eine Nationalbühne zu haben, so würden wir auch eine Nation" [NA XX.1/ 99]): an undertaking, however, which August W. Schlegel qualified in his *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* [1809] as being particularly arduous in view of the geopolitical fragmentation that distinguished Schiller's and Pellico's countries in contrast to the other well

presence from an analogical thinking that he had from the natural sciences of which he had been a former student and from which he graduated with a doctoral thesis on the *Versuch über den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen* (1780).

Following the original analogy of historical and natural laws that Schiller laid out in his first historical writing on the *History of the Netherlands' Revolt* (1788) ("Die Geschichte der Welt ist sich selbst gleich wie die Gesetze der Natur und einfach wie die Seele des Menschen.

Dieselbe Bedingungen bringen dieselben Erscheinungen zurück" [NA XVII.1/ 21]), he had paralleled the past to the present.⁵⁴⁰ On the same line of thought, Schiller was able to

established European nation-states: "[...] in England, Spanien und Frankreich hat sich ein nationales System der dramatischen Kunst entwickelt und festgesetzt; in Italien und Deutschland, wo es nur Hauptstädte der einzelnen Staaten, aber keine allgemeine gibt, findet das Aufkommen des Theaters große Schwierigkeit" (1966: 252). In his dramaturgical study, Schneider sets up the thesis according to which the introduction of the "fourth wall" on stage and the imaginary boundary that divided henceforth the audience from the actors whose space they did no longer share, contributed eventually to the creation of a new collective idea as premise for the development of a national conscience: "Die These lässt sich daher dahin gehend konkretisieren, dass das Theater einen Raum bot, in dem der *Übergang* von der 'alten' zur 'neuen' Kollektivvorstellung *als solcher* direkt und gemeinschaftlich erfahren werden konnte. Auf diese Weise mag die Institution des Theaters wesentlich zur Entwicklung und Einübung solch bedeutsamer Kollektivvorstellungen der Moderne wie 'die Nation', 'die Republik' oder auch 'die Menschheit' beigetragen haben. Sie gab diesen Abstrakta gewissermaßen einen imaginären Körper" (2011: 49, emphases in the original).

⁵⁴⁰ In his concluding remarks to his Jena lecture (1789), Schiller set out his method "nach der Analogie zu schließen" based on the uniformity and unity that human and natural world shared: "der Gleichförmigkeit und unveränderlichen Einheit der Naturgesetze und des menschlichen Gemüths, welche Einheit Ursache ist, daß die Ereignisse des *entferntesten Altherthums*, unter dem Zusammenfluß ähnlicher Umstände von aussen, in den *neuesten Zeitläuften* wiederkehren; daß also von den neuesten Erscheinungen, die im Kreis unsrer Beobachtung liegen, auf diejenigen, welche sich in geschichtlosen Zeiten verlieren, rückwärts ein Schluß gezogen und einiges Licht verbreitet werden kann" (NA XVII.1/ 373, my emphases). This description speaks for a cyclical theory of culture that, as pointed out in the previous pages of this section, is reminiscent of Vico's notion of "*corsi e ricorsi*"; see on this point Pirro's article who comments extensively on Schiller's indebtedness to the Italian historian. The scholar highlights similarities and divergencies of their theories: whereas Vico identified a Providential *ratio* that governed the unfolding of human history, Schiller had a more pragmatic approach to the past which was meant to provide his contemporaries with a knowledge that allowed them to have an impact on the present (2004: 262). Schiller certainly envisioned a more optimistic historical development than Vico for whom humankind was ultimately able to only pretend (guided by Providence who acted in the historical present) towards the ideal of eternal history. The latter, however, stayed eventually out of reach as the individual remained caught in the recurring cycles of history, far from the original Paradise deemed irretrievable. For Schiller, in contrast, the ideal to be pursued was an aesthetic one that found its ultimate actualization outside of history; he also saw in the Elysium the place where humans' lost Paradisian state could be reclaimed. For this reason, Schiller's acceptance of history described a progressively spiral, rather than strictly circular, trajectory (for more details, see also fn. 394). What began for the German playwright with the

recognize, not only in one's own, but also and foremost in the history of others, the past of his time and country. In its alterity, the history of foreign states exemplified the very oppressive regimes from which Schiller's own countryfellowmen had been suffering.⁵⁴¹ Driven by the unshaken belief in a universal manifestation of human history, he claimed for himself the status of "contemporary of all times" ("Zeitgenosse aller Zeiten").⁵⁴² It was this pronounced sense of solidarity towards other countries equally subject to foreign powers and absolutistic monarchies, which distinguished Schiller's cosmopolitan perspective. He did not, consequently, shy away from looking beyond the German borders: be it the Netherlands, Switzerland or the US for the matter. It cannot, in fact, be considered a mere coincidence that 1783 – when Schiller first sketched the plan for his *Don Carlos* – was the year that coincided with the end of the American Revolutionary War against Britain (1775-1783). These instances had proven to Schiller that a country ought to be occupied prior to claim its

idealization of an originally teleological acceptance of history, was soon to be questioned by the reality of empirical history. He thus attempted to save his idealism and faith in the development of humanity by confining their strive for freedom to the aesthetic realm and by locating the latter beyond empirical history.

⁵⁴¹ Except for *Ester d'Engaddi*, *Erodiade* and *Tommaso Moro*, the only tragedies whose dramatic action is not contained within the borders of the Italian peninsula, the alterity of history was exemplified for Pellico by the very alienation that afflicted the Italian city-states which asserted the hegemony of their principality and power over others on the basis of their cultural and dynastic supremacy. Yet in their otherness, they ought in Pellico's eyes to become representative of one and the same culture and country. Schiller's dramaturgical production, in contrast, prevalently focused around the history of foreign European states, their own freedom and autonomy as condition and premise for their reciprocal peaceful coexistence. Lützeler concisely summarized Schiller's "Europäische[] Dramaturgie" as one whose plot development unfolded against the backdrop of three main conflicts: that of England against France, of Spain against England, and of France against Germany (2007: 64). For Schiller, as much as for Mazzini and his ideal "Young Europe" ("Giovine Europa"), the preservation of peace was indispensable to guarantee the brotherly, and hence free, coexistence of all European states. "Mazzini" – as Isabella remarks – "viewed national emancipation as the precondition for the global dissemination of freedom and peace" (2009: 99).

⁵⁴² As Schiller wrote in a letter from Jan. 25, 1795 to the German thinker and literate Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: "Wir wollen, dem Leibe nach, Bürger unserer Zeit seyn und bleiben, weil es nicht anders seyn kann; sonst aber und dem Geiste nach ist es das Vorrecht und die Pflicht des Philosophen wie des Dichters, zu *keinem Volk und zu keiner Zeit zu gehören*, sondern im eigentlichen Sinne des Worts der *Zeitgenosse aller Zeiten* zu seyn" (NA XXVII/ 129, 98., my emphases).

autonomy and the right to establish itself as a state. Foreign occupation, therefore, turned into the very condition for the institutionalization of the nation. If this kind of institutional thinking describes Schiller's cosmopolitanism, it also best justifies its allegiance with the playwright's patriotic aspiration for national emancipation.⁵⁴³

In politically disgregated countries as Germany and Italy, the notion of fatherland remained mainly circumscribed to a specific city-state – as Pellico's tragedies have most obviously illustrated. It was a provincial patriotism that claimed its right less on well-defined geopolitical borders, than on a country's cultural self-definition, which preceded and eventually promoted its political self-assertion. As a matter of fact, it is no other but culture that drives politics, and leads eventually to the institution of a nation-state.⁵⁴⁴ This explains ultimately the role of leadership with which both Schiller's and Pellico's countries alike had been endowed: a cultural "nationalism" that had underscored their political considerations in the first place, and consequently inspired their dramatic production.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ According to Kemiläinen, "Schiller war und blieb ein Weltbürger" (1956: 129). As a matter of fact, for him – as for other German intellectuals – cosmopolitanism and patriotism represented an inseparable dyad. Von Beyer, Schiller's contemporary and countryfellowman, explained the subordinate role that patriotism ought to be behold in towards cosmopolitan aspirations and warned against the dangers of an otherwise exclusive sense of patriotism: "Sofern nicht [...] der Patriotismus von dem Kosmopolitismus abhängig gemacht und demselben untergeordnet wird; sofern nicht der letzte dem ersten gleichsam zur Seite steht, um ihn zu leiten: auf welche Abwege können alsdann nicht Menschen durch ihren Patriotismus gebracht werden! [...] Wie oft hat er [sc. der Patriotismus] nicht Verwüstung und Sklaverei verbreitet! Durch ihn ward einst Rom groß: aber, wie viel hat nicht diese Größe der Menschheit gekostet. Sie sehen hieraus: daß es Fälle genug giebt, und geben kann, in welchen der Patriotismus, sofern er nicht dem Kosmopolitismus weicht, seinen Werth und sein Verdienst, das ihn zur Tugend macht, verliert" (1795: 230). Cosmopolitan thinkers drew the value ("Werth") and merit ("Verdienst") of their ideals from their emphasis on humanity and its progress as a whole.

⁵⁴⁴ It suffices to think, for instance, of France and the historical vicissitudes that followed Rousseau's social contract theory.

⁵⁴⁵ Mazzini, whom Kostka named for his idealism and indebtedness to the German poet "Schiller reborn" (1997: 71), will restore the notion of Italy's cultural role of leadership. In contrast to Schiller, however, his – as much as the overall mission of the Italian Risorgimento – will be chiefly religiously motivated.

Yet the question arises: How were they able to conciliate their patriotic sense of cultural identity and uniqueness with their cosmopolitan ideals? One can argue that the answer to this question lies in the very nature of their cosmopolitan views: whether it was chiefly literary as in Pellico's case, or first and foremost anthropological as for Schiller. As active translator and avid reader of foreign literature, Pellico had envisioned an alliance of countries engaged in a reciprocal literary exchange.⁵⁴⁶ Prior to this prospect of an ideal *res publica litteraria*, Schiller had claimed Posa's "boldest ideal of a republic of men" ("das kühnste Ideal einer Menschenrepublik").⁵⁴⁷ His eminently anthropological concern was attested as early as *Don Carlos*'s first Thalia fragment where he had explained in the prologue the extent to which his very interest in history had been catalyzed by the demand to justify the human being: "mir lag daran, den *Menschen* zu rechtfertigen" (NA IV/ 345, emphasis in the original). Only the "whole man" engaged in the aesthetic play-drive – that is, in the harmonious synthesis of sensuous and rational drives – was able to enjoy freedom and thus attain happiness. This human wholeness and integrity is one for which every state, in Schiller's opinion, ought to strive, rather than impairing their citizens' liberty with restrictive rules and oppressive laws. For it was on the happiness of its people that a state's strength and

⁵⁴⁶ Pellico's translation of Byron's *Manfred* was published in 1818, after the British lord had completed the English translation of *Francesca da Rimini* in 1816 (see Pellico's letter to Luigi from Nov. 22, 1816 [Rinieri I/ XLIII, 205]). The increased opening and outreach to European culture and literature became one of the most debated arguments in the contemporary *querelle* between Classicists and Romantics. In his essay on Friedrich Bouterwek's comprehensive 12-volume *History of New Poetry and Eloquence* (1801-1819) (*Geschichte der neuern Poesie und Beredsamkeit*), Pellico's friend Berchet argued for the need to study foreign literature for political – more than aesthetic – reasons, that is in order to learn from other countries, their achievements and thus avoid to remain behind (1912: 78-9). Mazzini would equally support this stance; according to Isabella's study, he "dismissed the idea that the birth of a European literature would entail the destruction of national spirit, arguing that national independence and intellectual isolation should not be confused" (2009: 99).

⁵⁴⁷ See English transl. *Letters on Don Carlos*, no. 2, p. 178.

length of survival depended, and it was ultimately on the basis of everyone's happiness that all states could afford to peacefully coexist.⁵⁴⁸

This very question of humanity and concern for humankind had contributed, in the first place, to the aesthetization of history as fiction-making device. In Schiller's and Pellico's dramas, the historical narratives of disrupted family relations and the dreadful consequences derived from their inner familial lack of unity, reproduced metaphorically the fate of a divided country. In its quality of both metaphor and alterity, history was able to transcend its immanent and contingent dimension, and acquire eventually universal – or metahistorical – status. If Foscolo and Kleist had originally historicized ancient Greek myths and simultaneously demythized coeval history, Schiller and Pellico charged medieval (hi)stories with a universal meaning. Their significance was no longer temporally or locally bounded. Foscolo's and Kleist's original politization of history had turned for their successors into a "new mythology", one that had put to the fore aesthetics and faith, art and religion to set the individual free. As a consequence of their historical pessimism, history was reinscribed in a mythical matrix which, however – in contrast to Foscolo and Kleist – they no longer questioned. On the contrary, after the French Revolution had recalled the faith in an intelligible historical unfolding, history – whose *telos* and, along with it, its categories of cause and effect had been shattered – could find a new meaning in myth which, instead of explaining history, renders it "unquestionable".⁵⁴⁹ As Blumenberg puts it: "[The need for

⁵⁴⁸ All of Schiller's characters, whether heroes and antiheroes, distinguish themselves for their profound kernel of humanity, from which they derive eventually the very ambiguity that distinguishes their personalities and deeds: be it the tears that move we witness with the Spanish king Philipp II. and the English queen Elizabeth, be it Posa's self-interested idealism or Joan of Arc religious patriotism, despite their faults and iniquity, they are all portrayed as essentially human, that is with their faults, doubts and weaknesses.

⁵⁴⁹ In his extensive disquisition on the *Work on Myth*, Blumenberg addresses the "Unbefragbarmachung" as a chief category of myth (1979: 143).

explanation is suspended] in *mythical rationality*, by connections that are not causal and are not explanations" (1985: 128, my emphasis). The historical Roman and religious myths that functioned as subtexts to Schiller's and Pellico's dramas represented the deep structure at work in "mythical rationality" for the actualization of meaning.

With Manzoni and Goethe, history will be drawn back into its sphere of immanence, and metahistory will reclaim its empirical status. As a consequence of the historical pessimism and scepticism witnessed since the aftermath of the French terror, the traditional notion of universal history as a meaningful continuum had been dismissed. As we shall see, its discontinuous and fragmentary nature will turn history ultimately into allegory.

IV. PERFORMING THE NATION'S PAST: GOETHE'S AND MANZONI'S ALLEGORIZATION OF HISTORY.

The demythization of history witnessed with Foscolo's and Kleist's dramatic *oeuvre* had set the premise for a new perception of time.⁵⁵⁰ Drawn to the foreground, history finally gained its momentum: disjointed from timeless myth, it became measurable and datable. The contemporary German historiographer Reinhart Koselleck views this paradigmatic evolution as the climax of a change that began to outline itself as early as in the 16th century when the idea – and, with it, the term – of centuries (*Jahrhunderte*) was first established bringing forth the "pacemakers of temporal reflection" and the "chronological markers of historical experience" (1979: 246-7). Following Koselleck's argument, time acquired "historical quality" turning into "a dynamic and historical force in its own right" (1979: 246). This historization marked an epochal shift in temporalization which allowed an otherwise ephemeral and eluding entity (such as time) to become intelligible.⁵⁵¹ The challenge, in fact, that came along with the attempt to render time intuitable affected the modalities of its conceptualization. It privileged, in this respect, an essentially metaphorical form of

⁵⁵⁰ It is the contemporary French historiographer Paul Ricoeur who draws a line that establishes the distinction between "demythologization" (which he describes in terms of the loss of myth "as immediate logos" [1967: 162]) and "demythization" that is, in contrast, the "loss of the mythical dimension" of history which led to the dichotomy of myth versus history. As a consequence of this dichotomy, Ricoeur explains: "mythical time can no longer be co-ordinated with the time of events that are 'historical' in the sense required by historical method and historical criticism" (1967: 161-2).

⁵⁵¹ Koselleck's argument departs from the axiomatic premise that "[t]ime cannot be intuited" (2002: 102). The incapability to "have an intuition of past *time*" (2002: 102, emphasis in the original) is a point that Koselleck appears to borrow from Ricoeur who introduces his study on *Time and Narrative* with an excursus on Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, in which the Church Father admits his inability to ontologically define time (1984: 5-30). As Ricoeur remarks, the aporia of time resides in its very elusiveness: "How can time exist if the past is no longer, if the future is not yet, and if the present is not always?" (1984: 4). Ricoeur will find the answer to his rhetorical question in the "simultaneous" nature of time that he sets against the fictionalized diachronical organization of events instead of historical narratives. As we shall see, for the German historical marxist Walter Benjamin, this temporal simultaneity will manifest itself in the conflation of past and present when the fictitious continuum of time is blasted open.

representation that was able to circumvent its abstraction and confer it a higher degree of tangibility. The result was a distinctively *spatial* mode of denotation expressed by means of *concrete* historical events: "in the sense of which one speaks of the time of the French Revolution" (Koselleck 2002: 102). Concomitant with Koselleck's disquisitions on the "metaphorical use of language" (2002: 102) to aptly convey the notion of time, were Blumenberg's studies in his *Prospect for a Theory of Nonconceptuality* on the "metaphorics of space", anthropologically justified as being "fundamental to the intuition of time" (1997: 87).⁵⁵² In its classical definition of "continued metaphor" – that is, as trope that reaches beyond the lexical level to the scope of discourse –, and in virtue of its spatial connotation, the trope of allegory best illustrates henceforth this new acceptance of (historical) time.⁵⁵³ It is at this point of transition from metaphor to allegory that this chapter

⁵⁵² Blumenberg appended this short essay originally from 1960 to his writing *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* (*Shipwreck with Spectator*) from 1979, in which the author elaborated his "theory of nonconceptuality" elucidating the historical genesis of metaphorical language within the context of those anthropological premises that justify its significance and implementation as conceptual device. In the very year of 1979, Koselleck published his influential work *Vergangene Zukunft* (*Futures Past*) in which he first postulated his theory of a metaphorical apprehension of time.

⁵⁵³ The definition of allegory as "continued" (or, for that matter, extended) metaphor stems from the ancient Roman rhetorician Quintilian according to whom: "*Allegory*, which is translated in Latin by *inversio*, either presents one thing in words and another in meaning, or else something absolutely opposed to the meaning of the words. The first type is generally produced by a **series of metaphors**" (Bk. VIII. vi. 44, emphases in the original, bold added). "Thus", as the author concludes in the following book, "continued *metaphor* develops into *allegory*" (Bk. IX. ii. 46, emphases in the original). Quintilian's definition of allegory echoes Walter Benjamin's description of baroque allegory connoted in his dissertational study *On the Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (1925) by an "exuberant use of metaphor" ("überwuchernde Metaphorik" [I.1. 374]), (1977: 198). "With every idea", he writes: "the moment of expression coincides with a veritable eruption of images, which gives rise to a chaotic *mass of metaphors*" ("einer wahren Bilderuption" [I.1. 349]), (1977: 173, my emphasis). In his dissertation, Benjamin also points to the very spatial nature of allegory which portrays history as a landscape of death and debris. Allegory displays in this respect a strict correlation to time, more precisely: to the earthly and edacious time. Koselleck's theory of a spatial acceptance of time that finds expression in the vision of ruins ("one calls to mind the juxtaposition of ruins and new buildings" [2002: 102]) displays a significant affinity with Benjamin's allegorical notion of spatiality as it takes shape in his persistent reflections on historical, urban and mnemonic landscapes. In the unconcluded *opus magnum* of his *Arcades Project*, Benjamin explicitly declares to "[p]ursue the question of whether a connection exists between the secularization of time in space and the allegorical mode of perception" (1999: 472 [N8a,4], implying the assumption of a relation between the two terms of comparison. It is the very activation of memory that enables eventually disparate fragments of reality

departs, and defends its stance. The theoretical grid to my analyses will be provided by Benjamin's and Ricoeur's disquisitions on history and time, aesthetics and allegory. As this section analyzes the allegorization that Goethe and Manzoni undertook of history in their plays, it addresses as well through the dramatization of their national past the consequent aesthetization of history: an aspect that has been articulated already in conjunction with Schiller's and Pellico's poetics.

If the 18th century had contributed to supplanting mythology, that is the *logic* of myth, with the cult of human reason, the Enlightenment marked but the final and fatal stage of a retrogressive process that Nietzsche had dated back as early as to fifth-century Greek drama. In his seminal work on *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), the German philosopher had blamed the tragedian Euripides for heralding the "murderous principle" of "aesthetic Socratism", deemed responsible for the demise of tragedy and the consequent decline of myth (1964: 101).⁵⁵⁴ "The ruin of tragedy", as he poignantly declared, "was at the same time the ruin of myth" (1964: 177). On the concomitant disappearance of ancient drama and myth, the theorist of allegory Walter Benjamin explained in his habilitation dissertation on *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1925) how the tragic hero found himself eventually supplanted by the martyr figure of the Baroque: "in one stroke the death of the hero has been

to be conjoined in a (spatial) constellation. The kinship between unfinished *Arcades Project* and this dissertation on *Trauerspiel* is explicitly established by Benjamin in the first remarks with which he introduced convolute N: "The pathos of this work [*sc.* the *Arcades Project*]: there are no periods of decline. Attempt to see the nineteenth century just as positively as I tried to see the seventeenth, in the work on *Trauerspiel*" (1999: 458 [N1,6]), and again: "The book of the Baroque exposed the seventeenth century to the light of the present day. Here, something analogous must be done for the nineteenth century, but with greater distinctness" (1999: 459 [N1a,2]).

⁵⁵⁴ On Nietzsche's invective against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, see Nolte (1990: 137).

transformed into that of a martyr" (1977: 113-4).⁵⁵⁵ The extinction of the classical Greek hero and the emergence of the martyr has been investigated and illustrated already in the previous chapter of this dissertation – exemplified by the apotheosis that Schiller's dramatic protagonists experienced, whose *post-mortem* sublimation raised them to the status of national martyrs.⁵⁵⁶ Benjamin elucidated in length the actual transition from classical tragedy to the Baroque mourning play (*Trauerspiel*), and identified Schiller's dramas as being representative of the "romantic form of the *Trauerspiel*": "No writer of modern times has struggled more intensely than Schiller to recreate the pathos of antiquity in subjects which have no connection with tragic myth. He believed that in the form of *history* he could renew the irrepeatable prerequisite which tragedy possessed in the *myth*" (1977: 122, my emphases).⁵⁵⁷ The death of tragedy and myth sanctioned the birth of both the German

⁵⁵⁵ Written between 1916 and 1925, Benjamin's habilitation appeared for the first time partially in print in 1928 (Menke 2006: 210).

⁵⁵⁶ In his *Trauerspiel* book (1925), Benjamin actually relates the martyr figure to that of the tyrant as chief character of the Baroque drama: "In the baroque, the tyrant and the martyr are but the two faces of the monarch" (1977: 69). The sovereign figure, that finds its objective correlative in the Baroque tyrant, derives for Benjamin its importance as "representative of history" (1977: 65), consequently the "only response to the call of history is the physical pain of martyrdom" (1977: 91). Hence sovereign and martyr alike are linked to the sphere of immanent temporality: "In the *Trauerspiel* monarch and martyr do not shake off their immanence" (1977: 67). In his preliminary remarks on the tyrant figure, Benjamin explains that it was the very idea of the sovereign that in Baroque drama found its incarnation in the absolute monarch: It was the very "theory of sovereignty" which "demands the completion of the image of the sovereign, as *tyrant*" (1977: 69, my emphasis). This was the dramatic expectation whether or not the sovereign did actually perform the role of the tyrant: "The drama makes a special point of endowing the ruler with the gesture of executive power as his characteristic gesture, and having him take part in the action with the words and behaviour of a tyrant *even where the situation does not require it*" (1977: 69, my emphasis). In his quality of absolute power, the sovereign – according to Benjamin's interpretation – in the first place the head of the state who "holds the course of history in his hand like a scepter" (1977: 65). As a matter of fact, he "is constantly intervening directly in the workings of the state so as to arrange the data of the historical process in a regular and harmonious sequence" (1977: 97).

⁵⁵⁷ Schiller explicitly employs the term "Trauerspiel" in a letter that he directs to his friend Körner while in the process of writing the historical drama of *The Maid of Orleans*: "Die Idee eines Trauerspiels muß immer *beweglich* und werdend sein, und nur virtualiter *in hundert und tausend möglichen Formen* sich darstellen" (letter to Körner, 28 July 1800 [NA XXX/ 181, 218.]). Schiller's notion of "Trauerspiel" as an always changing idea that finds its expression in countless possible forms shares a strong affinity with the ineffable nature of allegory.

mourning play and history. If tragedy had thus far enacted myth, the *Trauerspiel* would henceforth enact history.

History itself, however, was already undergoing a process of reevaluation. The Jacobinian terror, which had disappointed the enlightened optimism and idealism that had initially inspired a profound faith in historical progress and human perfectibility, undermined eventually the teleological and unilinear acceptance of history. It is in one of his later poems by the title *Am Antritt des neuen Jahrhunderts*, that Schiller had expressed his concern for the belligerent turmoil and threats that were afflicting his century and dramatically affecting the course of history:⁵⁵⁸

Edler Freund! Wo öffnet sich dem Frieden,
Wo der Freiheit sich ein Zufluchtsort?
Das Jahrhundert ist im Sturm geschieden,
Und das neue öffnet sich dem Mord. (NA II.1/ 362)

The French Revolution through its pernicious aftermath, and the forthcoming sequel of coalition wars during the Napoleonic empire, had marked the transition from mythical to historical violence. Two consequences derived from this paradigmatic shift, both influenced by the process of secularization that the French Revolution had advocated. On the one hand, the loss of faith in a teleological development of human history had disrupted and dismembered its meaningful unity and continuum. This sense of discontinuity and fragmentation affected henceforth inevitably historical interpretation lending itself to an allegorical exegesis. This allegorical mode of approaching history and the world can, in turn,

⁵⁵⁸ Written in June 1801, that is after the end of the second coalition war and following the Treaty of Lunéville in February of the same year, the poem voices the author's indictment against a turn of the century witnessing the England and France contending their European territories and marked by endless conflicts within and between the nations; for specific references in Schiller's verses to the actors and agents of the ongoing European warfare, see NA II.2 B, 99-101; see also Alt (2002: 226-7) for a contextualization of Schiller's poem within the broader perspective of his reflections on the Germany's cultural national program.

be viewed as the result of the Romantics' natural theology that had posited the transcendent into the realm of immanence. God was no longer conceived as a *supernatural* entity, but had moved into the realm of nature where and with which it manifested its presence and inseparable unity. For the Romantics, to engage with nature meant to experience the divine. If the natural universe had turned into the book of God, history – after descending from the heights of the Hegelian idealism into the phenomenological world of life and death – had turned into nature-history.⁵⁵⁹ The allegorization of history thus signified primarily its immanentization and its renewed interpretation after the forfeiture of its inner logic and progress.⁵⁶⁰

Both the immanent and the irrational component of history found their resonance in Goethe's and Manzoni's drama, albeit each in their distinctive way. In contrast to Manzoni, who sought to prove the unfolding of a divine plan and providence within history, Goethe never granted history its theodicy, and denied any evidence of a teleological design. Yet the two authors were able to meet on common ground, and to cultivate a friendship that lasted approximately two decades – which appears the more surprising considering their otherwise so disparate views.

⁵⁵⁹ Both the notion of the "book of nature" through which God rendered his presence and partaking in the world evident, and the resemantization of history as "nature-history" are key terms and tenets of the Baroque era. Benjamin will articulate their relevance throughout his dissertational study on the German baroque drama, from which I shall reference in more detail in my forthcoming analysis of Manzoni's and Goethe's works.

⁵⁶⁰ In the introductory pages to *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (1925), Benjamin elucidates the kinship and closeness of allegory to the immanent, worldly sphere: "Feeling himself dragged towards the abyss of damnation, a damnation registered in a profoundly carnal sense, the baroque dramatist, allegorist, historiographer, and the personages he animates, cling fervently to the world. The *Trauerspiel* is counter-transcendental, it celebrates the immanence of existence even where this existence is passed in torment" (1977: 16, emphasis in the original). The Baroque *Trauerspiel* is thus viewed as being inherently allegorical.

In contrast to the previous section, I will draw this time on Ricoeur's theories. It will be my objective to highlight his distance to Hayden White's thought who laid the foundation for the theoretical premise of my former analysis. For it is Paul Ricoeur who identifies the experience of phenomenal time as being specifically *historical*. In his magisterial and multivolume work on *Time and Narrative* (1983-1985), he elucidates at length the significance of history as narrative device apt to reproduce an experience of temporality that would otherwise remain elusive. As he postulates in the introductory chapter of his first volume: "time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience" (1984: 3).⁵⁶¹ If Ricoeur agreed with White on the distinctively narrative texture of history, he also insisted on keeping the fictional and historical modes of narration apart:

In other words, history is both a literary *artefact* (and in this sense a fiction) and a representation of *reality*. It is a literary artefact insofar as, in the manner of all literary texts, it tends to assume the status of a self-sufficient system of symbols. It is a representation of reality insofar as the world that it depicts – and which is the 'world of the work' – claims to hold for **real events** in the **real world**. (1981: 291, emphases in the original, bold added)⁵⁶²

⁵⁶¹ Ricoeur certainly concurs with White on the affinity shared by historical and fictional narratives alike to the extent, as he specifies, that both types of narratives have in common the same referent, humankind and human existence: "For what the historian attempts to restore through the whole network of causal relations is precisely what other men have experienced. The inexhaustible *human character of the past* therefore necessitates the work of integral comprehension" (1965: 28, my emphasis). It is this very "human character of the past" that will play a pivotal role in Manzoni's acceptance of history, in particular in relation to one of his central aesthetic questions concerning historical versus poetic truth. The form of "comprehension", in fact, to which Ricoeur refers is the historian's "sympathetic effort" which requires both the "*imaginative projection* into another present" as much as "into another human life" (1965: 28, my emphasis). The historian's subjectivity is rooted precisely in this sympathetic act of imagination and identification, insofar as – Ricoeur specifies – the "historian goes to the men of the past with his *own* human experience" (1965: 29, my emphasis).

⁵⁶² Ricoeur explains the link of history to fiction anthropologically by pointing to the inherently human predisposition for storytelling: "if our historical condition requires nothing less than the conjunction of two narrative genres, it is because of the very nature of our experience of *being* historical. [...] We are members of

Hence, according to Ricoeur, history's exclusively "*quasi-fictional character*" (1991: 354, my emphasis) allows to posit a claim on truth and reality from which fiction is instead exempt.⁵⁶³

The question as to how close a relationship fiction ought to establish with the historical events that Goethe and Manzoni chose to enact, will play a key role in their poetics. Whereas Goethe insisted on coalescing history with poetry, for Manzoni they eventually remained separate and distinct. Yet both dramatists agreed on the relevant role performed by poetry in counteracting the prosaic nature of a history of warfare and violence. By the same token, religious and pagan myths – which had once been destituted of their significance, and consequently dismissed as hermeneutic devices – will now be reinstated by both authors within the sphere of contingent human history. This literary practice of mythical reevaluation

the field of historicity as storytellers, as novelists, as historians. *We belong to history before telling stories or writing history*" (1981: 294, emphases in the original). Ricoeur goes thus far in his disquisitions as to suggest in the conclusion to the last volume of his trilogy *Time and Narrative* (1988) a possible link between the "unrepresentability of time" and "the way that (postmodern) narrativity is carried towards its limits", detecting the cause in what Benjamin had identified as the demise of the storyteller (1988: 270).

⁵⁶³ In this article that first appeared in 1984 under the title *Le Temps raconté*, Ricoeur recounts and readdresses key thoughts articulated already in his trilogy *Time and Narrative* (1983-1985) of which the first two volumes had already been published. In his claim to objectivity and veracity, Ricoeur compares the historian with the judge figure: "For historians, the explanatory form is made autonomous; it becomes the distinct object of a process of authentication and justification. In this respect, historians are in the situation of a judge: placed in the real or potential situation of a dispute, they attempt to prove that one given explanation is better than another" (1984: 175). One cannot but recall in this context Nietzsche's critique against the historian who seeks to act like a judge towards the past: "Objectivity and justice have nothing to do with each other" (1964: 52). On the basis of this assumption, the historian ought to be for Nietzsche, in the first stance, an artist able to achieve historical objectivity by means of a creative process of imagination and invention. "To think objectively, in this sense of history", Nietzsche explained, "is the work of the *dramatist*" (1964: 51). On the same token, Benjamin identified in drama – more precisely in the allegorical drama of the Baroque – the medium apt to undermine the alleged "justice" of history. Ascribing history a degree of objectivity meant for Nietzsche to literally provide past events with an objective plan from *outside* rather than from *within* history itself: "to think one thing with another, and weave the elements into a single whole; with the presumption that the unity of plan must be *put into the objects* if it be not already there" (1964: 51, my emphasis). Nietzsche did not deny the "truly subjective nature" of this kind of objectivity and mentioned Schiller as paradigmatic example of this historiographical practice (1964: 52). The "real value" of drama, Nietzsche argued, consisted "in *inventing* ingenious variations on a probably commonplace theme" (1964: 54, my emphasis). It was not "indifference" that objectivity sought, but "a creative vision from a height, the loving study of the data of experience, the free elaborating of a given type" (1964: 54); see also Hayden White's remarks on Nietzsche's notion of historical objectivity (1973: 284-5). Goethe, in contrast to Manzoni, will in this sense display a closer affinity to Nietzsche's thought.

and restoration will be illustrated, as onset to this chapter, by Goethe's Promethean *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), and subsequently contrasted and compared with the Christ figure exemplified by Manzoni's *Adelchi* (1822).

The Promethean and Christian interpretation pursued by both playwrights alike can be viewed as mythical devices employed to come to term with the secularization of history and, along with it, the dissolution of a transcendent and meaningful world order. It is as a consequence of this secularized worldview that Walter Benjamin had detected a sense of melancholy which resulted from a transitory notion of time – where the latter had been reduced to the ephemeral status of *natural* history. In Benjamin's words: the "allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history" (1977: 177) marked by death, destruction, and downfall. As the "word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience" (1977: 177), the individual – according to Benjamin – must come to term with the evanescence of meaning, one that only the allegorist can, in its very ineffable quality, grasp: "If the object becomes allegorical under the gaze of melancholy [...], then it is exposed to the allegorist, it is unconditionally in his power. That is to say it is now quite incapable of emanating any meaning or significance of its own; such significance as it has, it acquires from the allegorist" (1977: 183-4).

The secularized acceptations of both ephemeral time and elusive meaning are the elicitors of a world indifference – as Blumenberg later put it in his study on *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1966) – that humankind must face by means of individual assertion (*Selbstbehauptung*): "'self-assertion' [...] means an existential program, according to which man posits his existence in a *historical* situation and indicates to himself how he is going to deal with the reality surrounding him and what use he will make of the possibilities that are

open to him" (1983: 138, my emphasis).⁵⁶⁴ Following Benjamin's drama theory, the original "mourning [*Trauer*] as the resonance of the tragic" (1977: 118, emphasis in the original) had turned in the Baroque *Trauerspiel* into melancholy. If mourning had been associated thus far with the tragic hero subject to the inclemency of fate, melancholy came to be related to the martyrdom that the monarch figure experienced through his fall – caused by the "faithlessness of friends and enemies" (1977: 72) – from the heights of his social standing into disgrace.⁵⁶⁵ While the idea of martyrdom is enacted with major emphasis – albeit in very different ways – in Goethe's *Egmont* (1788) and Manzoni's *Adelchi* (1822), the motif of treason – whether personal or collective – is a recurring theme in all four dramas. Due to the more pronounced resemblance that the motif of personal betrayal displays in Goethe's *Götz* (1773) and Manzoni's *Carmagnola* (1820), I will compare these two plays to illustrate their thematic affinities. In contrast, the eminently collective nature of treachery that drives forth the events in Goethe's *Egmont* (1788) and Manzoni's *Adelchi* (1822) suggests that they be placed and analyzed next to each other. Whereas this particular choice may be functional to the argument that I pursue in this section, all four plays show other relevant points of

⁵⁶⁴ Blumenberg's argument points to an epochal shift that witnessed the transition of the individual's attention from the realm of transcendence to that of transience: "The escape into transcendence, as the possibility that is held out to man and has only to be grasped, has lost its human relevance precisely on account of the absolutism of the decisions of divine grace, that is, on account of the dependence of the individual's salvation on a faith that he can no longer choose to have. This changed set of presuppositions brings into the horizon of possible intentions the alternative of the immanent self-assertion of reason through the mastery and alteration of reality. A 'disappearance of order' [*Ordnungsschwund*], causing doubt regarding the existence of a structure of reality that can be related to man, is the presupposition of a general conception of human activity that no longer perceives in given states of affairs the binding character of the ancient and medieval cosmos, and consequently holds them to be, in principle, at man's disposal" (1983: 137, emphasis in the original); cf. on this point also Greiner (2009: 194-5).

⁵⁶⁵ In his quote, Benjamin is actually citing the definition of martyr-drama by the German Baroque poet Harsdörffer which he illustrates through the example of Christ's betrayal by his own disciple, followed by his passion: "Just as Christ, suffered in the name of mankind, so, in the eyes of the writers of the baroque, does *royalty* in general" (1977: 73, my emphasis).

contacts – as I will address in the course of this section – that would equally justify a different juxtaposition. The fact that all four plays could be related to one another in a different constellation and still offer a fruitful scope of investigations, speaks essentially for the strong reciprocal amity and admiration that the two playwrights enjoyed for themselves and their works – albeit only from a distance that they were able to bridge through a correspondence which, though sporadic, still accounts for an "elective affinity" that persisted until the end of their lives.

To thoroughly understand Benjamin's interpretation of the Baroque mourning play, it is moreover essential to pinpoint the actual significance of the Sovereign figure. For it is in this notion of royal authority that lies the key and crux of Benjamin's martyrdom theory. Epitomized by *Christus rex*, it is the crucified king that emblematically incarnates the idea of the Sovereign. As Benjamin explains: "Behind this fusion [of monarch and martyr] stands the *exemplum* of Christ's kingship and crucifixion", and the German author sets forth specifying: "Baroque drama is inherently emblematic-allegorical, as Greek tragedy never is, precisely because it postulates the dual presence, the twofold organizing pivot of Christ's nature – part god, part man, and overwhelmingly of this world" (1977: 17, emphasis in the original). It is precisely in this double, divine and human, nature that resides the ambiguous and thus allegorical meaning intrinsic to the Baroque drama. In what follows, I will demonstrate how this allegorical mode of signification is employed by Goethe and Manzoni alike, whose dramatic protagonists are at once "part god, part man, and overwhelmingly of this world". This overtly immanent connotation (so inherent to allegory) is a trait that Benjamin's martyr and Blumenberg's myth theory alike share, and can be viewed as the result of the very secularized worldview out of which they were articulated.

Manzoni's eminently religious acceptance of history allows to detect also a meaningful resemblance with Benjamin's messianism which viewed every moment of human time as directly related to God, that is to universal time.⁵⁶⁶ According to this theory, the present turns – as actualized future of the past – into the privileged historical perspective. It is in this relation that the present institutes with the past that history derives at once its immanent status and its critical significance: two distinctive aspects of allegorical interpretation. Following, in fact, the etymology of its lexical components from "other" (*ἄλλος*) and "speaking" (*ἀγορεύω*), allegory performs in terms of "other discourse" an essentially critical function that intends – as Benjamin put it in the seventh of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1942) – "to brush history against the grain" (1973: 257). In virtue of this principle, allegory allows for an alternative reappropriation of history: one that features as chief agents its sufferers rather than its subjugators, the conquered rather than the conquerors. It is precisely this history of violence and victims that Manzoni will enact on stage and endow with a messianic potential. If Manzoni will privilege the Benjaminian acceptance of allegory, Goethe's allegorization of history will display a stronger affinity with the Baroque martyr drama – rooted, as it was, in the temporal immance of the phenomenal world, and reluctant to any continuity or contact with the transcendent. Goethe's and Manzoni's historical plays ultimately prove their allegorical significance by the very token

⁵⁶⁶ See also Konersmann's comments on Benjamin's messianism and his indebtedness to the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1991: 36).

that allowed history – through the reenactment of their national past – to be reviewed, renewed and rewritten.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁷ Although Goethe's predilection for the symbol to the disadvantage of allegory considerably influenced his contemporaries, Romantic literature provides enough evidence of how symbolism and allegory actually coexisted and competed with each other as figurative devices. As Kelley explains in her study, the Romantics' rejection of allegory was essentially part of their critique against neoclassical aesthetics which had favored allegory over Renaissance symbolism (1982: 624). As to Goethe himself, despite the reluctance he expressed towards allegory, his writings are not, strictly speaking, "exempt" from allegorical content. In contrast, however, to Benjamin's understanding of allegory, Goethe's allegorization of history did not aim at dismantling the façade of history as artefact, but reiterated instead its process of aesthetization. Ricoeur's symbolic theory displays, in turn, a closer affinity to Goethe's *modus scribendi*. Hayden White employed the term of "false allegory" to describe Ricoeur's historical thought and theory of temporalization, defining it as "a speaking otherwise about history that suggests either that it is a *timeless, mechanical* structure [...] or that it is a temporal process the meaning of which can be provided by metaphysical speculation" (1987: 181, my emphases). While for White – as he extensively illustrates in his study on *Metahistory* (1973) – the allegorical content of historical narratives is derived by their inherently literary nature that justifies the employment of tropes, the adjective "false" pinpoints the key issue that Ricoeur addressed in his theoretical disquisitions. Following White's argument, the alleged allegorical meaning (or "truth" for the matter) that historical narratives are said to articulate, is disclosed by Ricoeur as "false" for resulting from an artificial assemblance of events, diachronically arranged *post-factum*, with the objective to provide only an alleged coherence of facts and unity of meaning – the very same one that Goethe, for his part, questioned in official historical accounts.

4.1.1 *Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand. Ein Schauspiel (1773)*

Between 1812 and 1813, Goethe was dictating the third part of his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-1816). Recalling what would mark at once the inception of his dramatic production and literary profession, he annotated in a retrospective remark on *Götz von Berlichingen*:

Ich hegte *nun*, anstatt der Lebensbeschreibung Goetzens und der deutschen Altertümer, *mein eignes Werk* im Sinne, und suchte ihm immer mehr *historischen* und *nationalen* Gehalt zu geben, und das was daran *fabelhaft* oder bloß leidenschaftlich war, auslöschen; [...].⁵⁶⁸

Nearly four decades had elapsed since the young German lawyer and author had originally set hand, in 1771, to his historical drama. When he returned to the play in 1773, it had been the author's explicit goal "das Ganze umzuschreiben" (DuW III.13/ 622) in "ein ganz erneutes Stück" (DuW III.13/ 622).⁵⁶⁹ In this "brand new play" that he took pride in naming his "very own work", the "historical" and "national" component was to be emphasized and the "marvelous" elements, in turn, effaced. Whereas the historical context of the drama and its meaning with regard to the country's national identity received – in the playwright's intent – a more pronounced attention, the fictionalized recount of facts was not altogether removed, but remained inevitably affected by the aesthetization that Goethe undertook of history in the

⁵⁶⁸ See "Dichtung und Wahrheit", *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 14.1, III, bk. 13, p. 622, my emphases; henceforth cited as "DuW".

⁵⁶⁹ The complete quote reads: " Ohne also an dem ersten Manuskript irgend etwas zu verändern, welches ich wirklich noch in seiner Urgestalt besitze, nahm ich mir vor, *das Ganze umzuschreiben*, und leistete dies auch mit solcher Tätigkeit, daß in wenigen Wochen *ein ganz erneutes Stück* vor mir lag. Ich ging damit um so rascher zu Werke, je weniger ich die Absicht hatte, diese zweite Bearbeitung jemals drucken zu lassen, sondern sie gleichfalls nur als Vorübung ansah, die ich künftig, bei einer mit mehrerem Fleiß und Überlegung anzustellenden neuen Behandlung, abermals zum Grunde legen wollte" (DuW III.13/ 622, my emphases). Goethe eventually published this second version of his drama in 1787, whereas the original manuscript was not set to print before 1832. He also reworked the 1787 edition of his work (which had not originally been meant to be strage) for the theater in 1804; for more details on the three editions and the genesis of the play, see the extensive commentary to the text by Müller (1986: 1001-05).

process of its dramatization. As I will shortly argue, Goethe approached and altered history by means of a mythopoiesis that shall be substantiated through direct references to his aesthetic program and its anthropological premise.

With the major focus of my investigations concentrated on Goethe's retrieval and reenactment of historical sources, his exegetic process features a renewed infiltration of myth within the immanent substrate of history. It will be, in particular, the twofold nature of the Promethean myth that offers Goethe the possibility to conjoin the divine with the human sphere, and best exemplify the Romantic ideal of the self-assertive human subject against the backdrop of a hitherto secularized human history. While Goethe's rereading and reintegration of pagan mythology inevitably calls to mind Blumenberg's theories concerning the "work" performed "on myth", his dramatic revival and repetition of Götz's story shall be analyzed against the background of Benjamin's disquisitions on the art of storytelling. Finally, based on the playwright's analogical understanding of history as natural process, that is, as provided with an overtly organic and eminently immanent quality, the tragedy's allegorical relevance shall be more closely determined and defined by means of a contrastive comparison with Benjamin's disquisitions on allegory.

*Götz's drama begins with the incipit: "Erzähl das noch einmal, vom Berlichingen".*⁵⁷⁰

Metzler's request to tell the story of the Emperor's knight introduces from the very first act an anecdotal motif that runs like a red thread through the entire play.⁵⁷¹ It will, in fact, recur

⁵⁷⁰ "Götz von Berlichingen", *Goethe Sämtliche Werke*, act I, p. 281; henceforth quoted with act and page number.

⁵⁷¹ As chief representative of the peasants, Metzler will perform a limited role in the second version of the play from 1773, entering the stage only briefly in the first and the last act as instigator of the peasantary insurrection. His telling name, which can be desumed from the German word "Gemetzel" (carnage) alludes to the role he will perform as radical revolutionary who will not accept Götz as moderate leader of the peasants' cause. In the

already a few scenes later with Götz's sister, Maria, who debuts on stage as she recounts the parable of the "pious child" upon her nephew's request ("CARL Ich bitte dich, liebe Tante, erzähl mir das noch einmal vom frommen Kind, 's gar zu schön" [I/ 290]), while they are awaiting his father's homecoming and upon whose return the son Carl, in turn, will ask: "Soll ich dir vom frommen Kind erzählen?" (I/ 295).

As predominant theme of the play, storytelling reflects the author's claim to historical emphasis. According in fact to Walter Benjamin's homonymous essay, *The Storyteller* (1937), storytelling represented a distinctive trait of the Middle Ages.⁵⁷² In the drama it makes its appearance in its twofold version of exemplary story meant to impart a moral (*Storyteller* IV/ 86) as is the case of Maria's Christian tale, and of the chronicler (*Storyteller* XII/ 96) whose role is played on the metanarrative level by Goethe himself. Benjamin, who had named the "chroniclers of the Middle Ages the precursors of the historians of today", pointed out that while the latter was the "writer of history", the former had been the "teller of it" (*Storyteller* XII/ 96). He sets forth explaining their differences by specifying that the "historian is bound to explain in one or another the happenings with which he deals", whereas the chronicler's "historical tales" are exempt from the "burden of demonstrable explanation" (*Storyteller* XII/ 96). This distinction accounts for Goethe's specific understanding of historiography based on a substantial mistrust in the historian's reliability

aftermath of the terror that ensue in the nineties from the French Revolution, Goethe will altogether expunge the originally extensive description of the rebellious mob scene.

⁵⁷² Benjamin identifies this trait in the medieval "trade structure" which witnessed the emergence of a new social class, the "traveling journeymen" (*Storyteller* II/ 85) or bourgeoisie which would contribute to the decline of knighthood and the dawn "einer verderbten Welt" presaged by Götz: "Es kommen Zeiten des Betrugs, es ist ihm Freiheit gegeben. Die Nichtswürdigen werden regieren mit List, und der Edle wird in ihre Netze fallen" (V/ 388).

for impartiality and veracity: "was der Historiker [...] für Wahrheit halt, ist immer nur für ihn, ist nur subjektive Wahrheit; unbestreitbare, objektive Wahrheit ist es nicht".⁵⁷³

Following the playwright's conversation with the German historian Heinrich Luden, who recalls and reports it posthumously, Goethe viewed history as chiefly apt to engage and entertain the recipient's "mind" and "heart" alike: "Die Geschichte ist gleich befriedigend für den *Geist* und das *Herz*, für den Verstand und das Gemüt, und zugleich regt sie die *Phantasie* allgewaltig auf und treibt, wie zum *Denken*, so zum *Dichten*" (*Rückblicke* 136-37). With the ability to incite the "imagination" ("Phantasie"), and inspire at once the individual's "reason" ("Denken") and "rhyme" ("Dichten"), history's prominent quality is to prompt and promote the recipient's "enthusiasm": "Das Beste was wir von der Geschichte haben ist der *Enthusiasmus*, den sie erregt".⁵⁷⁴ Goethe deemed it arduous for this enthusiastic engagement to be achieved through historical realism – of the kind, for instance, that Manzoni so keenly pursued and that Goethe, despite his zealous admiration for the Italian writer, did not fail to reprimand.

Within the historical timeframe of the drama, it is Götz that performs the role of the historian who, upon his wife's exhortation, decides to write down the story of his life:

"ELIZABETH So *schreib* doch deine Geschichte aus die du angefangen hast" (IV/ 367, my

⁵⁷³ See "Goethe und Heinrich Luden", p.136-137, my emphases; this conversation originally included in Luden's biography *Rückblicke in mein Leben* published in Jena in 1847.

⁵⁷⁴ "Betrachtungen im Sinner der Wanderer", in *Maximen und Reflektionen* (1829), my emphasis. This is a collection of Goethe's aphorisms collated from his writings published only posthumously in 1833. Goethe himself did not write any work under this title, nor did he arrange this collection himself; in his commentary to the text, Fricke rectifies this erroneous assumption by stating: "Der Befund läßt keinen Zweifel offen: Goethe hat ein selbständiges Aphorismenbuch weder verfaßt noch geplant noch gewollt. Nichtsdestoweniger hat sich das falsche Bild der "Maximen und Reflexionen" als einem aphoristischen Werk von Goethe bereits auf breiter Ebene im gebildeten Bewußtsein festgesetzt – und führt immer wieder zu entsprechenden Mißverständnissen"; cf. *Sämtliche Werke. Sprüche in Prosa*, p. 463.

emphasis). If it is true that the "chronicler is *historyteller*" (*Storyteller* XII/ 95, my emphasis), then Goethe is the one who, in turn, recollects the history of his nation's past by recounting the story written ("geschrieben") and handed down by Götz, with whom he had well familiarized himself: "Das Leben des biedern Götz von Berlichingen, von ihm selbst *geschrieben*, trieb mich in die historische Behandlungsart" (DuW III.13/ 620, my emphasis).⁵⁷⁵ Goethe thus restores Götz's biography by – to say it with Benjamin – "repeating" the story that its author had originally told.⁵⁷⁶ It is significant, in this respect, that the drama's first version from 1771 (the so-called *Urgötz*) appeared originally as the *Geschichte Gottfriedens von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand dramatisiert*, stating what had been in the intention of the author, that is to narrate on stage Berlichingen's story. The title, in other words, implies that the protagonist's personal story becomes metonymic for the very medieval history, that is of the time out which it originated took place.⁵⁷⁷ This idea is corroborated by the semantic ambiguity that the German term "Geschichte" suggests in as far as one and the same signifier denotes simultaneously two distinctive concepts: that of "history" and "story" alike. In virtue of its double meaning, the German lexeme implies and

⁵⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, Goethe's chief historical source for his drama had been the autobiography of the medieval knight: *Kurze Lebensgeschichte des tapfern deutschen Ritters. Götz von Berlichingen genannt: mit der eisernen Hand*.

⁵⁷⁶ Following Benjamin's argument: "for storytelling is always the art of repeating stories" (*Storyteller* VIII/ 91). This inherent reiterative quality of storytelling is thematized in the very introduction of the play through the act of repetition enacted by Maria and Carl in a joint effort to help her nephew repeat the story, and thus make sure that he remembers it: "Erzähl du mirs kleiner Schelm, da will ich hören, ob du Acht gibst" (I/ 290).

⁵⁷⁷ The 16th-century dramatic background ensues, consequently, from the biography of a single man. In this respect, it accounts for Goethe's specific acceptance of history in terms of (hi)story made by individuals rather than masses: "Der schwache Faden, der sich aus dem manchmal so breiten Gewebe des Wissens und der Wissenschaften durch alle Zeiten, selbst die dunkelsten und verworrensten, ununterbrochen fortzieht, wird durch Individuen durchgeführt" (*Werke* XXIII.1/ 613, my emphasis). Here history, intended by Goethe naturally as human history, coincides with the very progress of humanity as driven forth by the sciences which had played a pivotal role in his life and writing.

entails at once the twofold connotation of factual and fictional account – which is for Goethe as the very root of history writing where the "real" and "ideal" component coalesce: "Die Geschichte wie das Universum, das sie repräsentieren soll, hat einen *realen* und einen *idealen* Teil".⁵⁷⁸ Departing from this historiographic theory and tenet, Goethe deemed it to be the task of the historian to perform as well and play at once the role of the poet: "Ich [*sc.* Luden] glaube wirklich, daß Geschichte nicht würdig geschrieben werden könne, ohne eine wahre *poiesis*, und daß niemand ein Historiker sein könne im schönsten Sinne des Wortes, dem die *schöpferische* oder *dichterische* Kraft fehlt" (*Rückblicke* 141).

This is precisely how Goethe, the historian-poet, approached Götz's story and the history of his time as he wrote in an early letter to his friend Salzmann on November 18th, 1771:

Mein ganzer Genius liegt auf einem Unternehmen worüber Homer und Schäkespear und alles vergessen worden. Ich *dramatisire die Geschichte* eines der edelsten Deutschen, *rette das Andencken* eines braven Mannes, und die viele Arbeit die mich's kostet, macht mir einen wahren Zeitvertreib, den hier so nöthig habe, denn es ist traurig an einem Ort zu leben wo unsre ganze Wirksamkeit in sich selbst summen muß [...]. (Werke I/ 247, my emphases)

While he aimed at the reenactment of (hi)story ("dramatisire die Geschichte") and the renewal of its memory ("rette das Andencken"), Goethe employed the biography of the medieval knight with the goal to both entertain and instruct his contemporaries. In his own biographic annotations years later, collected under the telling title of *Poetry and Truth* (1811-1816), Goethe would explain the widely acknowledged reception of his work with the remark:

⁵⁷⁸ "Allgemeines, Ethisches, Literarisches", in *Maximen und Reflektionen*, XI, no. 713.

Es entsteht ein eigenes allgemeines Behagen, wenn man einer *Nation* ihre *Geschichte* auf eine geistreiche Weise wieder zur Erinnerung bringt; sie erfreut sich der Tugenden ihrer Vorfahren und belächelt die Mängel derselben welche sie längst überwunden zu haben glaubt. *Teilnahme* und *Beifall* kann daher einer solchen Darstellung nicht fehlen, und ich hatte mich in diesem Sinne einer vielfachen Wirkung zu erfreuen. (DuW IV.17/ 773, my emphases)

If the dramatic revival of his nation's history and the consequent recollection of a shared past was at the root of the "acceptance" ("Teilnahme") and "applause" ("Beifall") that the play enjoyed, it accounted in turn of a chief didactic purpose which consisted in fostering a sense of national belonging and identity, intrinsic to Goethe's aesthetics and his role as a storyteller. As Benjamin notes: "For the storyteller joins the ranks of the teachers" (*Storyteller* XIX/ 108).

By doing so, Goethe fulfills Götz's original intent to leave to posterity the story of his life as "evidence" ("Zeugnis") of an era, that of knighthood that had come to an end and which along with Götz – "Muster eines Ritters, tapfer und edel in seiner Freiheit" (IV/ 367) – was destined to vanish.⁵⁷⁹ His own wife Elizabeth would urge him to bear witness: "Gib deinen Freunden ein *Zeugnis* in die Hand deine Feinde zu beschämen, verschaff einer edlen Nachkommenschaft die Freude dich nicht zu verkennen" (IV/ 367, my emphasis). Metzler's reiterated request in the first act to hear once more Götz's story: "Ich bitt dich erzähls doch noch einmal!" (I/ 281), not only contributes through repetition to the renewal of the story in the memory of the future generations, it also and more importantly attests that the story of the medieval knight, and with him Götz himself, had turned into a myth: a living myth, that literally *exists* within the immanent sphere of history. Contrary, in fact, to the pagan myths

⁵⁷⁹ In a remark that Goethe made in 1826, he stated: "Eine Chronik schreibt nur derjenige, dem die Gegenwart wichtig ist" (*Werke* XX/ 207), in "Über Kunst und Altertum" V. 3, 1826. As we shall see, *Götz's* drama undoubtedly reflects and refers considerably to Goethe's own present.

whose realm resides outside of history, in the gods' Olympian dwelling, the historical myths originate within history. As such, their content is made of a documented and, therefore, true story which in the aftermath of their mythization is fictionalized; whereas the Greek myths are essentially tales.

The act of remembrance, therefore, as it is renewed through repetition, and the consequent mythization eventually allows Götz – and with him, his story and history – to defy the edacious progressing of time. This is the reason why Weislingen, counter-image of his former friend, envisions to erase Götz's memory by surprising him with his death sentence: "Und wenn ich dich habe! – Es ist noch Gnade wenn wir heimlich im Gefängnis dein Todesurteil vollstrecken. – So *verlischt er vor dem Andenken der Menschen*, und du kannst freier atmen töriges Herz" (V/ 377, my emphasis). Götz, in other words, like the Scheherazade "who thinks of a fresh story whenever her tale comes to a stop" (*Storyteller* XIII/ 98), hopes that the retelling of his story may detain the passing of time and extend its progress well beyond death. While the Persian princess, in fact, survives, Götz succumbs to his fate. As a matter of fact, his biography claims its right to mythical – that is eternal – valence no other but through his very death: "He has borrowed" – Benjamin explains – "his authority from death" (*Storyteller* XI/ 94):

It is [...] characteristic that not only a man's knowledge or wisdom, but above all his real life – and this is the stuff that stories are made of – first assumes transmissible form *at the moment of his death*. Just as a sequence of images is set in motion inside a man as his life comes to an end [...] suddenly [...] the unforgettable emerges and imparts to everything that concerned him that authority which even the poorest wretch in dying possesses for the living around him. *This authority is at the very source of the story.* (*Storyteller* X/ 94, my emphases).

In his strife against Chronos, "die *allmächtige Zeit*", the dramatic protagonist resembles therefore more closely the mythical character of Prometheus.⁵⁸⁰ It was Lenz, the German poet that had met the young Goethe in Strasbourg and since then idolized, who detected in Goethe's *Schauspiel* the "Prometheische Funken" (1992: 425) that he so fervidly acclaimed: "der *lebendige* Eindruck, der sich in Gesinnungen , Taten und *Handlungen* hernach einmischt" (1992: 425), emphases in the original).⁵⁸¹ Goethe's Götz embodied for Lenz in its life-asserting zeal that manifested itself through his zest for actions, the prototypical and yet bygone German. Hence Lenz's challenge to his contemporaries by exhorting them to emulate Goethe's representative of the "*antiken deutschen Mannes*" and assimilate his nature ("und wenn wir ihn gutfinden, uns *eigen machen*"), in order to regain and restore their German identity: "damit wir wieder Deutsche werden, von denen wir so weit ausgerartet sind" (1992: 425, my emphases).

In his exemplary role, Götz stands out from the others with whom he increasingly finds himself at odds. The disagreement that the individual, chief agent of history, experiences in his interaction with the masses is at the very root of Goethe's historical theory as we find it concisely formulated in *Maximen und Reflexionen*: "Sie [*sc.* die Individuen] stehen nämlich *mit der Menge* im Gegensatz, ja im Widerstreit".⁵⁸² In this relationship of "contrast" ("Gegensatz") and conflict ("Widerstreit"), the masses ("Menge") are charged with

⁵⁸⁰ "Prometheus", *Werke*, vol. 4, p. 408, my emphasis. It is indicative that Goethe wrote the poems "Prometheus" and "An Schwager Kronos" in the same year 1774, see *Sämtliche Werke. Gedichte 1756-1799*, pp. 201-204.

⁵⁸¹ Goethe's relationship with Lenz, at first amicable, had not been free of frictions. After meeting Goethe in Strasbourg where he was studying law in 1771, Lenz grew so fond of him and his writings that he decided to follow him to Weimar where Goethe moved in 1775 where he began to work for the court.

⁵⁸² "Zur Farbenlehre", in *Werke* XXIII.1, p. 614, my emphasis.

a negative connotation. This elitarian stance – which constitutes one of the major differences with Manzoni's historical tragedies and, the more so, with his novel where history's anonymous people and the peasants enjoy, in contrast, the playwrights' predilection – comes clearly to the fore at the end of the play with the scene of the "Peasant War" ("Bauernkrieg") that introduces the fifth act. On the peasants' request, Götz – albeit initially reluctant – agrees to side for and support the insurrection, pursuing however a moderate line of action that does not find Metzler's consent who eventually rejects altogether Götz's role as leader of their cause.⁵⁸³

By joining the mob, Götz turns into a political dissident and is stigmatized as rebel: "ELIZABETH Er hat sich zu Rebellen, Missetätern, Mödern gesellt, ist an ihrer Spitze gezogen" is his wife's interjection who fears for her spouse's life under the recently institutionalized law. Götz had already distinguished himself as resilient to accept the new *status quo* that ensued from the social changes that had been profiling themselves at the turn of the 16th century. Resorting, in fact, to an outdated and outlawed principle of knighthood – the meanwhile obsolete "fist law" ("Faustrecht"), which had been hitherto at the very core of the knightly etiquette, Götz defends a tailor's right by surprising the couple of merchants in an ambush, and coercing them to pay the pecuniary reward that they owed him. This act of self-justice will recriminate him with the double charge of robbery and infraction of the current law which had been abrogated by the newly formed class of the so-called *domini*

⁵⁸³ In the course of the play, Götz will voice his critique against the mob and their means of protest: "Was wütet ihr und verderbt das Land! Wollt ihr abstecken von allen Übeltaten, und handeln als wackere Leute, und die wissen was sie wollen, so will ich euch behülflich sein zu euren Forderungen, und auf acht Tag euer Hauptmann sein" (V/ 372). Eventually, disappointed by the violence with which the peasants defended their cause, Götz will withdraw from his role: "Die Mordbrenner! Ich sage mich von ihnen los. Sie sollen einen Zigeuner zum Hauptmann machen, mich nicht" (V/ 375).

terrae, the princely landlords whose economic and political power had been on the rise, reducing their sovereign, in Weislingen's words, to a "shadow" of his imperial countenance: "Er ist nur der Schatten davon" (IV/ 364). Götz, whose loyalty and fidelity were exclusive to the Kaiser, would refuse to submit to this institutionalized variant of justice that was expecting him to swear, instead, an oath of truce ("Urfehde"). His invective – "Esel der Gerechtigkeit!" (IV/ 356) – against the modern laws, which is mediated and mitigated in the play by a pronounced sense of irony, so constitutive and distinctive of Goethe's aesthetics. The entire play questions the notion of justice as it is executed by the institutional power, and juxtaposes it to Götz's practice of self-justice. Where the former restricts individual freedom, the latter reasserts it; where the former exploits it in the interest of power, the latter ensues it from the very code of knightly respect and honor. Götz will explicitly address this critique when confronted with the new legislators: "Ihr mißbraucht die Kaiserliche Gewalt. In Turn! Das ist sein Befehl nicht. Was! mir erst, die *Verräter!* eine *Falle* stellen, und ihren Eid, ihr ritterlich Wort zum Speck drin aufzuhängen" (IV/ 359, my emphases). With Götz's denunciation against a notion of legality that compromises the individual's drive to self-assertion, Goethe's concern with the immanent application of justice will find a strong echo in Manzoni's *Carmagnola* who will come to realize that earthly justice is far removed from divine one as the only genuine and impartial expression of law.⁵⁸⁴ The resemblance shared between the two plays is, moreover, clearly evident in the court scenes where Götz and Carmagnola will respectively be summoned. After realizing the conspiracy and the delusive

⁵⁸⁴ See, in this regard, my considerations on Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* as analyzed primarily in connection with Manzoni's *Adelchi* (1822), and more marginally in relation to *The Count of Carmagnola* (1820).

contrivance into which he had been allured, Götz will blame his legislators as "traitors" ("Verräter") – an accusation that will be reiterated nearly *verbatim* by Manzoni's Carmagnola. Akin to Carmagnola, Götz will fall prey to treason by his life-long friend Weislingen. Weislingen, by far more human in his weaknesses than Manzoni's idealized Marco, will purportedly betray the knight and before befalling to, like Carmagnola's loyal friend, personal scruples that will affect his mental and physical health, and afflict him until his death: "Keine Ruh und Rast, weder Tag noch Nacht. Im halben Schlummer giftige Träume. [...] Er ist gefangen und ich zittere vor ihm. Elender Mensch! Dein Wort hat ihm zum Tode verurteilt und du bebst vor seiner Traumgestalt wie ein Missetäter. – Und soll er sterben? – Götz! Götz!" (V/ 381-82). Upon Berlichingen's arrest by the royal troop – after Weislingen had betrayed him to the Kaiser for his "aufrührerische[n] Unternehmungen" (III/ 332), the knight will declare, in his most notorious response to the chieftain, exclusive submission to the king: "Mich ergeben! Auf Gnad und Ungnad! Mit wem redet Ihr! Bin ich ein Räuber! Sag deinem Hauptmann: Vor Ihro Kaiserliche Majestät, hab ich, wie immer schuldigen Respekt. Er aber, sags ihm, er kann mich im Arsch lecken" (III/ 349). In his unbending defiance to submit to any authority other than the Kaiser, and his unrelenting efforts to defend his knightly right to perform by his duty ("Ritterpflicht") towards his sovereign king, Götz evokes that traits of a Promethean figure, resembling at once the rebellious and recalcitrant 22-year old *Storm-and-Stress* poet and newly graduated lawyer. As the playwright himself shares with Eckermann years later in February 1826: "Ich tat einen glücklichen Griff mit meinem 'Götz von Berlichingen'; das war doch *Bein von meinem Bein* und *Fleisch von meinem Fleisch*" (*Gespräche* 220, my emphases).⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁵ Cf. English translation: "I made a happy hit with my *Goetz von Berlichingen*; that was at any rate **bone of**

It is significant in this regard that the composition of his first historical drama coincided with Goethe's address *Zum Shakespears Tag* held on October 24, 1771, i.e. the same year that he wrote his *Urgötz*. In this essay, besides worshipping the English playwright – whom he names "mein Freund" – for his innovative violation of the Aristotelian unities, Goethe praises Shakespeare's historical tragedies for rotating around what he calls "the secret point" ("den geheimen Punkt"): "in dem das Eigentümliche unseres Ichs, die *prätendierte Freiheit unsres Wollens* mit dem *notwendigen Gang des Ganzen* zusammenstoß" (*Werke* XVIII/ 11, my emphases). It is precisely this clash between the individual's alleged freedom of will and the inevitable and inexorable progress of life and the world that Götz experiences, and Goethe enacts.⁵⁸⁶

While the above-captioned point has been widely discussed and demonstrated by critiques, I would like to take this argument a step further and illustrate how Berlichingen's drama exemplifies the dilemma of the individual confronted with a phenomenon that Hans Blumenberg identified in his study on *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1966) with the

my bone and flesh of my flesh, and something could be done with it" (*Conversations* 129, emphasis in the original, bold added). As Goethe himself recalls years later towards Eckermann: "Ich schrieb meinen 'Götz von Berlichingen', sagte er, als junger Mensch von zweiundzwanzig". The young Goethe had just graduated from his law studies when he set hand to his *Urgötz* in 1771 while he was working as a lawyer in Wetzlar.

⁵⁸⁶ Following Shakespeare's example, Goethe had vehemently rejected the Aristotelian unities. He explains the influence exerted by the English dramatist on his own dramatic production with the words: "Durch die fortdauernde Teilnahme an Shakespeares Werken hatte ich mir den Geist so ausgeweitet, daß mir der enge Bühnenraum und die kurze einer Vorstellung zugemessene Zeit keineswegs hinlänglich schienen, um etwas Bedeutendes vorzutragen. Das Leben des biedern Götz von Berlichingen, von ihm selbst geschrieben, trieb mich in die historische Behandlungsart, und meine Einbildungskraft dehnte sich dergestalt aus, daß auch meine dramatische Form alle Theatergrenzen überschritt, und sich den lebendigen Ereignissen mehr und mehr zu nähern suchte" (DuW, III/ bk 13). He had already announced and articulated this aesthetic innovation in the address *Zum Shakespears Tag* that he held on Oct. 10, 1771: "Ich zweifelte keine Augenblick dem regelmäßigen Theater zu entsagen. Es schien mir die Einheit des Orts so kerkermäßig ängstlich, die Einheiten der Handlung und der Zeit lästige Fesseln unsrer Einbildungskraft; ich sprang in die freie Luft und fühlteerst daß ich Hände und Füße hatte" (*Werke* XVIII/ 10). In the play the scenes change rapidly, and along with them the different places of action.

concept of "a disappearance of order" [*'Ordnungsschwund'*] (1983: 137, emphasis in the original). Chronologically, Götz situates himself precisely at the end of the Middle Ages, that is, at the very turning point that followed the secularization which witnessed the loss of a metaphysical entity and consequently of meaning and which Blumenberg described as the "reality that at the end of the Middle Ages comes to be seen as *'fact'*" (1983: 138, my emphasis).⁵⁸⁷ Deprived of its *telos*, history featured a brand new concept "der menschlichen Freiheit" (1983: 150).⁵⁸⁸ This paradigmatic shift towards an anthropocentric worldview is overtly articulated in the drama's first act by Weislingen, yet to be befriended and related by law to Berlichingen through his engagement with Götz's sister Maria: "So gewiß ist der allein glücklich und groß, der weder zu herrschen noch zu gehorchen braucht um etwas zu sein" (I/ 309). The responsibility, however, derived to humankind by this freedom is not comparable to what led the first man to commit the original sin. If hitherto, in fact, human responsibility was directed to the past that witnessed the fall of man, the responsibility of the modern man was now directed to the opposite direction, the future. "Sie [*sc.* die Freiheit] ist Verantwortung" – thus Blumenberg: "für den Zustand der Welt als *zukunftsbezogene Forderung*, nicht als *vergangene Urschuld*" (1983: 150). In Goethe's drama, this sense of responsibility finds its expression in Götz's anxiety and aspiration for better times to come:

⁵⁸⁷ Goethe had witnessed this turning point in his own present and used his drama as allegory of the past to foster awareness among his contemporaries: "ich war schon im stillen beschäftigt, von diesem Wendepunkt der deutschen Geschichte mich vor- und rückwärts zu bewegen und die Hauptereignisse in gleichem Sinn zu bearbeiten" (DuW, Part III, Bk. 13).

⁵⁸⁸ As Goethe himself would remark towards Eckermann in October 1825: "Sobald wir dem Menschen die Freiheit zugestehen, ist es um die Allwissenheit Gottes getan; denn sobald die Gottheit weiß, was ich tun werde, bin ich gezwungen zu handeln, wie sie es weiß" (*Gespräche* 209). "If we grant freedom to man, there is an end to the omniscience of God; for it the Divinity knows how I shall act, I must act so perforce" (*Conversations* 120).

GÖTZ Sollten wir nicht hoffen, daß mehr solcher Fürsten auf einmal herrschen können, und Verehrung des Kaisers, Fried und Freundschaft der Nachbarn, und der Untertanen Lieb, der kostbarste Familien Schatz sein wird der auf Enkel und Urenkel erbt. Jeder würde das seinige erhalten und in sich selbst vermehren, statt daß sie jetzo nicht zuzunehmen glauben, wenn sie nicht andere verderben.
(III/ 353)

The social idyll envisioned by Götz in the image of a self-sufficient community is one designed and developed exclusively by its people. Upon the disappearance of a divine plan able to explain and justify the world, reality with its evil imposed itself henceforth as *factum brutum*, that is: devoid of an explanation which, as a consequence, endowed man with the "burden of self-assertion" in a world indifferent to the anguish of humankind and human existence:

The bad aspects of the world no longer appear as *metaphysical marks* of the quality of the world principle or punishing justice but rather as *marks of the 'facticity'* of reality. In it man appears not to be 'taken into consideration', and the indifference of the self-preservation of everything in existence lets the bad appear to him as whatever opposes his own will to live. The Middle Ages came to an end when within their spiritual system creation as 'providence' ceased to be credible to man and *the burden of self-assertion* was therefore laid upon him. (Blumenberg 1983: 138, my emphases)

The forfeiture of a metaphysical dimension and the factuality with which reality asserted itself is at the root of the separation between terrestrial and transcendental world that will distinguish the forthcoming Baroque era and – as Benjamin points out – its "*secular* explanation of history" (1977: 166, my emphasis).⁵⁸⁹ This anthropocentric *Weltanschauung*

⁵⁸⁹ I will address this point in more detail in my analysis of *Egmont* (1788) when I shall prove the affinity of Goethe's play with 17th century theatre and the Baroque martyr drama. Suffice to say here that Benjamin identified in the Baroque drama, in the representation of medieval mystery plays through the new secular worldview, a dialectic tension and antinomy that considered distinctive of the allegorical mode. The result of this antithetical synthesis consisted in the forfeiture of an otherwise redemptive purpose that was originally inscribed in the divine plan. Benjamin saw this process of secularization as a consequence derived from the Lutheran counter-reformation. As he explains in his study on the *Origin of the German Baroque Drama* (1925): For all that the increasing *worldliness* of the Counter-Reformation prevailed [...], religious aspirations did not lose their importance: it was just that this century *denied* them a *religious fulfilment*, demanding of them, or

is most zealously advocated by Goethe's Prometheus, archetype of individual autonomy. The Romantics embraced the figure of Prometheus as suffering champion of humanity, a symbol of liberty and rebellion to tyranny, who eventually incurred the wrath of the Gods. As symbol of individual freedom, Goethe portrays in his *Prometheus* poem from 1774, this semi-deity as a defiant Titan who, upon his insurgence against the Gods, keeps molding men at his own creaturely image and nature:

Hier sitz ich, forme Menschen
 Nach meinem Bilde
 Ein Geschlecht das mir gleich sei
 Zu leiden, weinen
 Genießen und zu freuen sich
 Und dein nicht zu achten
 Wie ich! (ll. 52-58)⁵⁹⁰

Prometheus is the *Übermensch* in a world devoid of the divine. Where Christ has been relinquished from its duty, and God's plan and presence removed, it is the rebels and revolutionaries who have taken a place left vacant, and have thus turned into supernatural beings – in the vestiges of either Christ or Prometheus. This is what occurred to the historical Götze, and what would recur with a contemporary historical figure that Goethe had worshipped: Napoleon. A victim of injustice, Götze – like Carmagnola – is also vicariously allusive of Christ, in particular in the scene of the "last supper" that the protagonist shares in

imposing upon them, a *secular solution* instead" (1977: 79, my emphases). Hence: "whereas the Christian mystery-play and the Christian chronicle present the entire course of world history as a story of redemption [...], [t]he relationship of the *Trauerspiel* to the mystery-play is called into question by the **insuperable despair** which seems necessarily to be the last word of the **secularized Christian drama**" (1977: 78, emphasis in the original, bold added). Benjamin identified in this secular explanation of history "the allegorical way of seeing" as opposed to the mystical unified meaning conveyed by the symbol in a world that had been stripped off its divine presence and plan. With the forfeiture of the metaphysical, history found itself anchored in nature and the phenomenological world. It is precisely this tie that history established with nature that will be at the root of Goethe's pantheism.

⁵⁹⁰ See *Sämtliche Werke. Gedichte 1756-1799*, p. 204.

the name of liberty with his family and friends shortly before his death. "Es lebe die Freiheit" (III/ 352) is the reiterated invocation voiced by Berlichingen who, akin to Christ's sacrifice for the freedom of humankind, pleads in his final address to his wife for the salvation of a reprobate society and a depraved world: "—Arme Frau. Ich lasse dich in einer verderbten Welt. [...] Es kommen die Zeiten des Betrugs, es ist ihm Freiheit gegeben. Die Nichtswürdigen werden regieren mit List, und der Edle wird in ihre Netze fallen" (V/ 388). Götz's Quixotian melancholy for a forsaken past reflects Goethe's desire to restore to memory a time in which people were still determined to defend their cause of freedom, and decide the course of their fate. Viewed from this perspective, Berlichingen's drama allegorically disguises the vicissitudes of 18th-century Germany, while Götz's personal preoccupation for the future of his community echoes Goethe's concern for a historical present that was about to undergo radical changes in its pursuit to national autonomy and identity.

This conclusion would be equally in place, if – following the playwright's preference for the symbol over the allegory – Goethe may have intended, instead, to endow Berlichingen's drama with a symbolic (rather than allegorical) valence. I would like to clarify this point by resorting to the explanation that Benjamin presents in his study *On the Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1925) of Goethe's understanding and undoing of allegory. To do so, I shall depart from Goethe's juxtaposition of both terms: "Wie weit steht nicht dagegen [*sc.* gegen das Symbol] Allegorie zurück; sie ist vielleicht geistreich witzig, aber doch meist rhetorisch und *conventionell* und immer besser, je mehr sie sich demjenigen nähert, was wir Symbol nennen".⁵⁹¹ As Benjamin points out, Goethe's critique is here directed to a specific

⁵⁹¹ "Nachtrag zu Philostrats Gemälde", *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*, p. 27.

form of allegory: the one *en vogue* during Classicism which ensued as counter-movement to the Baroque. Therefore, Benjamin explains, Goethe's "statement [...] may be described as a negative, *a posteriori* construction of allegory" (1977: 161, emphasis in the original).

Opposite to the classicist use of allegory with its "*conventional* relationship between an illustrative image and its abstract meaning", there was the "*modern* view of allegory" whose origin are traced back to the Baroque: "the modern allegorical way of looking at things, the literary and visual emblem-books of the baroque" (1977: 162, my emphases).⁵⁹² In contrast to the use of allegory made by Classicist art and authors, Baroque allegory defied and, for the matter, destroyed anything conventional based on its inherently referential and associative mode of interpretation and conveyance of meaning: "Any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else" to the extent that "all of the things which are used to signify derive from the very fact of their pointing to something else" (1977: 175). If allegory in its inherent "ambiguity, multiplicity of meaning [...] and the baroque glory in richness of meaning" is remote from the "clarity and unity of meaning" (1977: 177) claimed by the symbol, it results far from being "conventionell" – as Goethe had originally argued in his quote. "The allegory of the seventeenth century", thus Benjamin, "is not *convention* of expression" as is instead the case of the written sign, "but *expression* of convention" that is: expression of what allegory displays as mere *appearance* of meaning, which makes it in turn

⁵⁹² As Benjamin specifies, as opposed to Classicism the Baroque was *en pair* with Romanticism: "the baroque reveals itself to be the sovereign opposite of classicism, as which hitherto, only romanticism has been acknowledged" (1977: 176). Whereas classicism "was not permitted to behold the lack of freedom, the imperfection, the collapse of the physical, beautiful, nature [...] beneath its extravagant pomp, this is precisely what baroque allegory proclaims, with unprecedented emphasis" (1977: 176). this was precisely what the baroque and its use of allegory aimed at

insignificant, i.e. expression-less.⁵⁹³ The allegory does so by bursting the construed unity of symbolic significance and breaking it up into its fragmented components reducing the symbol to a "torso". If, following Benjamin's argument articulated in his review of *Goethe's Elective Affinities* (1919-1922), allegory is the "torso of a symbol" (1996: 340), one may as well conclude that all symbolic expression is at its core allegorical – in other words, all symbols can be identified as potential allegories.⁵⁹⁴ Benjamin proves this point in his above-captioned essay when he explains that Goethe availed himself of the Christian "*symbol* of the star falling over the heads of the lovers" – to represent their "hope of redemption" – in order to counteract at the end of Goethe's novel the, otherwise, "mythical" forces that drive forth its plot and action. Since this "moment" of hopeful redemption "can never be expressed in words but is expressible solely in representation", Goethe must resort – specifies Benjamin – to the symbolic. In its mystical valence, the symbol of the falling star is essentially a device employed by the writer to guarantee the story's "happy ending". As such, the symbol – contrary to what Gundolf had claimed and whose argument Benjamin is systematically deconstructing in his essay – is not indicative of the novel's *truth* but only *material* content: "the mythic [not mystical] is the *real* material content of this book" (1996: 309). Hence following Benjamin's argument, the symbol is a disguised allegory, which constitutes in the end the "truth content" of this work of art whose mystical and sacred elements are the symbolic disguise that aims at providing the mythical with a mere "semblance of beauty" (1996: 342).

⁵⁹³ On the definition of the expressionless as Benjamin articulates it in his critical essay on *Goethe's Elective Affinities* (1919-1922), see also section 4.1.2.

⁵⁹⁴ Benjamin's review was published only in 1924-1925, that is during the same years that he was completing his dissertational study on the Baroque drama.

This use of the symbol as disguised allegory becomes more evident if we turn our attention to the play. Like the "falling star" in *Elective Affinities* (1809), the "comet" in *Götz's* drama (1773) anticipates the symbolic use that Goethe makes of allegory: "GEORG Es sind bedenkliche Zeiten. Schon seit acht Tagen läßt sich ein *fürchterlicher Komet* sehen, und ganz Deutschland ist in Angst es bedeutete den Tod des Kaisers der sehr krank ist" (V/ 368, my emphasis). As symbol of an idea that cannot be expressed in words, the comet is charged with an ominous valence. In the play, the comet is afoot of an epochal change, of a world (and time) thrown out of joint – as Götz remarks: "wir sind aus unserm *Kreise* geruckt" (V/ 368, my emphasis), and concludes with the same cosmological metaphor: "Unsere *Bahn* geht zu Ende" (V/ 368, my emphasis). I, therefore, argue that nowhere more clearly than in this instance can it be proved that Goethe's symbolic is at its core allegorical, and it could not be otherwise if, in Benjamin's interpretation, the allegory constitutes but its very "torso".

With the decline of an era, also ends Götz's life. This occurs as the natural consequence of a time that had long elapsed and moved on while Berlichingen was still attempting to hold on to the past. It is in and through his death that Götz regains his freedom: "Himmlische Luft. – Freiheit! Freiheit" (V/ 388). In the very moment that he exits the immanent unfolding of time – which, through the mutilation of his arm as metonymy of a maimed freedom, had reduced him to a crippled knight – Götz's story earns its legitimacy and is able to go down into history.⁵⁹⁵ The story of his life, and with it the history of an otherwise forgotten past ("LERSE Wehe der Nachkommenschaft die dich verkennt" [V/ 389]), will live on in posterity and up into Goethe's present when through his drama, the

⁵⁹⁵ In her article *Vom Urgötz*, Graham addresses the oximoric meaning expressed by Götz's arm and armature ("die eiserne Hand") as being indicative at once of his strength and his weakness: "Eben dieses Symbol mit seinem Doppelsinn von Kraftfülle und Verkrüppelung" (1965: 247).

playwright will eventually render him justice and restore the legacy of a – in Marie's words – "noble man": "Edler Mann! Edler Mann! Wehe dem Jahrhundert das dich von sich stieß" (V/389).

4.1.2. *Il conte di Carmagnola* (1816-1820)

In his *Conversations with Eckermann* from 31 January 1827, when Goethe justified "his"

Egmont as the legitimate aesthetic product of his imagination rather than his impartiality, his fancy rather than his fidelity to history, the German poet and patron of Manzoni, wrote of his *protégé*:

Er [sc. Manzoni] hat gar zu viel *Respekt vor der Geschichte* und fügt aus diesem Grunde seinen Stücken immer gern einige Auseinandersetzungen hinzu, in denen er nachweist, wie treu er den Einzelheiten der Geschichte geblieben. Nun mögen seine *Fakta* historisch sein, aber seine *Charaktere* sind es doch nicht, so wenig es mein Thoas und meine Iphigenia sind. Kein Dichter hat je die historischen Charaktere *gekannt*, die er darstellte; hätte er sie aber gekannt, so hätte er sie schwerlich so gebrauchen können.

(*Goethes Gespräche* 271, my emphases).⁵⁹⁶

Upon remarking on Manzoni's "excessive respect" for historical accuracy and authenticity, Goethe revokes the poet's claim to historical veracity on the ground of a basic divergency between "facts" (*Fakta*) and "figures" (*Charaktere*) that he deems fundamental. Whether a

⁵⁹⁶ "He [sc. Manzoni] has too much *respect for history*, and on this account is always adding notes to his pieces, in which he shows how faithful he has been to detail. Now, though his *facts* may be historical, his *characters* are not so – any more than my Thoas and Iphigenia. No poet has ever *known* the historical characters he has painted; if he had, he could scarcely have made use of them" (*Conversations* 166, my emphases). To the question as to what extent Goethe's *Egmont* (1788) may have left his mark on Manzoni's *Carmagnola*, recent studies reiterated its influence – except for Kostka who argues strongly against this theory (1997: 22). As to the question whether Manzoni read Goethe's drama in the original German (or rather in French translation), Beaumont proves in his study that "by the third decade of the century, if not in 1807, he knew enough German to be able to read and appreciate works written in German, and that Goethe may very well have been a source of inspiration to him" (1939: 131). Gaetano Cattaneo certainly confirms Beaumont's assumption when in his letter to Manzoni from 1827 he explicitly admits toward his friend "che tu conosci sufficientemente il tedesco" (EN XIX.1/ 69); while Goethe had already assumed in his letter to the Duke Carl August from September 1820 Manzoni's knowledge of German: "Wenn ich nicht irre, liest der Dichter Manzoni selbst das Deutsche" ("Se non erro, il poeta Manzoni legge il tedesco" [EN XIX.1/ 394]). As Getto finally remarks in a note to his study on Manzoni within the context of his contemporary European culture, the playwright did own a complete collection of Schiller's dramas from 1805-1807 (1971: 198). The most thorough evidence of *Egmont*'s impact on Manzoni's tragedy is delivered by Sandrini in his extensive introduction to *The Count of Carmagnola* (EN III/ LXV, LXXXVII, LXXXVIII, LXXXIX, XCVII); other relevant sources that reiterate the affiliation of Manzoni's drama with Goethe's *Egmont* "che ha molte e mirabili somiglianze col *Conte di Carmagnola* are Zumbini (199: 65), and Lonardi in his introduction to Manzoni's *Adelchi* when he describes "il Goethe dell'Egmont, un dramma cui Manzoni ha guardato fin dalla prima idea del *Carmagnola*" (1992: 33, emphasis in the original).

poet may research and rely on written records concerning a specific historical event, he will yet remain removed from a thorough knowledge of its agents that only a first-hand testimony, if not a direct acquaintance with the characters, can ensure. Hence the resort to one's own inventiveness as a means to restore human history back to life. Made of the fabric of poetic inspiration, the distinction between real and ideal characters, therefore, listed in *The Count of Carmagnola's* cast are groundless and gratuitous: "[d]enn gewiß nicht aus eigenem Gefühl und Ueberzeugung hat er [sc. Manzoni] seine Personen in *historische* und *ideelle* getheilt" (*Theilnahme* XX).⁵⁹⁷ The implication, following Goethe's argument, that Manzoni's differentiation in historical and ideal characters was not dictated by personal conviction, and that he thus was well aware of the inevitable process of aesthetization that poetry undertakes of history, appears after all in line with Manzoni's own saying. In a letter to Fauriel from 21 January 1821 – when he had just begun to compose the second act of his subsequent historical drama, which will question altogether the reliability of poetry in its quest for historical truth, Manzoni in fact had maintained: "Je voudrais bien entendre votre avis sur ce *système d'invention des faits* pour développer des *mœurs historiques*. Il me semble que c'est une ressource *très-heureuse* de cette poésie" (L I/ no. 144, 227, my emphases).⁵⁹⁸ Yet confident in the inventive potential of poetry, as extremely favorable resource to "develop" and expand on historical facts by disclosing their inner moral truth, Manzoni's explicitly

⁵⁹⁷ Ugoni's Italian translation of Goethe's review of the play reads: "giacché non par verosimile, che dividesse i personaggi in *istorici* e in *ideali* per sentimento e *convincimento proprio*" (Grüning 1988: 170-71, my emphases).

⁵⁹⁸ When republishing his drama in Paris in the French translation and edition by Fauriel in 1823 – that after Goethe's review that appeared originally in 1821 in his literary journal *Über Kunst und Alterthum* (III.2) – Manzoni will omit the distinction in the characters' cast; see introduction the *The Count of Carmagnola* in Bardazzi's edition (1985: LXXXVIII).

named "ideal" characters are allocated the role of reenacting the ethical core and concern of human history. For this very reason, Goethe argues, historical characters cannot but express the poet's ethical worldview, and consequently epitomize an ideal:

Für den Dichter ist keine Person historisch, es beliebt ihm *seine sittliche Welt* darzustellen, und er erweist zu diesem Zweck gewissen Personen aus der Geschichte die Ehre ihren Namen seinen Geschöpfen zu leihen. Herrn Manzoni dürfen wir zum Ruhm nachsagen daß seine Figuren alle aus einem Guß sind, eine so *ideell* wie die andere. Sie gehören alle zu einem gewissen *politisch-sittlichen* Kreise [...]. (*Theilnahme* XX, my emphases).⁵⁹⁹

As representatives of a poet's "political-ethical circle", the plot and protagonists of *Carmagnola*'s drama inhabit a stage where the historical background is reminiscent of the playwright's contemporary historical backdrop. In his review, Goethe was quoting nearly *verbatim* – to support after all his own point in this argument – what Manzoni had explained six years beforehand in the only letter he ever wrote to his "master" on January 23, 1821:

Deggio però confessarle che la distinzione dei personaggi in istorici e in ideali è un fallo tutto mio, e che ne fu cagione un attaccamento troppo scrupoloso all'esattezza storica, che mi portò a separare gli uomini della realtà da quelli che io aveva immaginati per rappresentare una *classe*, una *opinione*, un *interesse*. (EN XXIX/316, my emphases)⁶⁰⁰

The historical drama turns, therefore, into an ideological device that arises from the playwright's historical circumstances, and addresses his personal convictions and concerns.

⁵⁹⁹ "Non v'ha persona storica pel poeta. Quand'ei vuol rappresentare il *mondo morale da lui concetto*, fa l'onore a certi individui della storia di prestarne i nomi alle sue creature. Possiam dire a lode del sig. Manzoni, che tutte le figure sono d'un getto, tutte ugualmente *ideali*. Tutte pertengono ad un circolo *politico e morale*, [...]" (Grüning 1988: 171, my emphases).

⁶⁰⁰ Well towards the middle of his letter, Manzoni refers to Goethe as "la voce del Maestro": "die Stimme des Meisters" (*Theilnahme* XXXIX). According to a German translation that Goethe himself arranged of Manzoni's letter and included in his Jena-edition of Manzoni's work from 1827, the excerpted passage reads as follows: "Sodann muß ich aber bekennen, daß die Abtheilung der Personen in geschichtliche und ideelle ganz mein Fehler sey, verursacht durch eine allzugroße Anhänglichkeit an das genau Geschichtliche, welche mich bewog die realen Personen von denjenigen zu trennen, die ich ersann um eine *Klasse*, eine *Meinung*, ein *Interesse* vorzustellen" (1827: XXXIX, my emphases).

The history that Manzoni chooses to stage, however, does not have "monumental" value – to borrow from Nietzsche's terminological distinction articulated in his essay on *The Use and Abuse of History* (1874). It is not, in other words, the history of the *res gestae* whose "use" would consist merely in the "knowledge that the great thing existed and was therefore possible, and so may be possible again" (Nietzsche 1964: 19). For Manzoni, history served instead as chiefly didactic vehicle for the comprehension and critique of the local, if not yet national, past. This approach to history allowed, in turn – quoting again Nietzsche: "to *break up* the past; and *apply* it too, in order to live", and by doing so to "bring the past to the bar of *judgment*, *interrogate* it remorselessly, and finally *condemn* it" (1964: 29, my emphases).

Both of these two aspects – on the one hand, the conscious involvement and deliberate engagement with the past to "break *it* up" (and likewise break up *with* it), interrupting its linear progression; on the other hand, the pragmatic application of the new knowledge hence gained from history – are equally fundamental to Nietzsche. Within this scope of practice, Nietzsche's theory displays a significant affinity with Benjamin's *Theses* (1942). This affiliation of thoughts results further corroborated by the eminent role and relevance that both philosophers attribute to the imperative of "forgetting" history as handed down by official records in order to reevaluate the past and reawaken one's dormant consciousness. In the seventh of his theses, Benjamin describes this critical act of "dissociating" oneself from the past as "the task to brush history against the grain" (1973: 257). This is how Manzoni essentially proceeded when sieving through the historical resources consulted, reviewing often contradictory reports and, thus, rectifying the controversial image with which the medieval *condottiero* had been stereotyped as ambitioned chieftain and stigmatized as untrusty

conspirator.⁶⁰¹ In backing up his theory of Carmagnola's innocence, Manzoni does so by availing himself of historically substantiated proof that takes into account erstwhile Medieval customs and expected military conduct.⁶⁰² There is also, undoubtedly, a pragmatic component to this specific mode of interpreting and enacting history insofar as tragedy serves for Manzoni the purpose of moral instruction and national education.

Portrayed with virtues and vices alike, Manzoni's Carmagnola results eventually to be a more realistic (and thus historically truthful) character than his forthcoming idealized counterpart Adelchi. Removed from Adelchi's impeccable image of innocence, the Count recalls instead – to put it with Goethe – the classical Aristotelian tragic hero affected by his

⁶⁰¹ In the *Notizie storiche* that lay out the drama's historical context, after informing the reader that the tragedy will focus exclusively on the Count's main vicissitudes, Manzoni explains to have chosen only those events that appeared most credible or "verosimile": "Alcuni di essi [*sc.* i fatti principali] sono raccontati così diversamente dagli storici, che è impossibile formarsene e darne una opinione, certa e unica. Tra le relazioni spesso varie e talvolta opposte, ho scelto quelle che mi sono parse più *verosimili*, o sulle quali gli scrittori vanno più d'accordo" (EN III/ 13, my emphasis). On Manzoni's distinction between "verità" and "verosimile", see fn. 610.

⁶⁰² A detailed account of his research is reported in the *Notizie storiche*. Here the playwright explains Carmagnola's release of his war prisoners as according to the military customs of his time ("ordinò che [...] questi fossero rilasciati, *secondo l'uso*" [EN III/ 16, my emphasis]). He points, on the other hands, to what may have been the actual reason of his charge, that is the Venetians' unjustified mistrust towards Carmagnola: "I Signori veneti furono punti e insospettiti dal procedere del Conte; ma *senza giusta ragione*" (EN III/ 16). Manzoni goes thus far as to blame the Venetian historians for missing the impartiality required to guarantee a truthful report of Carmagnola's case, and argues equally against the non-biased historians who preferred to settle down by declaring Carmagnola a victim of treason without providing further charge against the actual traitors: "Gli storici veneti accusano qui il Carmagnola di tradimento. Gli storici che non hanno preso il tristo assunto di giustificare i suoi uccisori, non gli danno altra taccia che d'essersi lasciato ingannare da uno stratagemma" (EN III/ 17). Manzoni laments, therefore, the lack of any records that would provide enough evidence to prove Carmagnola's innocence. In contrast, therefore, to the non-Venetian historians who never questioned, or even reviewed, the charges historically handed down against the chieftain, Manzoni will both dismantle the alleged accusation of treason as unjustified ("il tradimento non ispiega nulla; giacchè non si sa vedere perchè il Carmagnola avrebbe ordinata la spedizione, il cattivo esito della quale non fu d'alcun vantaggio per il nemico" [EN III/ 18]), and thus deny any historical evidence ("la mancanza assoluta di testimonianze dirette storiche, che confermino la reità del Carmagnola" [EN III/ 19]) that could speak for it: "Nulla d'autentico si ha sull'innocenza o sulla reità di questo grand'uomo. Era da aspettarsi che gli storici veneziani che volevano scrivere e viver tranquilli, l'avrebbero trovato colpevole. Essi esprimono quest'opinione come una cosa di fatto, e con quella negligenza che è naturale a chi parla in favore della *forza*" (EN III/ 19, my emphases). The law of force remains the illegitimate device that determines both the course and the narrative of the history: "Senza perdersi in congetture, [gli storici veneziani] asseriscono che il Carmagnola fu convinto coi tormenti, coi testimoni e con le sue proprie lettere. Di questi tre mezzi di prova il solo che si sappia di certo essere stato adoprato è l'infamissimo primo, quello che non prova nulla" (EN III/ 19).

flaws and failures; following Goethe's remarks: "Die alte Forderung des Theoristen daß ein tragischer Held nicht vollkommen, nicht fehlerfrey seyn müsse, findet sich auch hier befriedigt" (*Theilnahme* XXI).⁶⁰³ Yet, as we shall see, this realism concedes its way ever closer to an idealistic *dénouement* that witnesses the protagonist exiting the stage redeemed from a false indictment and reinstated as victim of injustice.⁶⁰⁴

Departing, therefore, from Manzoni's own definition of his drama in terms of "componimento misto d'invenzione e di verità storica" (EN III/ 11), as he describes it in his forward to the tragedy, my analysis of the play will unfold along three concomitant and convergent lines of study, all held together by the equation of poetry and history. First, I shall illustrate how the fictionalization that Manzoni undertakes of history must be viewed as partaking in his very quest for truth which he pursued assuming as perspective his own present; references to Manzoni's contemporary history yet *in fieri* in his rapport with the past will become evident from the play. Second, as we follow Manzoni along his search for moral truth that he believed to be entailed in human history and expressed by his characters, I shall demonstrate how the ethical claim that he sets on tragedy revolutionized the dramatic tradition. This, in turn, initiated a very modern notion of theater based on the spectator's active contemplation of the play rather than acquiescent compassion for the tragic protagonist, in the guise of a Brechtian epic theater *ante litteram* – the more so as he restored and reinstated for this purpose a very classical component of Greek tragedy, the chorus. Third, as Manzoni identifies in history the unfolding of divine Providence, I will elucidate

⁶⁰³ Cf. Italian translation by Ugoni: "La barbogia condizione del Teorichista: che il tragico eroe non sia incolpabile e perfetto: trovasi qui adempiuta" (Grüning 1988: 171).

⁶⁰⁴ As a matter of fact, recent historical studies have actually confirmed the charge of treason against the historical Carmagnola.

how the dramatic development is driven forth by a messianic force that manifests itself shortly before the curtain falls. Within this scope of study, the tragedy will derive its allegorical valence both on the intradiegetic level of its action and the extradiegetic link that it establishes with Manzoni's very notion of universal human history. The binomial of mysticism and realism that, consequently, distinguishes his first historical play, will call moreover for the inclusion of Manzoni's *Sacred Hymns* (1812-1822), with special emphasis on the "Pentecost" (1817-1822), and his civil poems (1814-1821) as they shall illustrate a major development of Manzoni's ethical and anthropological, poetic and political creed reflected in *Carmagnola*, and in the revisions that the play underwent. If the religious poems, in fact, dealt with the Messiah's historical past and the civil poems with Manzoni's historical present, both their message and meaning found an intelligible echo in the *The Count of Carmagnola* where religious patriotism and parabel, sacred and secular history, medieval and messianic focus converged in an innovative dramatic product.

To Claude Charles Fauriel, Manzoni announced on 25 March 1816 his new literary project – dedicated to his "meilleur ami" in sign of "cordial and reverent friendship" – as "une tragédie que j'ai commencé avec beaucoup *d'ardeur et d'espoir* de faire au moins une *chose neuve*" (L I/ no. 111, 157, my emphases).⁶⁰⁵ It had been the playwright's aspiration – described as an ambitious undertaking – to realize a hitherto ground-breaking dramatic genre whose "action commence par la déclaration de guerre de Vénitiens au duc de Milan [...] et se termine par la mort de Carmagnola", thus encompassing "une espace de six ans" – "c'est un

⁶⁰⁵ Manzoni's dedication opens the forward ("Prefazione") that introduces the play with the Italian wording: "Al Signor / Carlo Claudio Fauriel / in attestato / di cordiale e riverente amicizia / l'autore" (EN III/ 3). Manzoni had actually first set pen to his tragedy on January 15, 1816, and by the time he actually wrote to Fauriel, he had already completed the first five scenes of act one; see commentary to Manzoni's letter (EN XXVII/ 202).

fort soufflet", Manzoni remarked in the above-captioned letter to his French friend, "à la règle de l'unité de tems" (L I/ no. 111, 157). The declared discomfort with which Manzoni attempted to adopt and adhere to the Aristotelian unities that had shaped the classical theater, is expressed in a subsequent missive to Fauriel from July 13, 1816 to whom he confided: "Ne croyez pas que je veuille faire la guerre aux règles pour avoir le plaisir de les combattre sans nécessité; je ne fais que les éviter quand je les trouve dans mon chemin, et qu'il me paraît qu'elles m'empêchent d'arriver, ou de bien marcher" (L I/ no. 112, 161).⁶⁰⁶ Hindered by the dramatic three unities, Manzoni granted himself the poetic licence to willfully neglect them, nonetheless aware of the unfortunate reception that his tragedy – "quel povero *Carmagnola*" as he will call it in his letter from February 1820 to his friend Gaetano Giudici (L I/ no. 128, 193) – may have expected: "Ainsi au fond je ne crains pour ma Tragédie qu'un malheur" (L I/ no. 112, 162).⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁶ The unities were jeopardizing for Manzoni the truthful representation of history. As the playwright will, in retrospect, point out in his later essay *Del romanzo storico* (1827): "la storia, per fare nella tragedia quella grande irruzione che s'era fissata di fare, aveva proprio bisogno d'abbattere quel baluardo; e l'abbattè" (*Opere* V.3/ 362). Manzoni had shared his disapproval of the Aristotelian unities with Schiller – whom he originally mentioned in his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-23) next to Goethe and Shakespeare. Schiller, before him, had in fact lamented in his correspondence with Goethe from 26 July 26 1800, as he was writing his *Maid of Orleans* (1801) the impossibility to conciliate the ancient form of tragedy with the contemporary German *Trauerspiel*: "Was mich bey meinem neuen Stücke besonders incommodiert ist, daß es sich nicht so wie ich wünsche in wenige große Massen ordnen will und daß ich es, in Absicht auf *Zeit* und *Ort* in zu viele Theile zerstückeln muß welches, wenn auch die Handlung selbst die gehörigte Stätigkeit hat, immer *der Tragödie widerstrebend* ist. Man muß, wie ich bei diesem Stücke sehen, sich durch keinen *allgemeinen Begriff* feßeln, sondern es wagen, bei einem neuen Stück die Form zu erfinden, und sich den Gattungsbegriff immer *beweglich* halten" (NA XXX/ no. 176, 214, my emphasis). According to the German writer, the definition of a specific literary genre ("Gattungsbegriff") could be restricted to a "general concept" ("allgemeinen Begriff"), but ought remain "mobile" ("beweglich"), in other words: "malleable" to new forms. Schiller will reiterate this very reconceptualization of ancient drama only two days later in his letter Körner from 28 July 1800, where this notion versatility becomes the distinctive trait between Greek tragedy and German *Trauerspiel*: "Die Idee eines Trauerspiels muß immer *beweglich* und *werdend* sein, und nur virtualiter in hundert und tausend möglichen Formen sich darstellen" (NA XXX/ no. 181, 218). For its inherent property of defying formal conventions and for being pliable, in terms of content, to different meanings and interpretations, Benjamin considered allegory as the literary device more apt to feature in the German *Trauerspiel*.

⁶⁰⁷ In his *Reminiscenze* (1882), Cesare Cantù – a contemporary friend of Manzoni – reports in detail through first-hand documents, such as reviews and letters, *Carmagnola*'s poor reception in Italy, for the great part due to

The critiques that Manzoni had predicted were not too long in coming and soon denounced by the French literary critic Victor Chauvet.⁶⁰⁸ Manzoni, who justified his

Manzoni's rejection of the Aristotelian unities. The reknown literary journal "Biblioteca italiana" did not even deem his drama worthwhile mentioning: "Non merita che se ne parli"; qtd. in Cantù (1882: 123). In a later article, the same Milanese journal would eventually return to address the content of Manzoni's drama without, however, questioning Carmagnola's guilt: "Versimilmente il Senato veneto cominciò quindi a diffidarsi di lui", thus objecting to the playwright's standpoint; and after elucidating the chieftain's reprobate conduct and career, reinforcing his death sentence as justified: "Tutte queste cose furono dalla Signoria imputate a tradimento del Carmagnola, il quale invitato sotto pretesti a Venezia fu arrestato, dannato a morte, e il dì 5 maggio del 1452 decapitato" (Scalvini 1948: 196). Cantù was one of the very few that approached with diffidence the charge of treason against Manzoni's tragic protagonist: "Fatto è che contro di questo si lanciarono accuse misteriose, incerte: si usarono artifizj per trarlo a Venezia, dove egli venne in buona fede" (1882: 123).

⁶⁰⁸ In a letter that Goethe addressed in March 1820 to Gaetano Cattaneo, the German writer sided with Manzoni's dramatic practice: "Daß er die Einheiten der Zeit und des Ortes nicht streng beobachtet, kann von uns deutschen nicht getadelt werden, da wir seit langen Jahren der Überzeugung sind, die er in seiner Vorrede freymüthig ausspricht. Daß er dagegen die dritte Einheit als die unerläßliche, die der Handlung und des Interesses, stets for Augen gehabt und uns von Anfang bis zu Ende immer in gleicher Theilnahme erhält, verdient allen Beyfall" (EN XXIX.1/ 391); cf. Italian translation: "Che non abbia osservato rigidamente le unità di tempo e di luogo non può essere criticato da noi tedeschi, poiché proprio noi siamo da molti anni convinti di quanto da lui espresso con franchezza nel suo proemio; aver invece mantenuto come irrinunciabile la terza unità, cioè quella d'azione e d'interesse, coinvolgendoci dall'inizio alla fine, merita grande plauso" (EN XXIX.1/ 390). In an entry made to his *Tages- und Jahresheft* during the same year of 1820, Goethe defended once more Manzoni against the critique of his Romantic contemporaries and compatriots: "Von fremder literatur beschäftigte mich *Graf Carmagnola*. Der wahrhaft liebenswürdige Verfasser Alexander Manzoni, ein geborner Dichter, ward wegen theatralischer Ortsverletzung von seinen Landsleuten des Romanticismus angeklagt, von dessen Unarten doch nicht die geringste an ihm haftete" (EN XXIX.1/ 395, emphasis in the original); cf. Italian translation: "Per quanto riguarda le letterature straniere mi occupai del *Conte di Carmagnola*. Alessandro Manzoni, autore veramente amabile e vero poeta, fu accusato, dai suoi compatrioti – per la violazione dell'unità teatrale di luogo – di Romanticismo, pur non avendone i difetti" (EN XXIX.1/ 395, emphasis in the original). A year later, Goethe still mentions Manzoni in an article published in his literary journal *Über Kunst und Altertum* (1821/ III.1) in which he argues against the Aristotelian unities as relying on the spectator's identification with the dramatic actors and their action on stage: "Herr Manzoni gab, durch einen guten Gedanken, in seiner Vorrede zum Grafen Carmagnola, zu folgenden Betrachtungen Anlaß: der Hauptirrthum, woraus die eingeübte Nothwendigkeit der beyden, nunmehr beseitigten Theater-Einheiten entsprang, entwickelte sich aus dem, überigens löblichen, lebhaften *Antheil den der Zuschauer an der Bühne nimmt*, nur versieht er es darin daß er, der unten ganz still sitzt, sich einbildet er habe auch oben zu schaffen, daher sich denn die da droben eben so wenig vom Flecke rühren und zu ihrem Thun und Handeln nicht mehr Zeit brauchen sollen, als er zum Schauen und Horchen. Diesen Irrthum muß man ihm benehmen, wenn das Theater erfreulich und der peniblen Forderungen jener Einheiten entbunden werden soll" (*Werke* XXI/ 43, my emphasis); cf. Ugoni's translation "Il Signor Manzoni con una bella idea, espressa nella sua prefazione al *Conte di Carmagnola*, mi ha dato motivo per aggiungere le seguenti osservazioni. L'errore principale, dal quale scaturiva la presunta necessità delle due ormai eliminate unità drammatiche si era sviluppato dalla **partecipazione** – del resto lodevole **dello spettatore al teatro**, soltanto che questa sua partecipazione consiste nello stare là giù zitto, immaginandosi di aver a che fare anche di sopra; questo fa sì che anche quelli lassù non si dovrebbero spostare neanche di un passo né impiegare più tempo per il loro agire che quello impiegato dallo spettatore per il guardare e l'ascoltare. Da questo errore esso deve essere distolto se si vuole che il teatro diventi dilettevole e sia liberato dalle penose esigenze di quelle unità" (Grüning 1988: 186-87, emphasis in the original, bold added). In the forward to his drama, Manzoni will criticize precisely this "falso supposto": "cioè che lo spettatore sia lì come parte dell'azione; quando è, per così dire, una mente estrinseca che la contempla. [...] Quando si considera che lo spettatore è fuori

infraction against the Aristotelian rules in a formal letter of response *On the Unity of Time and Place in Tragedy* (1820-1823) defended himself by calling into account what he deemed to be at the very root of history, and thus of historical dramas – "la marche de l'esprit humaine":

Nous découvrons, dans une *série donnée de faits*, une partie de *notre nature* e de *notre destinée*; nous finissons par dire en nous-même: Dans de telle circonstances, à l'aide de tels moyens, avec de tels hommes, les choses devaient arriver ainsi. *La création imposée par la règle des deux unités consiste à déranger tout cela*, et à donner à l'effet principal que l'on a conservé et que l'on représente une autre série de causes nécessairement différentes et qui doivent néanmoins être également *vraisemblables* et intéressantes; [...]
(*Opere* V.3/ 132-33, my emphases).⁶⁰⁹

dall'azione, l'argomento in favore delle unità svanisce" (EN III/ 5); in his aesthetic notes that he had been collecting between 1816 and 1819, later collated under the title of *Materiali estetici*, Manzoni had favored and formulated the spectator's alienation rather than assimilation to the enacted play according, as he will explain in *Carmagnola's* "Prefazione", to an erroneous "principio, cioè, che nel dramma rappresentato siano verosimili que' fatti soli che s'accordano con la presenza dello spettatore, dimanierachè possano parergli fatti reali" (EN III/ 5). When eventually also the British *New Quarterly* criticized Manzoni, holding him up against Shakespeare, for having "*boldly declare[d] war against the Unities*": "little confirmation will be gained from this proselyte to our tramontane notions of dramatic liberty; we fear, however, that the Italians will require a more *splendid violation* of their old established laws, before they are led to abandon them" (*Werke* XXI/ 141, my emphases), Goethe decided to write a second review of Manzoni's drama, that was published in *Über Kunst und Altertum* (1821/ III.2) under the title *Graf Carmagnola noch einmal* where the author points to Manzoni's actual bravery at breaking with the traditional dramatic form, in particular in a country yet too conservative to accept any major innovations: "Keineswegs! wir loben dagegen den Author, der vor einem strengen und, wie man am heftigen Widerstreite sieht, theilweise unbiegsamen Publikum handelt, wenn er als guter Kopf, Talent, Genie, durch sanftes Ausweichen versucht eine löbliche Freyheit zu erlangen. Hiebey kann der Autor seine eigene Nation nicht einmal zu Rathe ziehen, geschweige eine fremde; eben so wenig darf er fragen, was Entfernte, Andersgebildete für Vortheil aus seiner Arbeit gewinnen mögen" (*Werke* XXI/ 142); cf. Ugoni's Italian translation: "Per niente affatto! Lodiamo per lo contrario l'A., che scrivendo a un pubblico rigoroso e in parte inflessibile, come si vede dalla veemenza dell'opposizione, cerchi invece con senno, ingegno e genio d'acquistarsi, cedendo destramente, una libertà lodevole sulla scena. In ciò l'A. non può prender consiglio neppure dalla propria nazione, molto meno da una straniera: così neppure può egli badare qual vantaggio, in paesi lontani, uomini altramente educati possano trarre dal suo lavoro" (Grüning 1988: 176).

⁶⁰⁹ Manzoni's chief objection against the dramatic unities was their incompatibility with his quest for historical truth; in a remark that followed a comment articulated in his *Lettre* to Chauvet on the French classical theater, he argued: "les grandes actions historiques ont une origine, des impulsions, des tendances, des obstacles bien différens et bien autrement compliqués; elles ne se laissent donc pas si aisément réduire, dans l'imitation, à des conditions qu'elles n'ont pas eues dans la réalité" (*Opere* V.3/ 139). Manzoni's *Lettre à M.^r C****, composed already in Paris in the spring of 1820 [EN III/ LX] was set to print only in 1823 with the French translation of Manzoni's dramas edited by Fauriel that appeared under the title *Le Comte de Carmagnola et Adelchis. Tragédies d'A. Manzoni traduites de l'italien par M. C. Fauriel; suivies d'un article de Goethe et de divers morceaux sur la théorie de l'art dramatique*; beside the two historical plays and his *Lettre*, the volume included

It was essential for Manzoni that history be more than the mere discovery of a "series of given facts", and disclose instead behind the surface of factual accounts that part of human ground which is reminiscent of our own "nature" and "destiny", complying consequently with the aesthetic principle of "verisimilitude".⁶¹⁰ In an entry from 1820 to his *Tag- und*

also Goethe's review of *Carmagnola* that was originally published in *Über Kunst und Altertum* (1820/ II.3; see *Werke* XX/ 478-90), included in 1827 to the Jena edition of Manzoni's works; for more details, cf. Manzoni's letter to Fauriel from May 29, 1822 in which he instructs his friend and editor what to include and what to leave out in the French edition of his works (L I/ no. 160, 264-72). His *Lettre*, will become the manifesto of his early aesthetic theory which – as we shall see in this further investigation – would undergo major changes and a decisive development. Yet he will remain resolute in his stance on the "dramatic revolution" that in his later essay on the historical novel, *Del Romanzo storico* (1827-1850), he will declare as successful: "la rivoluzione drammatica, che vediamo ora vittoriosa" (*Opere* V.3/ 358). As he commented on the unities of time and place, rectifying the alleged incorret meaning thus far attributed to Aristotle's rules, he eventually conclude that the unities contravened the very scope of history: "Unità, si diceva, proclamate da Aristotele, osservate fedelmente nelle tragedie greche, e soprattutto volute dalla ragione. Se poi Aristotele avesse proposte davvero queste unità; se nelle tragedie greche fossero davvero state osservate; se la ragione non avesse nulla a dire in contrario, non si cercava quasi da nessuno; e a chi ne cercasse, si dava sulla voce. È inutile aggiungere che alla storia quelle regole non convenivano punto" (*Opere* V.3/ 358-59, my emphasis). Following Manzoni's argument, it was, therefore, indispensable for history to obviate both the unity of space and time in order to access the stage: "la storia, per fare nella tragedia quella grande irruzione che s'era fissata di fare, aveva proprio bisogno d'abbattere quel baluardo; e l'abbattè (362). In the *Prefazione* to his drama, Manzoni had already contested "la quistione delle due unità di tempo e di luogo" as being the result of an arbitrary interpretation and application of ancient drama on the modern stage: "L'unità di luogo, e la così detta unità di tempo, non sono regole fondate nella ragione dell'arte, nè connaturali all'indole del poema drammatico; ma sono venute da una autorità non bene intesa, e da principi arbitrari: ciò risulta evidente a chi osservi la genesi di esse. L'unità di luogo è nata dal fatto che la più parte delle tragedie greche imitano un'azione la quale si compie in un solo luogo [anacronismo: la tragedia moderna non è la tragedia greca] [...]. L'unità di tempo ebbe origine da un passo di Aristotele, il quale [...] non contiene un precetto, ma la semplice notizia di un fatto; cioè della pratica più generale del teatro greco" (EN III/ 4, my emphases). The playwright eventually dismisses altogether the assumption that it was in Aristotle's intention to prescribe dramatic rules, but rather to merely describe what was common dramatic practice in the classical Greek theater: "Che se Aristotele avesse realmente inteso di stabilire un canone dell'arte, questa sua frase avrebbe il doppio inconveniente di non esprimere un'idea precisa, e di non essere accompagnata da alcun ragionamento" (EN III/ 4).

⁶¹⁰ In his letter to Giudici from February 1820, Manzoni had described "questo interesse" for truth as "una parte importante ed eterna dell'animo umano" as it related to the very human "desiderio di conoscere quello che è realmente, e di vedere più che si può in noi e nel nostro destino su questa terra" (L I/ no. 127, 194). The principle of verisimilitude was considered by Manzoni essential to a truthful representation of his human characters: a truthfulness which the unities hindered instead to achieve. Early on his *Lettre* (1820-1823), even before criticizing the Aristotelian rules, the playwright introduces his forthcoming argument with defining the very notion of truth: "La vraisemblance et l'intérêt dans les caractères dramatiques, comme dans toutes les parties de la poésie, dérivent de la vérité. Or, cette vérité est justement la base du système historique. Le poète qui l'a adopté ne crée pas le distances pur le plaisir d'étendre son action; il les prend dans l'histoire même" (*Opere* V.3/ 91, my emphases). Manzoni thus relates the notion of verisimilitude directly to that of verity, a fundamental kinship that he will readdress in the original draft of his letter *Sul romanticismo* directed to the marquis Cesare d'Azeglio – written nearly simultaneously, or shortly after in 1823, in which he formulated the aesthetic principle: "Che la poesia, e la letteratura in genere debba proporsi l'utile per iscopo, il vero per

Jahreshefte, Goethe located the successful combination of historical veracity and poetic verisimilitude in Manzoni's drama within his characters who functioned as embodiments of that "perfect humanity" that had enjoyed a privileged status in his own aesthetic and anthropological theory: "Er [*sc.* Manzoni] hielt sich an einem *historischen Gange*, seine Dichtung hatte den Charakter einer *vollkommenen Humanität*" (EN XXIX.1/ 395, my

soggetto, e l'interessante per mezzo" (*Opere* V.3/ 248). His letter to d'Azeglio became Manzoni's manifesto for the Italian Romanticism which, in contrast to the French and English Romantics, ought to aim at being "useful" ("utile"), "truthful" ("vero") and "interesting" ("interessante"). This stance will drastically shift, and Manzoni will omit this passage from the final edition of the letter published in 1871; see also Gibellini's extensive introduction to the letter in EN XIII (2008: XXVII-LXXIV). This change of mind finds its roots in Manzoni's encounter and exchange of thoughts with Rosmini whom he met in 1826. The same Rosmini, in fact, had published in 1827 his essay *Sull'idillio e la nuova letteratura italiana* in which he had clearly separated the role of the poet from that of the historian by stating: "la *verisimiglianza* si distingue assai da quelle due nozioni di *verità*, e di *cose vere*, e non può confondersi nè con quella nè con queste", and by differentiating the three terms as follows: "La *verità*, è l'idea esemplare delle cose. Le *cose vere* sono le cose (esistenti) in quanto rassomigliano alla verità. La *verisimiglianza* è l'argomento **interno** della *verità nelle cose*, di questa rassomiglianza che hanno colla loro **idea esemplare**: l'argomento dico pel quale al sentirsi narrare la cosa, tosto giudichiamo ch'essa *probabilmente* sia avvenuta qual ci si narra" (1827: 324; emphases in the original, bold added); see also Nebuloni's comment on Rosmini's essay (1994: 268). For the time being, however, Manzoni defended in his *Lettre* to Chauvet the right of poetry, that is verisimilitude, to appeal to truth denouncing the restrictions imposed in this task by the classical dramatic unities: "Pour prouver que la persistance d'un personnage dans un même dessein sort de la vraisemblance lorsqu'elle se prolonge au-delà des limites de la règle, il faudrait prouver qu'il n'arrive jamais aux hommes d'aspirer à un but éloigné de plus de vingt-quatre heures, *dans le temps*, et de plus de quelques centaines de pas, *dans l'espace*; et, pour avoir le droit de soutenir que le degré de persistance dont il s'agit produit la langueur et la froideur, il faudrait avoir démontré que l'esprit humain est constitué de manière à se dégoûter et à se fatiguer d'être obligé de suivre les desseins d'un homme au-delà d'un seul jour et d'un seul lieu" (*Opere* V.3/ 91-92, my emphases). Considering that "l'expérience atteste suffisamment le contraire", the author demonstrates that "il n'y a pas une histoire, pas un conte peut-être qui n'excède de si étroites limites" (*Opere* V.3/ 92). As a matter of fact, Manzoni explains: "plus la volonté de l'homme traverse [...] de durée et d'étendue, et plus elle excite en nous de curiosité et d'intérêt" given the fact that "plus les événements qui sont le produit de sa force se prolongent et se diversifient" (*Opere* V.3/ 92, my emphasis). Many years later in his life, when Manzoni would eventually rely exclusively on metaphysical truth as the guarantor of that ethical claim that history had failed to provide and poetry to posit, he will considerably review the original standpoint articulated in his letter *Sul romanticismo* to the father of his future son-in-law, formulating more prudently: "Non voglio dissimulare a Lei [...] nè a me stesso [...] quanto indeterminato, incerto e vacillante nell'applicazione sia il senso della parola 'vero' riguardo ai lavori d'immaginazione" (*Opere* V.3/ 280). At this point, Manzoni had already written, under the influence of his spiritual father Rosmini, the dialogue *Dell'invenzione* (1850) where the notion of truth had been linked directly to God: "l'aver noi una critica storica che, ne' fatti passati, cerca la verità di fatto, e, ciò che importa troppo più, l'aver una *religione* che, essendo verità, non può convenientemente adattarsi a variazioni arbitrarie, e ad aggiunte fantastiche" (*Opere* V.3/ 363-64).

emphases).⁶¹¹ Rooted in *interiore hominis*, "[c]e fond général de nature humaine, sur lequel se dessinent, pour ainsi dire, les individus humains, on n'a eu ni *le temps* ni *la place* de le déployer" (*Opere* V.3/ 133-34, my emphases), Manzoni's poetic truth cannot be pursued by rules external and thus alien to the very essence of human nature, without originating "personnages fictifs, qui y ont figuré comme types abstraits de certaines passions, plutôt que comme des êtres passionnés" (*Opere* V.3/ 134). Devoid of flesh and blood, the classical drama features instead what Manzoni lamented to be an "uniformité des caractères tragiques, qui constituent proprement le *romanesque*" (*Opere* V.3/ 134, my emphasis). It is precisely this "exagération" (*Opere* V.3/ 134) – as the author qualified in his *Lettre* poetic fancy – that he would blame in *Adelchi* (1820-1822) whom he granted toward Fauriel the epithet of "mon petit monstre romantique" (L I/ no. 158/ 259), before he opted altogether not to name him any longer: "cet *Adelchi*, que je rougis de nommer" (L I/ no. 160, 264, emphasis in the original). In contrast to his forthcoming tragic protagonist, Manzoni had meant to represent with Carmagnola a fundamental "dissonance" between his actions and his heart: "Io aveva sentito che le *circostanze* e le *azioni* del Carmagnola non erano in proporzione coll'animo suo e coi suoi disegni, ma questa *dissonanza* appunto è quella che io ho voluto rappresentare" (L I/ 193, my emphases).⁶¹² It is precisely this distinction and divergence between external facts and inner feelings that will allow the author to redeem him eventually from the charge of treason.

⁶¹¹ Cf. Italian translation: "Sviluppò un percorso storico, la sua poesia ebbe come carattere la *completa umanità*" (EN XXIX.1/ 395, my emphasis).

⁶¹² See Manzoni's letter from Paris to his friend Giudici February 7, 1820 – that is, shortly after the publication of his tragedy in January 1820, three years from the time he first set pen to *Carmagnola* in January 1816 to its completion in December 1819 [EN III: LIV]).

Yet unaware of the pitfalls in which poetry will delude Manzoni through the danger of "excessive" idealization, his equation of historical *qua* poetic truth will find its dwelling place within the sphere of human immanence and imperfection. As pointed out once more in his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-23): "Tout ce que la *volonté humaine* a de fort ou de mystérieux, le *malheur* de religieux et de profond, le poëte peut le deviner; ou, pour mieux dire, l'apercevoir, le saisir et le rendre" (*Opere* V.3/ 123, my emphases). Two principles, "individual will" and "misfortune", govern the actions and attitudes of the characters inhabiting Manzoni's drama. As they put themselves and their strength of will to the test in the least favorable circumstances, they bring to light all the depth and breath of their human vulnerability and weakness – in other words, "leur individualité: tout cela" which "est passé sous silence par l'histoire; et tout cela" that the author still believed to be "le domaine de la poésie" (*Opere* V.3/ 122). This aesthetic and anthropological tenet shall be exemplified through the catastrophe encountered and the conduct respectively enacted by Marco and Carmagnola: major protagonists and prototypes of the dichotomy between ideal and real, fictional and historical hitherto articulated by Manzoni.

Listed by the author as ideal character, Marco features in the role of Venetian senator and trusted friend of Carmagnola. When the count and *condottiero* falls into disgrace to the Venetian Republic and is stigmatized as traitor, Marco's ideal counterpart Marino who appeals to a patriotism which is the more provincial and petty as it is employed as manipulative ideological device intended to pressure Marco into signing his allegiance to the Republic of Venice and thus, in turn, betray his loyalty to Carmagnola. Ideal are both figures insofar as we find them respectively located at the opposite ends of the ethical spectrum and scale of good and evil that govern the course of human history: "quel misto di grande e di

meschino, di ragionevole e di pazzo che si vede negli avvenimenti grandi e piccioli di questo mondo" which had stemmed "dalla rappresentazione la più vicina al vero" that Manzoni had intended to enact (L I/ 194).⁶¹³

The apology that Marco articulates in response to Marino's accusations against Carmagnola – as much as the count's self-defense in the first scene of the last act – is a later addition, justifiable by the author's intent to argue against the false accusations with which his historical protagonist had been charged, but also and consequently to illustrate the coercive power exerted by the State on his citizens in a manner not dissimilar to the absolute sovereign onto his subjects.⁶¹⁴ Hence Marco's plea to the Senate to desist from its insidious design of recalling the count from his encampment near Cremona – following his unsuccessful military campaign – back to Venice under the pretext of consulting over a possible armistice: "Lasciam codeste / Cure ai *tiranni*, ivi il valor si tema / Ove lo scettro è in una mano [...]" (IV.1/ ll. 155-57, my emphasis). Albeit representing the very notion of morality and virtue expressed in his genuine interest for the cause of the state ("la causa dello Stato / È la mia causa" [IV.1/ ll. 101-2]), Marco is far from being the thoroughly idealized figure that Adelchi will embody. With Marco, Manzoni set instead on stage primarily a *human* character that would eventually succumb to the law of force, and fear for his life:

MARCO	Oggi ho scoperto! Abbandonar nel laccio Un amico io potea! Veder gli al tergo L'assassino venir, veder lo stile Che su lui scende, e non gridar: ti guarda! Io lo potea; l'ho fatto... io più nol devo Salvar; chiamato ho in testimonio il cielo D'un'infame viltà... la sua sentenza

⁶¹³ See above-captioned letter by Manzoni to Giudici from early February 1820.

⁶¹⁴ As to the tragedy's subsequent additions, see commentary to the drama (EN III/ 124, 151).

Ho sottoscritta... ho la mia parte anch'io
 Nel suo sangue! Oh che feci! ... io mi lasciai
 Dunque atterrir?... La vita?... Ebben talvolta
 Senza delitto non si può serbarla. (IV.2/ ll. 273-83)

Marco's anguished consciousness calls to mind Judas' agonizing sense of guilt as Manzoni had portrayed it in the sixth strophe of his sacred hymn *The Passion* (1814-1815):

[...] simile quell'alma divenne
 A la notte de l'uomo omicida:
 Di quel sangue sol ode le grida;
 E s'accorge che sangue tradi. (ll. 45-48)

Yet, since Marco in the first place *denies* (rather than betrays) to succor his friend and to warn him against the treachery devised by Marino, he appears to display a stronger affinity with the apostle Peter and his denial of Jesus. Whether it had been *de facto* in the intention of the author, it may not be farfetched to assume from an unwavering Catholic as Manzoni that the choice of the name may as well have been suggested by the homonymous evangelist. The more so as it was John Mark who had followed Jesus to the Gethsemane garden upon Judas' betrayal, but after being identified by the soldiers, dreaded for his life and deserted him.⁶¹⁵

The motif of "betrayal", already examined in *Adelchi*, is charged for Manzoni with an eminently Christian connotation, lending itself, in turn, to an allegorical interpretation of the dramatic context and content. In his first tragedy, more than in Manzoni's forthcoming one, this thematic thread makes its appearance in Marco's and Carmagnola's Janus-faced role of

⁶¹⁵ Also Sandrini, in his introduction to Manzoni's drama, associates Marco with Saint Peter (EN III/ XCVI), next to the analogy of Marco *qua* Judas that he addresses in the actual commentary to the tragedy (EN III/ 48). In his letters, Saint Peter calls John Mark "my son Mark" (5:13), which speaks for the close relationship that the evangelist and disciple shared. Although Mark was not one of Jesus' disciples, he did write the Gospel by relying on what St. Peter had told and taught him. Unlike the other Gospel writings, however, his version does not portray Christ as lordly authority, but rather engaged in helping, that is: in *serving* others through healing, feeding, teaching: "For even the Son of Man" – he explains – "came not to *be* served but to *serve* others and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). This very idea of "servanthood" echoes in the tragedy's context with Carmagnola in his role of mercenary at the service of a magnate.

subjects and sufferers of treason. Although Manzoni does not exonerate his characters from their moral responsibility, he draws a clear line of distinction between whom intentionally exploits evil and whom inexorably experiences it: "il vero male per l'uomo", as he had specified in the third chapter of his extensive and yet incomplete essay *Sulla morale cattolica* (1819), "non è quello che soffre, ma quello che fa" (*Opere* III/ 48).⁶¹⁶ He pursues and promotes this moral tenet explicitly in his historical essay titled *Storia della colonna infame* (1842) that Manzoni appended to the final edition of his novel *The Betrothed* (1840). In this essay, the author investigates on the trials conducted and the tortures carried out in the early 1600s in Milan against the so-called "untori", i.e. the people unjustly accused to have spread the plague.⁶¹⁷ In the introduction to his essay, the author explicitly denies Providence any responsibility in the atrocities committed, and denounces instead the actual perpetrators of violence and posterity for deliberately choosing to remain oblivious of a truth that history has eventually silenced:

rimane l'orrore e scompare la colpa; e, cercando un colpevole contro cui sdegnarsi a ragione, il pensiero si trova con raccapriccio condotto a esitare tra due bestemmie, che son due deliri: negar la *Provvidenza*, o accusarla. Ma quando, nel guardar più attentamente a que' fatti, ci si scopre un'*ingiustizia* che *poteva* esser veduta da quelli stessi che la *commettevano*, un trasgredir le *regole ammesse anche da loro* [...], è un sollievo pensare che, se non seppero quello che facevano, fu per non *volarlo* sapere, fu per quell'ignoranza che l'uomo assume e perde a piacere, e non è una scusa, ma una *colpa*.

⁶¹⁶ On Manzoni's deliberate distinction between who commits and who enforces evil and who endures it, see Scarpati (2005: 269-79). Manzoni interrupted the composition of *Carmagnola* in 1818 to write – in response to Sismondi who had accused the Church of dissipation and corruption – his *Vindication of Catholic Morality* which was concluded and published in 1819.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. *I promessi sposi*, vol. 2, p. 750; henceforth indicated as "PS" followed by volume and page number. Driven by the need to shed light on a truth long foregone and forgotten ("non di rado le verità troppo evidenti [...] sono in vece dimenticate"), Manzoni intends to restore the memory of this atrocious event, eventually fallen into oblivion, and to render consequently justice to the innocent victims: "dal non dimenticare questa dipende il giudicar rettamente quell'atroce giudizio". For more details on the history and reception of Manzoni's *History of the Column of Infamy* (1842), see Vigorelli's and Riccardi's extensive commentary in EN XII.

(PS II/ 752, my emphases)

When Manzoni excludes up front the involvement of Providence in the injustice witnessed through history, and denies the theory that justifies the presence of evil as ensued altogether by the absence of a providential design, injustice cannot but stem from humankind, that is from the individual's freedom of will. In the 1725 edition of his *New Science*, Vico had argued that free will allowed for people to live under the banner of justice according to a common sense that was upheld by the laws: "viene di séguito [*sc.* che negli uomini sia libertà d'arbitrio] che gli uomini abbiano elezioni di vivere con giustizia" (Bk. I.i./ 172). Following Vico's assertion, any act of injustice would, therefore, imply the willful infraction of that very law that is meant to be guarantor of justice. Hence Manzoni's claim, in the excerpted quote, that the perpetrators of injustice break the laws that they themselves have acknowledged and passed – evidently not to ensure justice, but to exert power.⁶¹⁸ This truth is voiced by Marino when he justifies the Council's resort to treachery: "Sola una strada alla giustizia è schiusa, / L'arte con cui l'ingannator s'inganna" (IV.1/ ll. 80-81).⁶¹⁹ Marco and

⁶¹⁸ For more details on Vico's double principle of divine Providence and human will as directing the course of human history, see *Adelchi's* forthcoming section. The Neapolitan historian justifies the individuals' human sense of justice as being derivative of that common sense that people endorse of laws as natural providers of justice: "il quale comun senso [*sc.* di vivere con giustizia] è comprovato da questo comun desiderio che naturalmente hanno dalle leggi, ove essi non sien tòcchi da passione di alcun propio interesse di non volerle" (Bk. I. i/ 172). Unlike Vico, Manzoni will come to realize with his first historical tragedy that justice cannot be achieved on earth as it lies exclusively in God's hand and will. After completing his drama, the playwright will describe Carmagnola to Giudici: as a man: "che si dibatte colla debolezza e colla perfidia de' suoi tempi, e con istituzioni misere, improvide, irragionevoli, ma astute e già fortificate dall'abitudine e dal rispetto, e dagli interessi di quelli che hanno *l'iniziativa della forza*, [...]" (see his letter from February 7, 1820 [L I/ 193, my emphasis]). The notion of the "initiative of force" as lawful device of power, shall be developed in more detail in Manzoni's second drama *Adelchi* in relation to the notion of violence developed by Walter Benjamin in his critical essay on *The Critique of Violence* (1921).

⁶¹⁹ Carmagnola is well of aware of the deceitful strategy adopted by those in power: "Questa cupa arte lor, questi intricati / Avvolgimenti di menzogna, questo / Finger, tacere, antiveder, di cui / Tanto li loda e li condanna il mondo" (IV.3/ 396-400), as he acknowledges towards Gonzaga only a few following scenes only to dismiss the slightest suspicion against Venice. As we shall see, Carmagnola will eventually renounce this blind, delusive faith in humans for a stronger and more persistent one in the divine.

Carmagnola alike articulate Manzoni's charge. Whereas Marco, in the midst of his penitential anguish, points directly to the Venetian senators as the actual traitors to whose "abbominevole rete" (IV.2/ l. 335) he had fallen prey: "Gli astuti! i traditor!" (IV.2/ l. 309), Carmagnola – upon becoming aware of the deceit that the Council of Ten had brought upon him ("Io veniva all'inganno" [V.1/ l. 83]) – comes to realize that justice can be sought only beyond earthly life, in Gods' hands to whom he surrenders upon granting his foes forgiveness:

IL CONTE [...]. Il torto è grande;
 Ma perdona, e vedrai che in mezzo ai mali
 Un'altra gioia ancor riman. La morte!
 Il più crudel nemico altro non puote
 Che accelerarla. Oh! Gli uomini non hanno
 Inventata la *morte*: ella seria
 Rabbiosa, insopportabile: dal cielo
 Essa ci viene; e l'accompagna il cielo
 Con tal *conforto*, che nè dar nè torre
 Gli uomini ponno. [...] (V.5/ ll. 278-87, my emphases).⁶²⁰

Carmagnola's plea for reconciliation and his peaceful acceptance of the senate's verdict follow the providential epiphany that invests him at the threshold of life and death: "perchè" – as the author explains once more in the third chapter of *Sulla morale cattolica* (1819): "quando a seguire la giustizia non c'è altra strada che la morte, è certo per noi che Dio ci ha segnata quella per arrivare a Lui" (*Opere* III/ 36).⁶²¹ By relying his trust in God, that very same "fiducia in Dio" with which Renzo will sum up at the end of *The Betrothed* (1840) the

⁶²⁰ Carmagnola's final words spoken to his wife are reminiscent of the forgiveness that Ermengarda grants to her former husband, King Charles, shortly before expiring. As she consoles her sister Ansberga about her imminent end, Ermengarda likewise welcomes her death as comfort and remedy to earthly injustice: "-Non turbarti, o diletta: oh! non guardarmi / Accorata così. Di Dio, nol vedi?, / Questa è pietà. [...]" (IV.1/ 25-27).

⁶²¹ For Lonardi, *The Count of Carmagnola* represents the "allegoria storica e metastorica del 'potere ingiusto' e della violenza" (1976: 27). In the second part of the *Morale cattolica* that, written between 1819 and 1820, remained incomplete, Manzoni had described injustice as the deliberate abrogation of the divine law: "ogni potere ingiusto per far male agli uomini, ha bisogno di cooperatori che rinuncino ad obbedire alla legge divina, e quindi l'inesecuzione di essa è la condizione più essenziale perchè esso possa agire" (*Opere* III/ 518).

moral truth of his vicissitudes (2002: 745), death turns for Carmagnola from an act of cruelty to one of comfort as he is determined to follow Christ's example of passion: "perché ogni nostro sacrificio è leggiero in paragone dell'ineffabile sacrificio dell'Uomo-Dio, al quale dobbiamo essere somiglianti" (*Opere* III/ 36). In a world where, quoting Marco: "Testimonianza al vero, colpa si stima" (IV.1/ l. 149), truth can only be achieved through an act of divine faith, after the human faith that he had first posed in Visconti, and later in Venice had been betrayed.⁶²² In the very moment that Carmagnola accepts ("è un gran piacer la morte" [V.5/ l. 300]) what in his monologue he had still described as a fate "forcefully" imposed upon him ("Vo dunque incontro al mio destin, forzato" [V.4/ l. 237]), he exerts that very freedom of will that Manzoni prefers to keep intact within the instance and intervention of "provvida sventura", which will eventually contribute to his redemption.⁶²³ Manzoni qualified this strength of will "la determinazione la più ammirabile e la più difficile, quella di morire [con quell'aiuto divino che rende facili tutti i doveri] tra i tormenti per la verità" (*Opere* III/ 36, my emphasis), where the only authentic truth resides *in mente Dei*, consequently turning the medieval character into a martyr.⁶²⁴

⁶²² The notion of faith is originally addressed in the tragedy as early as in the first act when the Venetian doge articulates the transition of Carmagnola's "fede" ("faith") from Milan to Venice: "Egli [*sc.* il Duca] la vostra fede / Ha liberata, a voi l'ha resa intatta, / Qual gliela deste il primo giorno. È nostra / Or questa fede; e noi saprem tenerne / Ben altro conto [...]" (I.2/ ll. 137-41).

⁶²³ The key notion of "provvida sventura" ("providential woe") will be articulated in further detail within the context of *Adelchi*'s drama. Carmagnola's joyful reception of death echoes on the lines of *Sulla morale cattolica* (1819) Manzoni's rhetorical question: "È bello il dare la propria vita per la verità e per la giustizia?" (*Opere* III/ 35, my emphases). "Truth" ("verità") and "justice" ("giustizia") constitute Manzoni's chief pursuits in his ethical claim to history.

⁶²⁴ In her thought-provoking study on *The Politics of Martyrdom*, Rosoux examines the reevaluation and resemantization through time of the traitor figure into that of a victim and even martyr. As she remarks: "official representations of the past fluctuate [...]. The time factor is indeed often a determining element that explains the conversion of a victim – or even a traitor – into a martyr and vice versa" (2004: 101). This can be said to be

As historical character, to which the author wished to remain faithful, Manzoni's Carmagnola is portrayed in his virtues and vices alike. His martial ambitions – a man "desideroso di grandi imprese" is how Manzoni described him in his letter to Gaetano Giudici (L I/ 193) –, and his mercenary aspiration to vindicate the offense suffered by the hand of his former lord, the duke of Milan, make up a very human character that Foscolo had criticized in his essay *Della nuova scuola drammatica italiana* (1826) for being devoid of "tratti ideali" (EN XI.2/ 603).⁶²⁵ If the reason that induced Carmagnola to betray his

particularly true for the first Christian followers who were originally stigmatized as threat and treason to their authorities before history would rename them into victims of power, and eventually religious martyrs.

⁶²⁵ Foscolo, who had disliked Manzoni's distinction between real and ideal characters in his drama, overtly criticized his tragedy for lacking the idealization ("l'illusione drammatica che è più difficile ad ottenersi in quelle tragedie le quali professano di illustrare la storia" [EN XI.2/ 606]), required to be deemed of any aesthetic value: "non vi si trova alcun elemento di quell'ideale che dà lume, foco e vita e apparenze tangibili all'illusione" (EN XI.2/ 603). According to Foscolo, not reality, but the illusion – "senza la quale non esisterebbe arte veruna d'immaginazione e molto meno poesia drammatica" – ought to be the object of art (EN XI.2/ 591). Unlike Goethe, who had also disapproved of Manzoni's separation of historical from fictional characters, Foscolo did not have any praise left for a drama which had both failed to meet the requirements for qualifying as an authentic work of art and thus poetry, but had also not measured up with the claim of historical truthfulness that he harshly questioned: "Intendete voi seriamente che la vostra tragedia sia fondata assolutamente sul vero? Ma potete voi preservare la verità storica incorporandola alle alterazioni e alle finzioni necessarie alla scena? E senza alterazioni e finzioni riuscirete mai a fare poesia?" (EN XI.2/ 563), concluding: "la scena e la poesia, senza le quali non v'è tragedia, vi obbligavano ad alterare la storia" (EN XI.2/ 564). For Foscolo it was impossible for the poet to simultaneously play the part of the historian, that is: "le parti irconciliabili di poeta e di storico" (EN XI.2/ 589): "Lo storico ei guida per mezzo dell'esperienza de' fatti, e de' ragionamenti sov'essi; il poeta per mezzo dell'immaginazione e de' sentimenti [...]. La poesia tende a farci fortemente e pienamente sentire la nostra esistenza, e sollevarla di su dalle noie che l'accompagnano; la storia invece tende a dirigere la vista nostra in guisa che sappiamo giovarci del modo com'è" (EN XI.2/ 565-66). In contrast to Foscolo, who had qualified poetry and history to be as repellent as water and oil, Manzoni had claimed to be able to successfully conjoin and conciliate by yet keeping them distinct from each other. As he explained in his letter to Fauriel from January 1821, while he was already working at the second act of his next drama *Adelchi*, poetry was not supposed to compete with – as it had been the case with Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* which had become "une fable de son invention" – but rather to complete history, it ought in Manzoni's words: "profiter de l'histoire sans se mettre en concurrence avec elle, sans prétendre faire ce qu'elle fait mieux, voilà ce qui me paraît encore accordé à la poésie et ce qu'à son tour elle seule peut faire" (L I/ no. 144, 227). For Foscolo, instead, as we have already seen with Goethe's *Götz* and as we shall analyze in more depth with his *Egmont*, it was necessary for poetry and history to become one indiscernible unity in order for both to be perfectly combined: "[l'illusione] non acquista potere magico irresistibile se non allorchè la verità e la finzione, ritrovandosi faccia a faccia e in contatto non solo perdono [la] loro naturale tendenza a cozzare fra loro, ma s'aiutano scambievolmente a riunirsi e confondersi e parere una cosa sola" (EN XI.2/ 591). The different standpoint from which Foscolo and Manzoni respectively assessed and articulated their poetics was rooted in a personal dislike, and went therefore beyond a merely aesthetic disagreement. Manzoni, as Tommaseo writes, "[e]ra stato nei primi anni ammiratore del Foscolo" – an admiration, however, that soon waned causing

allegiance to Visconti and support the duke's hostile city of Venice was personal, equally personal was the cause that led him to join Venice's politics of warfare.⁶²⁶ Animated essentially and exclusively by a desire of revenge against his Milan foe, Carmagnola's interest in the Venetian Republic does not reach beyond the scope of his individual pursuit for retaliation – nor did he feel emotionally tied, for the matter, to Milan. Carmagnola, in other words, will take advantage of Venice as much as Venice will exploit his military service. It is this provincial patriotism – which Carmagnola lacks – that Manzoni criticizes with emphasis in his tragedy at a time when the peninsula was afflicted by inner discord and division. The more so as the civil warfare featured the mercenary soldier who, in the invective raised by the chorus: "venduto ad un duce venduto, / Con lui pugna, e non chiede il perchè" (II.6/ ll. 31-32). The author's denunciation of the mercenary driven into battle devoid of ideals, is reiterated with strength by Carmagnola himself. When the Venetian commissioners, in fact, urge the count to detain his prisoners of war, he refuses to do so by explaining that the freed soldiers are not tied by any actual allegiance to Milan, and would trade as well their military service to Venice:

Foscolo's disapproval and critique: "Foscolo se ne vendicò scrivendo in giornali inglesi del male di me" (Rosa 1954: 47).

⁶²⁶ Equally restricted to the personal level was Marco's betrayal of Carmagnola's friendship, in particular if contrasted with the collective nature of betrayal that features in *Adelchi* the Latin and the Longobards siding for the Frank invaders. As Cantù will put it in his *Reminiscenze*: "nel *Carmagnola* [Manzoni] presenta l'uomo perseguitato [...]; sdegnato, ma senza escandescenza, e all'estrema condanna rassegnantesi colle domestiche affezioni [...]. Nell'*Adelchi* offre lo spettacolo d'un popolo che opprime un vulgo innominato e che alla sua volta è vinto da un altro, venuto a dominare una terra, sempre fatale a' suoi conquistatori" (1882: 133-34, emphases in the original); the tone of Cantù's remarks speak for his sensibility toward the contemporary patriotic insurgences and their attempted independence – Cantù's own writings will be subject to the Austrian censorship before being eventually imprisoned as many politically engaged literati of his time. The emphasis that Manzoni set respectively on the "personal" *versus* the "collective" notion of treason in the first and the second of his historical tragedies, reflects the nature of his own crises. Whereas in 1817, in fact, Manzoni had suffered a personal disappointment in the Church that had supported the Restoration, in 1820 the playwright had witnessed in the aftermath of the failed Carbonari revolts and the reinstatement of the Austrian domination a national *impasse*.

IL CONTE [Que' prigion] Han combattuto
 Perchè all'uomo che segue una bandiera,
 Grida una voce imperiosa in core:
 Combatti, e vinci. E' son perdenti, e' sono
 Tornati in libertà; si *venderanno*...
 Oh! tale ora è il soldato... a chi primiero
 Li *comprerà*... Comprateli, e son vostri. (III.2/ 97-103)

As hiredmen, they lack ideals as much as they lack initiative, and therefore freedom. In sharp contrast to their blind obedience, stands Carmagnola's service to the Venetian city as dictated essentially by personal goals and his ultimate refusal to accept any further instructions. This egocentrism will command his enemy's verdict, "Chiarito è il Conte un traditor" (IV.1/ l. 67), and eventually cost him his life, "si vuole / Torgli ogni via di nuocere" (IV.1/ l. 67-68):

MARINO Non è *giustizia* che il persegue: è solo
Odio privato, è invidia, è basso orgoglio
 Che non perdona al sommo, a chi tacendo
 Grida co' fatti: *io son maggior di voi*. (IV.1/ l. 58-61)

"Private hatred" ("odio privato") and personal haughtiness ("io son maggior di voi") define the strength of an individual will that is destined to clash with a State whose notion of "justice" ("giustizia") becomes a relative term destined to secure, in the first stance, its lawful power and force.⁶²⁷ Hence Carmagnola's lament of weariness: "[...] son stanco / Di questa guerra che condur non posso / A modo mio. [...]" (IV.3/ 414-16) that he had already expressed in the wishful renunciation of his mercenary role, upon refusing to attend the commissioners' mandate and his desire to conquer not one city, but the entire peninsula:

⁶²⁷ Marco's fate had shown that his notion of justice as one benefitting State ("chiedea che a provveder s'avesse / *L'util soltanto dello Stato*, e il *giusto*" [IV.1/ 185, my emphases]) did not reach out to the interests of its citizens. Manzoni pointed out this clash between the private and the public, the personal and the political, in his *Lettre to Chauvet* (1821-1823): "J'observe, dans l'histoire de cette époque, une lutte entre le *pouvoir civil* et la *force militaire*, le premier aspirant à être indépendant, et celle-ci à ne pas obéir. Je vois ce qu'il y avait d'individuel dans le caractère de Carmagnola éclater et se développer pas des incidents nés de cette lutte" (*Opere* V.3/ 129, my emphases).

IL CONTE col qual [Esercito], se *unito* ancora
 E *mio* foss'egli, e *mio* *davver*, torrei
 A correr tutta Italia; ogni disegno
 Dell'inimico al vento; anche il pensiero
 Dell'offesa a lui tolto; a stento usciti
 Dalle mie mani, e di fuggir contenti
 Quattro tai duci, contro a' quai pur ieri
 Era vanto il resistere; svanito
 Mezzo il terror di que' gran nomi; ai *nostri*
 Raddoppiato l'ardir che agli altri è scemo; (III.2/ 82-91, my emphases).

Carmagnola's national pursuit at the lead of a "united" militia aims at liquidating the power detained and the hostilities fostered by the local dukes to hand the command of war and the freed land into the hands of the people: "Tutta la scelta della guerra in *noi*; / *Nostre* le terre ch'egli han sgombre..." (III.2/ 1. 92-93, my emphases). The count's plea is launched against a provincial patriotism rooted in an idealism that serves only the rulers' petty interest than the people. The disavowal that Marco articulates towards his Venetian homeland, will constitute the ultimate denunciation of a feigned patriotism that Manzoni had meant to question:

MARCO Terra ov'io nacqui, addio per sempre: io spero
 Che ti morirò lontano, e pria che nulla
 Sappia di te: lo spero: in fra i perigli
 Certo per sua pietade il ciel m'invia.
 Ma non morirò per te. Che tu sii grande
 E gloriosa, che m'importa? Anch'io
 Due gran tesori avea, la mia virtude
 Ed un amico; e tu m'hai tolto entrambi. (IV.2/ ll. 343-50)

In his role of ideal character, Marco allows Manzoni to translate his political discourse into a moral one. As the playwright would explain in response to Chauvet's disapproving review of his tragedy, if the external historical facts alone speak for Carmagnola's innocence: "Il est vrai que des sénateurs exerçant la puissance souveraine, ont envoyé à la mort un général qui avait été leur bienfaiteur et leur ami", it remained the primary interest of drama ("d'un grand intérêt dramatique" [*Opere* V.3/ 128]) to disclose the innermost motifs of action that would

account, in turn, for the injustice suffered: "de voir le véritables pensées par lesquelles les hommes arrivent à commettre une grande *injustice*" (*Opere* V.3/ 128, my emphasis).

The count of Carmagnola had thus offered Manzoni the opportunity to reflect upon the moral value of drama, and historical tragedy in particular, setting forth an ethical discourse that he had already begun to articulate in his *Inni Sacri* (1812-1822).⁶²⁸ It comes, therefore, less of a surprise to detect a mystical component in a drama all grounded in the immanent sphere of human history – the more so if we are reminded that the composition of the sacred hymns was, in part, concomitant with the civil poems. Whether reference was made respectively to the sacred Christian past, or the secular contemporary present, in either case, history constituted a common denominator.⁶²⁹ Manzoni elucidates this moral claim that he attributes to drama in his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-23):

⁶²⁸ In his letter to Fauriel from 11 June 1817, Manzoni announced to his friend that his concern for the Aristotelian unities had been replaced by his current considerations "sur la moralité de la Tragédie" (L I/ no. 119, 177). The year before, Manzoni had started to collect notes on aesthetics that will later be published under the title of *Materiali estetici* to which his discourse "sur l'influence morale de la tragédie" (see letter to Fauriel from 3 Nov. 1821 [L I/ no. 153, 249]) was meant to be embedded. He had begun this work, which was eventually never completed, as he was reflecting on the unities of time, space and action adopted in the Greek theater; cf. letter to Fauriel from 13 July 1816: "J'ammassé des idées et des observations pour un long discours qui doit accompagner ma Tragédie" (L I, no. 112, 161). As it remained a work *in fieri*, it becomes arduous to establish an exact chronology of its inception and genesis; Manzoni probably first set pen to it in 1816 and continued to add material until 1819, with the second half focused on the moral valence of tragedy. The first, more comprehensive half of Manzoni's notes will be readdressed in his forward (*Prefazione*) to *Carmagnola*, and will articulate more systematically many of his key points again in his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-1823). In this essay, Manzoni will appoint the drama as the literary genre more apt at portraying historical truth: "les causes historiques d'une action sont essentiellement les plus dramatiques et les plus intéressantes" (*Opere* V.3/ 124), inasfar as: "ce n'est que là [sc. dans l'histoire même] que je puis découvrir le caractère propre des hommes et de l'époque que je veux peindre" (*Opere* V.3/ 128). It is, in fact, in history that the dramatic poet can recover the most noble human sentiments were part of Manzoni's ethical claim to history: "C'est de l'histoire que le poète tragique peut faire ressortir, sans contrainte, des sentimens humains; ce sont toujours les plus nobles, et nous en avons tant besoin!" (*Opere* V.3/ 160).

⁶²⁹ In his review of the *Sacred Hymns* that appeared in *Über Kunst und Altertum* (1820/ II.2) appended to his article on the querelle of Classicists and Romantics in Italy, Goethe – himself an atheist – had praised Manzoni's religious creed: "Der Verfasser erscheint als Christ ohne Schwärmerey, als römisch-katholisch ohne Bigotterie, als Eiferer ohne Härte" (*Werke* XX/ 423); in Ugolini's Italian translation: "L'A. si mostra Cristiano senza fanatismo, Cattolico-Romano senza bacchettoneria, zelante senza durezza" (Grüning 1988: 164).

Ce n'est pas, il faut le dire, *en partageant* le délire et les angoisses, les désirs et l'orgueil des personnages tragiques, que l'on éprouve le plus haut degré d'émotion; c'est au-dessus des cette sphère étroite et agitée, c'est dans les pures régions de la *contemplation désintéressée*, qu'à la vue des souffrances inutiles et des vaines jouissances des hommes, on est plus vivement saisi de *terreur* et de *pitié* pour soi-même.⁶³⁰ (*Opere* V.3/ 159, my emphases)

While the author advises against "partaking" in the characters' emotional state, he advocates instead a "disinterested contemplation", or as Manzoni himself defines it in his notes *Sulla moralità delle opere tragiche* (1817): "riflessione sentita" (*Opere* V.3/ 57). Manzoni's critique of the Aristotelian unities was driven by the strong empathy that they were meant to create between spectator and actor as prerequisite to the incitement of terror and piety.⁶³¹

"Noi *non ci immedesimiamo*" – explained Manzoni – colla rappresentazione dell'uomo mosso da queste passioni, come quella dei dolori e dei terrori."⁶³² The lack of identification, for which the playwright pleaded, did not exclude the ability of poetry to actually "move". Yet, in spite of emotional purgation, the dramatist aimed at "developing" primarily the spectator's

⁶³⁰ See also De Castris's reading of this passage (1965: 80-83), and Scarpati's reinterpretation of the Aristotelian categories of "terror" and "pity" that, according to the scholar, Manzoni had charged with a Christian connotation. Before De Castris, Santini had already remarked that Manzoni had endowed the classical "concept of catarsis" with "un significato morale-cristiano" (1940: 20). Scarpati argues that Manzoni had replaced the Aristotelian terms of "terror" and "pity" with that of "sgomento" and "pietà" from the *Pentecoste* (2005: 278).

⁶³¹ It is clear that Manzoni was reading Aristotle and Lessing while he was writing *Carmagnola*; see also Annoni's (1997: 23-26), and Scarpati's (2005: 266-269) comments.

⁶³² See *Sulla moralità delle opere tragiche* (1817), in *Opere inedite o rare*, vol. 3, p. 162. For this very reason, Manzoni had critized in the same essay, Schiller's *William Tell* (1804) for fostering the spectators' identification with the actor's feelings "tanto più che questa passione sembra giusta mentre è ira contro uno scellerato": "egli [sc. Schiller] ha errato mettendosi a rischio di far sentire lo spettatore come il suo personaggio" (*Opere* V.3/ 58). After this critique, Manzoni will completely dismiss the German writer and poet whom he had praised in his early *Materiali estetici* (1816-1819) – for the moral lesson imparted through the *Maria Stuart* drama which as such did not follow the Aristotelian expectations and effects of terror and pity (*Opere* V.3/ 8-9) – and mentioned in the original draft of his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-1823) next to Shakespeare and Goethe, and whose name he will eventually request to omit in the French publication of 1823 when he will instruct Fauriel: "je voudrais retrancher le nom de Schiller qui s'y trouve une fois, et d'une manière qui fait supposer une idée beaucoup plus haute que je ne l'ai réellement de l'importance dramatique de cet écrivain", shortly before coming the irrevocable conclusion: "en relisant les tragédies de Schiller je me suis confirmé dans ces idées: enfin je ne mérité ni n'ose le nommer" (see letter from 28 May 1822 [L I, no. 160, 267]).

"moral strength": "ce n'est pas en se communiquant à nous que les passions peuvent nous émouvoir d'une manière qui nous attache et nous plaise, mais en favorisant en nous le *développement de la force morale* à laide de laquelle on les domine et les juge" (*Opere* V.3/ 160, my emphasis) as specified in his letter to Chauvet. Manzoni considered it, in fact, the playwright's ethical claim to provide for the "improvement of society": "Un poeta drammatico deve, al pari d'ogni altro, desiderare tutto ciò che tende al *perfezionamento della società*, qualora egli riguardi, com'è giusto, l'arte sua come un mezzo e non come un fine".⁶³³ For the author of *Carmagnola*, this goal could still be achieved by coalescing the ideal with the real, poetry with history as each respectively can move ("commozione") and foster reflection ("riflessione"). Although in his letter to Gaetano Giudici from February 1820, in which Manzoni justifies towards his friend the choice of his dramatic character and content, he had expressed a preference for "riflessione" over "commozione" as being "il più profondo, ed il più utile ad eccitarsi", he did not exclude, but rather emphasized the coexistence of both dramatic effects. Manzoni demonstrates his theory through his own historical tragedy where he adopted "entrambi questi mezzi di commozione e di riflessione, impiegandone uno nella *tragedia* e l'altro nel *coro*" (L I/ no. 128, 194, my emphases).⁶³⁴ In what follows, my analysis

⁶³³ *Il vero eterno nella poesie*, in *Opere inedite o rare*, vol. 2, p. 441, my emphasis.

⁶³⁴ As a matter of fact, Manzoni will – according to Goethe – transform Aristotle's notion of dramatic fear into "commozione". As the German writer explains in his *Conversations* with Eckermann from July 21, 1827: "This [*sc.* the Aristotelian] fear may be of two sorts; it may exist in the shape of alarm (*Angst*), or in that of uneasiness (*Bangigkeit*). The latter feeling is awakened when we see a moral evil threatening and gradually overshadowing the personages; [...]. But **alarm** is awakened, in reader or spectator, when the personages are threatened with physical danger. [...] Now, Manzoni makes use of this alarm with a wonderful felicity, by resolving it into **emotion**, and thus leading us to admiration" (1930: 217, emphases in the original, bold added). See also German original: "Diese [*sc.* the Aristotelian] Furcht nun kann doppelter Art sein: sie kann bestehen in Angst, oder sie kann auch bestehen in Bangigkeit. Diese letztere Empfindung wird in uns regen, wenn wir ein moralisches Übel auf die handelnden Personen heranrücken und sich über sie verbreiten sehen [...]. Die Angst aber entsteht im Leser oder Zuschauer, wenn die handelnden Personen von einer physischen Gefahr bedroht werden [...]. Von dieser **Angst** nun machte Manzoni Gebrauch und zwar mit wunderbarem Glück, indem er sie

focuses first on the moral message conveyed by the chorus, and second on the martyrdom carried out by the count, in order to illustrate how Manzoni replaced the traditional expectation of dramatic assimilation with the ethically more conducive alienation.

Borrowing from the German romantic literate and theorist Schlegel, the eminent role that Manzoni attributes to the chorus in his early aesthetic notes collected under the title *Materiali estetici* (1816-1819) is to: "interpretare l'intenzione morale dello scrittore, a regolare e a correggere le false interpretazioni dello spettatore, a dare insomma al vero morale quella forza diretta che non riceve che da chi lo sente per la *meditazione spassionata* e non per l'urto delle passioni e degli interessi" (*Opere* V.3/ 12, my emphases). As the author reiterates, the chorus's "interpretation of the writer's moral intention", and the consequent strengthening of the "moral truth" can be brought about only through an act of "impartial meditation" ("*meditazione spassionata*"). In virtue of this function, the chorus "reserverebbe al Poeta un *cantuccio* donde mostrarsi e parlare in persona propria" (*Opere* V.3/ 12, my emphasis).⁶³⁵ From this "little corner" that Manzoni reserved for himself in the *Carmagnola* chorus, he denounces and denigrates the civil wars that had been wafting over and weakening

in **Rührung** auflöst und uns durch diese Empfindung zur Bewunderung führt" (*Goethes Gespräche* 338, bold added); cf. Italian translation: "Il terrore può essere di due specie: può consistere nell'angoscia oppure nell'ansia. Quest'ultimo sentimento si desta in noi quando vediamo un male morale avvicinarsi ai personaggi e incombere su di loro [...]. L'angoscia invece nasce nel lettore o nello spettatore quando i personaggi sono minacciati da un pericolo, [...]. È dunque di questa **angoscia** che Manzoni fa uso, e con prodigiosa efficacia perché la scioglie in **commozione** e, mediante questo moto dell'animo, ci conduce all'ammirazione (EN XIX.1/ 493, bold added).

⁶³⁵ Manzoni's description of the chorus as "cantuccio" will be addressed once more in the forward (*Prefazione*) to his drama as a strategy to prevent the playwright from getting involved into the action or from attributing his personal feelings to his characters: "[i Cori dei Greci] [h]anno finalmente un altro vantaggio per l'arte, in quanto, riserbando al poeta un *cantuccio* dov'egli possa parlare in persona propria, gli diminuiranno la tentazione di introdursi nell'azione, e di prestare ai personaggi i suoi proprj sentimenti: difetto dei più notati negli scrittori drammatici" (EN III/ 11, my emphasis). Similarly Schiller, who had introduced the Greek choruses in his drama *Die Braut von Messina* (1803), had argued: "Der Chor verläßt den engen Kreis der Handlung, um sich über Vergangenes und Künftiges, über ferne Zeiten und Völker, über das Menschlich überhaupt zu verbreiten, um die großen Resultate des Lebens zu ziehen, und die Lehren der Weisheit auszusprechen" (NA X/ 13).

the peninsula: "Il Coro era fatto certamente coll'intenzione di avvilitare quelle stesse guerre a cui io voleva pure interessare il lettore" (L I/ 194) he wrote to Giudici in the above-captioned missive from February 1820. The chorus thus turns into the space that allows the playwright to voice his patriotic concerns and critique:

– D'una *terra* son tutti: un *linguaggio*
 Parlan tutti: fratelli li dice
 Lo straniero: il comune *lignaggio*
 A ognun d'essi dal volto traspar.(II.6/ 17-20, my emphases)

His admonition to unity and kinship, apt to foster a communal sense of belonging, turns into the *conditio sine qua non* for national independence. It echoes in Manzoni's adjuration:

"Liberi non saremo se non siamo uni" (l. 34) invoked in his early civil poem *Il proclama di Rimini* (1815) – left incomplete upon the disillusioned course of events –, and reiterated six years later in his ode *Marzo 1821* with the invocation:

Una gente che libera tutta,
 O fia serva tra l'alpe ed il mare;
Una d'arme, di *lingua*, d'altare,
 Di memorie, di *sangue* e di cor.(II. 29-32, my emphases)

It is a cry for national identity that claims its right by *ius soli* ("una terra") and *ius sanguinis* ("comune lignaggio", "sangue") alike. Equal relevance is placed on language and race: the terms "linguaggio" and "lignaggio" advocated in the chorus – and addressed with renewed emphasis in the *Marzo* ode ("lingua", "sangue") – create through their assonance an inseparable binomial. In his groundbreaking study on *The Nation Form* (1988), Balibar had identified precisely the linguistic and the racial component as decisive in the construction of national identity. To the question: "How can ethnicity be produced?", Balibar's response on this point is clear: "History shows us that there are two great competing routes to this: *language* and *race*. Most often the two operate together, for only their complementarity

makes it possible for the 'people' to be represented as an absolutely autonomous unit. Both express the idea that the national character (which might also be called its soul or its spirit) is *immanent* in the people" (1991: 96, my emphases). It is precisely on the ground of this immanent, or else "natural", production of ethnicity that Manzoni's concern for an equally unified Italian language, able to articulate a national consciousness, will remain a recurrent one of his aesthetic and ethical engagement.⁶³⁶ In the pursuit of this common goal of ethnical and linguistic unity, the chorus pleads with strength to face the invaders and fight for their common cause: "Ritornate alle vostre bandiere: / Lo straniero discende; egli è qui. / Vincitor! [...]" (II.6/ 99-100). As the chorus approaches the end and transitions from fratricide conflicts and hostilities to foreign conquest and hegemony, it sends out a final warning against foreigners who are easily after a land weakened by bloodshed and civil warfare:

[...] Siete deboli e pochi?
Ma per questo a sfidarvi ei discende;
E voglioso a quei campi v'attende
Dove il vostro fratello perì. (II.6/ ll. 101-04)

⁶³⁶ In the so-called *Stresiane*, a collection of dialogues that Ruggero Bonghi annotated from the philosophical conversations that took place in Stresa where intellectuals met at Rosmini's residence, and in which Manzoni himself participated during his sojourn at the Lago Maggiore between 1851 and 1852, the *Dialogo sulla lingua* (1852) quotes Manzoni's election of the Florentine dialect as the linguistically most consistent, and therefore more appropriate to become the national language to which all other dialects ought to conform and, if necessary, complete: "usate sempre le parole e le frasi fiorentine, insin che potete. Nè perchè valgono meglio di quelle delle altre città italiane [...] ma perchè fatto un ragguaglio, si trova più conformità tra il dialetto fiorentino e gli altri italiani [...]. Ora verrà caso in cui il fiorentino non vi basti? Ebbene, allora introducete quel tanto di nuovo che vi bisogna; pigliatelo donde volete, purchè quel tanto di nuovo sia necessario ed abbia quelle due qualità: conformità e probabilità di passare" (EN XVI/ 319-320); see also introductions by Muratore (EN XVI/ CIV-CXIII), and Morando (EN XVI/ 295-315). As Lonardi observes, Manzoni's linguistic concern and choice is evident since his first historical tragedy where he decides to simplify through the register of a "linguaggio equilibrato e semplificato", avoiding "suggerzioni dell'amplificazione melodrammatica, o della conchiusa musicalità del petrarchismo" (1965: IX) in order to reach a wider audience. Manzoni's preference for a more genuine language against the melodramatic stylizations was conform to his pursuit for truth and authenticity. Hence his consequent decision to write his drama in verses in order to break the effect of dramatic illusion that the identification of the spectator with the actor and the action represented on stage had hitherto reinforced; cf. also Lonardi's remarks (1965: XI).

The belligerent scenery of the Macclodio battle that the chorus teichoscopically recounts, conferring it a highly dramatic effect, was already recognized by Goethe – next to *Adelchi's* two choruses – as the playwright's device to masterfully conjoin his obsolete past with his own present:⁶³⁷

– Ahi! Qual d'essi il sacrilego brando
Trasse il primo il fratello a ferire?
Oh terror! Del conflitto esecrando
La cagione esecranda qual è?
– Non lo sanno: a dar morte, a morire
Qui senz'ira ognun d'essi è venuto;(II.6/ ll. 25-30)

With the chorus functioning as commentary of a dramatic action to which it remains extrinsic, it grants and guarantees, in turn, the playwright an extradiegetic perspective from which to expand his visual field to a contemporary dramatic scenario afflicted by fratricide wars. It consequently suspends with alienating force the spectator's emotional involvement in the unfolding of the dramatic events to reflect on a tragedy that has reached out off stage, and is still *in fieri*. The chorus thus allows for an allegorical transposition of the past into the author's present. In his *Trauerspiel* study, Walter Benjamin attributes precisely this allegorical form to the tragic chorus, where "allegory is no longer colourful, rich in historical associations, but pure and severe" (1977: 190).

In his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-23), Manzoni underscores the ethical relevance derived from a poetic truth that, from conforming to the aesthetic ideal of beauty, may be able to exert an "enimently moral" effect "si le dégoût qu'il a excité est le dégoût du mal",

⁶³⁷ Goethe had praised the clarity with which Manzoni had portrayed a battle so cruent and chaotic: "in gränzenloses Detail vertieft sich doch nicht verwirrt, mitten in einer unausprechlichen Unordnung doch noch die Worte und Ausdrücke findet, um Klarheit über das Getümmel zu verbreiten und das Wildeinherstürmende faßlich zu machen" (*Theilnahme* XLIII); cf. Ugoni's translation: "ancorché pieno d'innumerevoli particolari, pur non s'intralcia, e l'A. di mezzo a uno strano disordine, trova tuttavia parole e modi, che diffondono luce su quel tumulto e rendono intellegibile quello che dice con impeto incondito" (Grüning 1988: 183).

ensuing a consequent sense of "horror": "il y a dans la vérité un intérêt si puissant, qu'il peut nous attacher à la considérer malgré une douleur véritable, malgré une certaine *horreur* voisine du dégoût" (*Opere* V.3/ 95, my emphases).⁶³⁸ As Manzoni sets forth explaining: "c'est une des plus belles facultés de la poésie que celle *d'arrêter*, à l'aide d'un grand intérêt, l'attention sur des phénomènes moraux que l'on ne peut observer sans *répugnance*" (*Opere* V.3/ 96, my emphases), he makes an essential point in identifying the ability of poetry, to "suspend" ("d'arrêter") the recipient's attention onto a moral matter that reveals itself behind the aesthetically beautified façade as it is *realiter*, that is "repugnant". Following along the lines of Manzoni's aesthetic discourse, in portraying the bloodshed brought about by a medieval battle that becomes reminiscent of an ongoing history of civil warfare, the chorus functions – to put it with Benjamin – as a "caesura" that has the effect of interrupting the unquestioned unfolding of history.⁶³⁹ This suspension is brought about from the present

⁶³⁸ This "disgust" ("dégoût") from a picture too truthful to historical reality will be criticized by Goethe who preferred, instead, to embellish historical accounts. These diametrically opposite approaches to history, "naturalistic" for Manzoni and "aesthetic" for Goethe, represents the most significant divide between the two authors.

⁶³⁹ It is chiefly Lonardi who, in his ample introduction to *Adelchi*, relates the dramatic alienation that Manzoni pursued in his plays with Benjamin's notion of historical citation and Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* (1992: 18-21). Before Manzoni, Schiller had already attributed to the chorus the task of breaking with the dramatic illusion: "Dadurch, daß der Chor die Theile aus einander hält, und zwischen die Passionen mit seiner beruhigenden Betrachtung tritt, giebt er uns unsre Freiheit zurück, die im Sturm der Affekte verloren gehen würde" (NA X/ 14). In his essay on *Goethe's Elective Affinities* (1919-1922), Benjamin explains his notion of "caesura" as it manifests itself in a work of art by resorting to Hölderlin's definition of the term as the "pure word, the counter-rhythmic rupture [...] in which every *expression* simultaneously *comes to a standstill*" (1996: 340, my emphases). When the expression of a work of art comes to a standstill, its mimetic representation is arrested to the point that the semblance shared by the work of art with nature is interrupted, and their "harmony" consequently suspended. When this occurs, the work of art ceases to be the meaningful "expression" of the natural world – in other words: that what in its alleged harmony makes sense –, and displays instead the "expressionless", that is: what is *silenced* behind the appearance or "semblance" of harmony: "What arrests this semblance [...], and interrupts the harmony is the expressionless [*das Ausdruckslose*]. [...] the expressionless compels the trembling harmony to stop [...] through its objection" (1996: 340, emphasis in the original). It is this "expressionless" that Benjamin identifies as the "critical violence" (or valence) of a work of art: "In the expressionless, the sublime violence of the true appears [...]. For it *shatters* whatever still survives as the legacy of chaos in all beautiful semblance: the *false*, errant *totality*—the absolute totality. Only the expressionless completes the work, by *shattering* it into a thing of shards, into a fragment of the true world, into

standpoint which breaks into the past through the chorus' commentary, with a consequent alienating effect on the spectator and the awakening of a hitherto dormant consciousness. This coincides for Carmagnola with a renewed consciousness of human history that goes along with its providential, and thus eschatological, design.⁶⁴⁰ Insofar as a "commentary on a reality" is for Benjamin essentially theological, the present – in its ability to interrupt the past and disrupt the continuum of history – results charged with a messianic value.⁶⁴¹ Manzoni, who in 1815 was writing the second of his sacred hymns, the *Passion*, exemplifies his messianism in the tragedy by Carmagnola's death and his final exit from the stage of history.⁶⁴²

the *torso of a symbol*" (1996: 340, my emphases). As the "torso of a symbol", allegory stands to the mystical unity of the symbolic like the fragment stands to the false harmonic totality; it thus derives its critical force by displaying ultimately the fictional and constructed nature of the totality conveyed by the symbol, by showing, in contrast, its false appearance. In other words, if the symbol is the expression of totality, as its mere "torso", allegory arrests the symbolic expression and renders it, in turn, "expression-less".

⁶⁴⁰ Benjamin calls this "present moment" *Jetztzeit* or *Aktualität*, and indicates with either terms the "Messianic time" of the now which endows the present with the ability to change the course of events. As he explains in the *Arcades Project*: "In order for a part of the past to be touched by the present instant <*Aktualität*> there must be no continuity between them" (N7,7/ 470, emphasis in the original). According to Benjamin, not every "present moment", but only a specific instant, has been endowed with the Messianic valence and force of breaking into the past and interrupting its homogenous unfolding of time. This allows, in turn, "the past to bring the present into a *critical* state" where the word "critical" – from the Greek etymology of *κρίνειν* – means to "sift" and "separate", and thus implies the very notion of judgement or turning point, in other words that of "caesura". The trick for Benjamin consists in not missing this one-time "revolutionary" opportunity, which would lead to a catastrophe, where catastrophe ensues ultimately from the missed chance for change (N10,2/ 474).

⁶⁴¹ In the *Arcades Project*, Benjamin defines "the structure of commentary" as the one allowing to "break with vulgar historical naturalism", in other words: to "grasp the *construction* of history as such". (N2,6/ 461 my emphasis). As specified beforehand: "Bear in mind that commentary on a reality [...] calls for a method completely different from that required by commentary on a text. In the one case, the scientific mainstay is *theology*; in the other case, philology" (N2,1/ 460 my emphasis).

⁶⁴² Manzoni began writing the *Passione* in October 1815, while in January 1816 he first sets pen to *Carmagnola* until after two acts he decides to temporarily suspend his writing in December 1816 to begin to work on 21 June 1817 on the original draft of the fifth of his sacred hymns, the *Pentecoste*; for a detailed chronology of this last hymn, see Firpo's commentary in his historical-critical edition (1962: 10-33), and Bardazzi's detailed introduction to the historical-critical edition of Manzoni's drama (1985: XXXIII).

As his individual drama of the past turns functions as allegory of the collective and contemporary one, Carmagnola represents in his role of *condottiero* a historical period. Manzoni transposed in the figure of this martial chieftain traits of the militant Church that will feature in the second draft of the *Pentecoste* (1817-1822) which Manzoni had reworked in 1819, before setting *Carmagnola* temporarily aside again.⁶⁴³ The church that in the *Passione* (1815) had relinquished Christ on the cross is now replaced by the assertive Church of the martyrs determined in following through its Christian mission against evil: "Tu, che da tanti secoli / Soffri, combatti e preghi" (ll. 5-6).⁶⁴⁴ In his desire to vindicate the injustice suffered by the hand of Visconti, Carmagnola reminds of the punitive God of the Old Testament, standing in contrast to the benevolent Adelchi who recalls, instead, the merciful Christ of the New Testament. This mercenary hired from history to play the role of a "Mietheld" (as Goethe put it in his review [*Theilnahme* XIII]), becomes under Manzoni's pen a medieval hero who is rented from a distant past to be transplanted into a modern Christian tragedy. The catastrophe that will expect him is no longer the Aristotelian scene of "suffering" intended as an "action of a destructive or painful nature, such as murders on the stage, tortures, woundings, and the like" (*Poetics* 1452b, 11.10). Manzoni replaced the actor's bodily agony and physical anguish, that took place on the Greek stage only to be followed by the audience's physiologically catharsis, with "un coup de la Providence qui les [*sc.* les

⁶⁴³ This consecutive chronology in the genesis of Manzoni's tragedies and his hymns is essential to understand the close affinity that echoes between the dramatic and the poetic works. The *Pentecoste* hymn, a poem of messianic expectation and actualization, situates itself significantly between *The Count of Carmagnola* and *Adelchi*. Started in 1817 and concluded only in 1822, it conjoins the first with the second historical tragedy, marking at once the onset, unfolding and outcome of a crisis that for Manzoni had been both personal and political.

⁶⁴⁴ For more details on Manzoni's transition from militant to merciful Church featured in the *Pentecoste*, see Busetto (1920).

hommes] aneantit" (*Opere* V.3/ 79).⁶⁴⁵ He deliberately distinguished his definition of catastrophe from the classical one "que l'on a trop souvent confondu avec l'action", by detaching it from the dramatic action "qui est proprement l'ensemble et la progression de tous les faits représentés" (*Opere* V.3/ 79). If, in fact, the catastrophe invests on Manzoni's dramatic stage the innocent protagonist, its occurrence rejects any justification of cause and effect that characterized, instead, the classical Greek drama where the catastrophe ensued from an act of guilt. This "deterministic outlook" that Benjamin had identified as being distinctive for the classical ancient drama inhabited by the Gods of Olympus, cannot find its application in the Baroque "fate tragedy" (1977: 128). In his study on *The Origin of the German Baroque Drama* (1925), Benjamin points out that in the "drama of fate" is manifest what he calls the "light of grace" which is naturally absent on the stage of the profane Greek theater. "For fate", Benjamin explains:

is not a purely natural occurrence – any more than it is purely historical. [...] It [*sc.* fate] is the elemental force of nature in historical events, which are not themselves entirely nature, because the *light of grace* is still reflected from the state of creation. But it is mirrored in the swamp of *Adam's guilt*. For the ineluctable chain of causality is not in itself fateful. (1977: 129, my emphases)

⁶⁴⁵ De Castris remarks that Manzoni's notion of "catharsis" is not brought about by terror and pity, but corresponds instead to moment of solace, which is both "individual" (i.e. immanent) and "metahistorical": "la cui catarsi non è suscitata dal terrore e dalla pietà della catastrofe storica, bensì da una *consolazione* tutta individuale e *metastorica*" (1965: 92, my emphasis). It is precisely this sense of personal and, at once, metaphysical "consolation" or comfort that Carmagnola will experience and express shortly before his passing from the earthly and ephemeral to the ethereal and eternal sphere. By accepting his fate, the mythical violence that originally imposed the death sentence onto the dramatic protagonist is suspended and substituted by divine violence with the consequent redemption and resemantization of Carmagnola's identity as traitor into that of martyr; as to Walter Benjamin's definition and distinction of mythical vs. divine violence, see forthcoming section on *Adelchi* where the Benjaminian essay on the *Critique of Violence* (1921) will be more systematically analyzed and adopted in my interpretation of Manzoni's second historical drama.

There is, evidently, a different connotation of guilt implied respectively by the tragedy *versus* the *Trauspiel*.⁶⁴⁶ In the latter, Benjamin identifies, in fact, a "*genuine* notion of fate" whose "essential motive should", in contrast to the classical tragedy, "be sought in an *eternal* sense of such determination" (1977: 129, my emphases). "There is no need" – Benjamin adds – "for events to follow a pattern which conforms to the laws of nature, a *miracle* can just as easily evoke this sense. It is not rooted in *factual inevitability*" (1977: 129, my emphases), which drove forth, instead, the ineluctable unfolding of events on the Greek stage. For this very reason, the providential design that presides, in Manzoni's tragedies alike, over the course of history, leaves the individuals' will free to act either along or against God's plan, intact.⁶⁴⁷

Defined, therefore, as the tragedy's "*événement principal*, autour duquel tous les autres viennent se grouper, comme moyens ou comme obstacles", the catastrophe acts for

⁶⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, "Adam's guilt" locates itself at the opposite end of the profane notion of guilt committed by the Greek hero. Contrary to the tragic hero who succumbs to the arbitrary will of the Olympian Gods, the original sin of humankind is originated by a deliberate choice, that is, by the individual's freedom of will. In the above-captioned excerpt, Benjamin sets forth: "The core of the notion of fate is rather a conviction that guilt (which in this context always means *creaturely guilt* – in *Christian* terms, original sin – not moral transgression on the part of the agent), however fleeting its appearance, unleashes causality as the instrument of the irresistibly unfolding fatalities. Fate is the entelechy of events within the field of guilt" (1977: 129, my emphases).

⁶⁴⁷ Within this theological – and, for Manzoni, specifically Christian – acceptance of catastrophe, Scarpato observes that the notion of Providence is not intended as a form of consolation, but rather as the actual explanation for the anguish suffered (2005: 270). Manzoni's concept of "sventura" is, consequently, devoid of the negative connotation implied by the Aristotelian notion of catastrophe to the extent that it implies the positive idea of salvation (2005: 271). In this perspective, the fatalistic pessimism that the Italian literary critic Russo identifies in his analysis of Manzoni's dramas (1945), which he views as a direct consequence of the playwright's giansenistic education, appears unjustified. Manzoni does not jeopardize the individual's free will, not even where – as in Carmagnola's case – death becomes inevitable. As divine Providence manifests its presence in the very moment of crisis and consequent catharsis, it offers a reason for the dramatic catastrophe residing in act of sacrifice and consequent salvation. In the dichotomy of fatalism *versus* free will, Parisi also argues against those critics that classify Manzoni as a rigorous giansenist, and demonstrates in his own study how the playwright accepted and assimilated to his personal faith only selected tenets of the giansenistic creed (2003: 113-14). In this respect, Carmagnola does exemplify the notion of free will at its best; as such he stands at the opposite end of his friend Marco whose will is under aegis and at the bidding of the institutional power as he himself declares after betraying the count and being on the point of exile: "[...] io nulla scelgo; e tutto / Ch'io faccio è forza e volontà d'altrui" (IV.2/ ll. 341-42).

Manzoni: "comme un terme *signalé* ou *entrevu* de loin, que l'on voulait éviter, et vers lequel on se précipite par le chemin même où l'on s'était jeté pour courir au but opposé" (*Opere* V.3/ 79, my emphases). Despite Gonzaga's attempt to alert his friend of the antagonism nurtured by his foes fearful of Carmagnola's increased power ("l'odio che teme" [IV.3/ l. 390]), the count dismisses the warning of an imminent catastrophe: "Non temer; non sono / Di me scontenti; e quando il fosser mai, / Io lo saprei ben tosto" (IV.3/ 411-13). Unlike the negative acceptation of Aristotle's catastrophe, Manzoni's notion of catastrophe recalls, instead, Benjamin's definition of "missed opportunity" (*Arcades* N10,2/ 474) that entails the very possibility, and therefore positive connotation, of progress. In this quality, the moment of catastrophe bears the potential to *cease* rather than corroborate the unfolding of events. When their logical and secular development – for history remains, as narrative, a man-made reconstruction, a story told to make sense of life – is ruptured, the Messianic can make its way into history. This is what Benjamin names "Jetztzeit", the "Messianic time" of the now (*Theses* XVIII.A/ 263), in other words, the present that irrupts into the past to charge it with a new meaning, a new consciousness, and thus literally change its course. In the tragedy, this Messianic moment corresponds to Carmagnola's "final epiphany" (De Castris 1965: 92) with which he entrusts in comfort his mourning daughter:

IL CONTE [...] a me tu sembri
 Chieder pietà, Matilde: ah! nulla il padre
 Può far per te; ma pei disertì in cielo
 C'è un *Padre*, il sai. Confida in esso, e vivi
 A dì tranquilli se non lieti: ei certo
 Te li prepara. [...] (V.5/ ll. 307-12, my emphasis).⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁸ Annoni had compared the count's parting from his wife and daughter with Christ's last exchange with his mother Maria and John the Baptist (1997: 163).

Akin to God who joins Napoleon's side at his passing:

Il Dio che atterra e suscita,
 Che affanna e che consola
 Sulla deserta coltrice
 Accanto a lui posò. (Cinque Maggio ll. 105-08)

Carmagnola's declared reliance on the divine Father that will become Adelchi's (*alias* Christ's) paternal figure, sanctions his reconciliation with the providential design and the consequent acceptance of his destiny – an instance that will be reiterated and reinforced by Adelchi at the moment of his own death. Manzoni's long-time devotee Cesare Cantù well described this ultimate retreat from earthly life and reunion with the divine: "la lotta umana finisce nella conciliazione religiosa, quando nell'anima sottomette il sentimento d'una felicità suprema ed inalterabile, rassicurata che sia contro la distruzione della sua terrestre individualità" (1882: 134).⁶⁴⁹ Upon and through their death, Carmagnola and Napoleon alike (as Christ before them) are thus able to exit history and access the metahistorical. Their ending functions as allegory of the metaphysical reading of history to which Manzoni will eventually resort, in order to recover that supreme moral truth, dwelling place of the ideal, which poetry would fail to find within the immanent sphere of human existence.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁹ In the above-captioned quote, Cantù is actually referring to the dramatic character of Adelchi, yet his description can as well be transposed onto Carmagnola. Manzoni himself, who after learning on July 16, 1821 of Napoleon's passing in the "Gazzetta di Milano" (1816-1875), the local newspaper which reported the death of the atheist emperor comforted by his faith in Christ, wrote his commemorative ode *Cinque Maggio* and later commented to his friend Cesare Cantù: "Che volete? Era un uomo che bisognava ammirare senza poterlo amare"; see Cantù's *Reminiscenze*, vol. 1 (1882: 114). Manzoni's ode attracted nearly immediately Goethe's attention who translated and published it in early 1823 in his literary journal *Über Kunst und Altertum* (IV.2), where it experienced soon after a wide popularity.

⁶⁵⁰ For Lonardi, *The Count of Carmagnola* is "allegoria storica e metastorica del 'potere ingiusto' e della violenza" (1976: 27). As to Manzoni's notion of metaphysical truth, cf. his last aesthetic writing *Dell'invenzione* (1850) where the author defines "verità che è una" as "idea" that is "oggetto della mente divina": "essere eterno, inalterabile e necessario", and as such "legge morale" (EN XVI/ 247-50).

4.1.3 Summary

For Manzoni and for Goethe alike, Napoleon had transcended the contingent realm of history, and had been transposed into the sphere of sacred and secular myth, inaugurating the birth of what will be known as the Romantic mythical drama.⁶⁵¹ The Christian analogy between Carmagnola and the French Emperor addressed in the concluding remarks of my analysis, can be equally applied to Götz von Berlichingen, especially in virtue of the assimilation that Goethe undertook of Napoleon as promethean – that is, partly human, partly divine – character.⁶⁵² The German poet, who in 1822 originally translated Manzoni's ode *Cinque Maggio* (1821), had shared with the Italian writer an unwavering – if not always uncontroversial – awe for the charismatic sovereign. Their fascination gained a new momentum when Napoleon exhibited, during the years of his captivity on the remote island of Saint Helena, next to his apotheosized countenance a profoundly human kernel which became the premise to his redemption, and his return to a human condition that in his hybris he had hitherto abdicated.⁶⁵³ Goethe's reverence for Napoleon, for instance, went thus far as to compare himself with the "accursed soul" when in his *West-Eastern Divan* (1819-1827)

⁶⁵¹ By reaching beyond the temporal boundaries, the figure of Napoleon conciliated for both playwrights their past with their present. Goethe illustrated this vicariously in the association, if not assimilation, that he undertook of the tyrant Timur with Napoleon in the "Book of Timur" from his *West-Östlicher Divan* (1819-1827) – a cycle of poems that Goethe first published in 1819, and expanded nearly a decade later in the second edition of 1827.

⁶⁵² As Blumenberg put it, "Prometheus becomes Napoleon, Napoleon Promethues" (1985: 465). Through his fate, Napoleon imparted a lesson as to what is to be expected for whom infracts the admonition voiced by Goethe with the words: "Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse" ("None stand against God except a God"); quoting Goethe himself, Blumenberg commented in his study on the *Work on Myth* (1979): "Napoleon gives us an example of how dangerous it is to elevate oneself into the absolute and to sacrifice everything to the carrying out of an idea" (1985: 497).

⁶⁵³ See also Blumenberg's remarks in this regard: "Saint Helena is the reduction to the hard core of reality. The picture of the humiliated and finally dying emperor is, for Goethe, the terrible application of the saying about politics as destiny [...]" (1985: 496).

poem, "Der Winter und Timur", he writes: "Bist Du der verdammten Geister / Einer, wohl! *ich bin der andre*" (ll. 14-15, my emphasis). On the same line, Manzoni absolves the tyrant from his past guilt, and even discerns in his persona God's image and might. Hence the question Manzoni poses in his ode *Cinque Maggio* (1821) as to whether it was "true glory" that the emperor enjoyed, whose answer the poet prefers to pass to posterity: "Fu vera gloria? *Ai posteri / l'ardua sentenza*: nui / chiniam la fronte al Massimo / Fattor, che volle in lui / del creator suo spirito / più vasta orma stampar" (ll. 31-36).

Akin to Götz and Carmagnola, Napoleon had been plunged from the heights of his imperial might into disgrace, and eventual demise. Yet the notion of human "fall" bore for Goethe and Manzoni a distinct meaning as their respective dramatic protagonists enact and exemplify. When, prior to his conversion, Manzoni composed his juvenile poem *Del trionfo della libertà* (1801), he warned himself in the fourth and last "canto" against the hybris that drove Hycarus to his flight, yet he names his fall "noble" and "sublime": "[...] mortali / Son le mie penne, e periglioso il volo / *Alta e sublime* è la caduta, l'ali / Però raccogli, e riposiamoci al suolo" (ll. 190-92, my emphases). In Manzoni's subsequent Catholic understanding, the notion of fall – as he would articulate it in his *Sacred Hymns* (1812-1822) – constituted the very condition of redemption from the ancestral sin, and of reconciliation with the almighty spirit.⁶⁵⁴ Napoleon himself would exemplify – following Manzoni's testimony in *Cinque Maggio* (1821) – through his own experience this premise and consequence: "Le braccia al sen conserte, / Stette, e di di che furono / L'assalse il sovvenir! / [...] Ahi! forse a tanto strazio / Cadde lo spirto anelo, / E disperò; ma valida / Venne una man

⁶⁵⁴ See in particular *Il Natale* (1813), where Manzoni compares the fall of man with the "rock" precipitating from the steep mountain to the valley where it awaits a "beneficent force" to raise and save it (cf. ll. 1-21).

dal cielo / E in più spiral aere / Pietosa il trasportò;" (ll. 75-77, ll. 84-90). It is this Christian tenet of grace and mercy, already discerned in *The Count of Carmagnola* (1820), that will find its dramatic focus in *Adelchi* (1822) who will embody and enact first and foremost Manzoni's creed.

Conversely, the downfall of Goethe's Götz first, and his Egmont later consists of their transition from detention to death without any chance of foreseeing the protagonists' rising anew to metaphysical heights. In fact, while *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) concludes with the admonition directed to the forthcoming century ("Jahrhundert") and its future generation ("Nachkommenschaft") to acknowledge Berlichingen's righteousness – where both terms speak for a phenomenological and immanent notion of time and history that expects justice to be made on earth – *Egmont* (1775-1788) ends with the scene of the guards surrounding him without the slightest hint and hope for freedom to be achieved beyond earthly life, which had still animated the promethean Götz.⁶⁵⁵ Yet, Manzoni's Christ and Goethe's Prometheus share some significant points of contact: both were semidivine figures, and both were tied – Christ to a cross, Prometheus to a rock – in sign of punishment. Whereas Prometheus, however, was sentenced by the Olympian Gods for daring to challenge their authority and rising himself above his human nature, Christ was judged and executed by mankind for claiming Messianic, and thus divine status. It is this dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, the providential and the pagan, which represented the main distinction between Goethe's and Manzoni's use of myth. This divide will return with more emphasis in their following

⁶⁵⁵ Hycarus and Prometheus, both profane characters, share some meaningful traits that legitimate, after all, their juxtaposition. Both challenge the authority, and are thus charged with hybris for testing and underestimating their human limitations. Yet, while Hycarus' death is informed by Manzoni with the positive prospect of collecting one's wings and setting oneself to rest, Prometheus' downfall is sanctioned by a punishment caught in a mythical renewal that leaves him no hope for redemption, let alone for "rest".

historical dramas, in particular – as we shall see – in conjunction with the notion of martyrdom.

4.2.1. *Egmont. Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* (1775-1788)⁶⁵⁶

Nearly four decades after setting first hands on *Egmont*, in his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-1816) Goethe summarized his experience with his second historical drama with the comment:

Unter den einzelnen Teilen der *Weltgeschichte* die ich *sorgfältiger studierte*, gehörten auch die Ereignisse welche die nachher vereinigten Niederlande so berühmt gemacht. Ich *erforschte die Quellen fleißig* und suchte mich möglichst unmittelbar zu unterrichten und mir alles lebendig zu vergegenwärtigen. [...] Allein zu meinem Gebrauche mußte ich [Graf Egmont] in einen solchen Charakter *umwandeln*, der solche Eigenschaften besaß, die einen Jüngling besser zieren als einen Mann in Jahren, einen Unbeweibten besser als einen Hausvater, einen unabhängigen mehr als einen, der, noch so *frei gesinnt*, durch mancherlei Verhältnisse begrenzt ist. (DuW IV.20/ 840, my emphases)

In this passage, Goethe articulates a twofold argument that addresses both his adoption and his adaptation of history.⁶⁵⁷ If *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), "Symbol einer bedeutenden Weltepoche" – as the playwright described only a few pages earlier in the same book his first drama – had widened Goethe's historical perspective to encompass a worldwide wave of change that had witnessed in the 16th century the paradigmatic shift from feudal to mercantile society, history was eventually to repeat itself with a new "Wendepunkt der Staatengeschichte" (DuW IV.19/ 834) about to recur again in 1787, when Belgium rebelled against the Habsburg hegemony and the past reclaimed its right onto the present. While

⁶⁵⁶ See Hartmann (1972) and his detailed study of Goethe's extended genesis of the play; contrary to the most widely proven assumptions, the scholar dates the original conception of the play back to 1773 although Goethe may have not begun to actually write his tragedy before 1775.

⁶⁵⁷ In his review *Über Egmont*, Schiller had harshly criticized Goethe's manipulation of historical truth: "verjüngt und von allen Bedingungen losgebunden" (DuW IV.20/ 840), and blamed him for going thus far as to alter the actual conciliatory nature of the relationship that Egmont had entertained with the Spanish sovereign: "Der wahre Egmont hatte durch eine prächtige Lebensart sein Vermögen äußerst in Unordnung gebracht und *brauchte* also den König, wodurch seine Schritte in der Republik sehr gebunden wurden" (NA XXII/ 203, emphasis in the original).

Berlichingen had thus accounted for the playwright's "national" history, *Egmont's* geographic *locus* had been, instead, situated within the Flanders territory – that is: well beyond the country's restricted, albeit yet imaginary, borders. Goethe who, in his conversations with Eckermann on *Götz's* medieval drama: "erstaunte zehn Jahre später über die Wahrheit [s]einer Darstellung", underscores that he had "diligently studied all sources" before putting pen on *Egmont*. Yet, this alleged adhesion to official historical writings did not detain him – as he explicitly declares – from altering the protagonist's personality and adapting his character to a specific notion of freedom that the playwright had intended him to embody.⁶⁵⁸

The above-captioned excerpt is clearly self-reflective while it features Goethe engaged in metanarrative considerations the author is emphasizing in this quoted passage the eminently selective and subjective nature of history writing which corresponded to Goethe's own understanding of history handed down to posterity:

Aber nicht alles ist wirklich geschehen, was uns als Geschichte dargeboten wird, und was wirklich geschehen, wie es dargeboten wird, und was so geschehen ist, das ist nur ein *Geringes* von dem, was überhaupt geschehen ist.⁶⁵⁹

The warning that the author points out in his conversation to the German historian Luden as to the *what* of the historians' choice, and the *how* of their chronicles, corresponds to what Manzoni would recommend in 1822 as "*utile e ragionata diffidenza*" (*Discorso* 472) towards

⁶⁵⁸ As Goethe remarked several years later to Eckermann: "Der Dichter muß wissen, welche Wirkungen er hervorbringen will, und danach die Natur seiner Charaktere einrichten. Hätte ich den Egmont so machen wollen, wie ihn die Geschichte meldet, als Vater von einem Dutzend Kindern, so würde sein leichtsinniges Handeln sehr absurd erschienen sein. Ich mußte also einen andern Egmont haben, wie er besser mit seinen Handlungen und meinen dichterischen Absichten in Harmonie stände; und dies ist, wie Klärchen sagt *mein Egmont*" (*Gespräche* 271, emphasis in the original); cf. English transl.: "The poet must know what effects he wishes to produce and regulate the nature of his characters accordingly. If I had tried to make Egmont as history represents him, the father of a dozen children, his light-minded proceedings would have appeared very absurd. I needed an Egmont more in harmony with his own actions and my poetic views; and this is, as Clara says, *my Egmont*" (*Conversations* 166, emphasis in the original).

⁶⁵⁹ See "Goethe und Heinrich Luden", p.137, my emphases.

the trustworthiness of historical accuracy. As the very title, *Poetry and Truth* (1811-1816), of Goethe's autobiography underlines, "truth" (i.e. history) and "poetry" (i.e. imagination) are indissoluble; they represent an aesthetic axiom that even Luden cannot but corroborate: "zugleich regt sie [*sc.* die Geschichte] die Phantasie allgewaltig auf und treibt, wie zum *Denken*, so zum *Dichten*".⁶⁶⁰ "Denken" and "Dichten", "reasoning" and "rhyming" are the historian's tools in recovering and reconstructing the alleged truth, which – Manzoni would reiterate: "lo storico l'ha *immaginata*" (*Discorso* 638, my emphasis).

In a lecture on *the Contribution of French Historiography to the Theory of History* (1978-1979), Paul Ricoeur illustrated with irrefutable evidence how the process of "understanding" on which "historical knowledge" relies is one of actual "reconstruction", and as such inevitably biased: "Every reconstruction is subject to a variety of systems of *interpretation*, menaced either by endless *fragmentation* or by premature *totalization*" (1980: 5, my emphases).⁶⁶¹ Following Ricoeur, the historian's interpretation is a consequence of his concern with a "rationality of history" that is his goal to "emphasize" (1965: 26, my emphasis). This rationality, Ricoeur sets forth, is a "choice" which "implies another choice within the historian's work itself" (1965: 26, my emphasis). To the extent that this "rationality" is the result of a "narrative" – in other words: "connected and meaningful because of its *continuity*" – the "rationality of history" is indissolubly related to what Ricoeur

⁶⁶⁰ "Goethe und Heinrich Luden", p.137, my emphases.

⁶⁶¹ Manzoni will clearly raise his critique against this "totalizing" tendency by eventually lending voice to the anonymous masses that history had silenced: "Un'immensa moltitudine d'uomini, una serie di generazioni, che passa sulla terra, sulla sua terra, inosservata, senza lasciarci traccia, è un tristo ma importante fenomeno" (*Discorso* 512-23). Goethe, in turned, had expressed his displeasure with the "fragmented", that is oftentimes incomplete historical resources. As he commented in his remarks *Zur Farbenlehre*: "Weniges gelangt aus der Vorzeit herüber als vollständiges Denkmal, vieles in *Trümmern*" (*Werke* XXIII.1/ 616, my emphasis).

names a "judgment of importance" from which the very "choice" of the historian "stems"; it is this judgement that ultimately "presides over the *selection* of events and factors" (1965: 26, my emphases).⁶⁶² Both factors, of subjectivity and selection alike, become manifest in Goethe's procrastinated conception of *Egmont*, and the drama's prolonged gestation. Between 1775 and 1782, when Goethe returned for the third time to play with the intention to complete it – "Nun will ich mich hinsetzen [...] damit Egmont endlich lebendig werde, oder auch wenn du willst daß er zu Grabe komme" he wrote to his court friend, Charlotte von Stein, on 20 March 1782 (*Werke* II.29/ 405) – he had meanwhile settled in the court of Weimar. As the chief advocate and author of German Neoclassicism in this "polirten" *milieu*, Goethe had eventually turned away from his former *Storm-and-Stress* fervor. When he approaches his historical drama again and, this time, he will do so only reluctantly, the playwright is determinate to "expunge" any evidence of his former juvenile zeal. To von Stein, lady-in-waiting at the Weimar court, Goethe remarked that same evening in the above-mentioned missive: "ich will nur das allzu *aufgeknöpfte, Studentenhafte* der Manier zu tilgen suchen, das der *Würde* des Gegenstands widerspricht" (*Werke* II.29/ 406, my emphases). For the proponent and promoter of Weimar classicism, the unfettered standpoint of the newly graduated law student from which Goethe had originally surveyed the history of the Netherlands' insurrection against the Spanish king, could no longer render justice to the "dignity" ("Würde") of its subject. When Goethe finally returned to his *Egmont* drama five years later, he not only attenuated the tone (i.e. the "how") of his historial interpretation, but

⁶⁶² Qtd. from Ricoeur's essay on *Objectivity and Subjectivity in History*, an address he held in 1952 under the French title *Objectivité et subjectivité en histoire*; now in his posthumous collection of essays under the comprehensive title of *History and Truth*, edited in English by Kelbley (1965).

also amended his original choice of events (i.e. the "what"). What urged him to continue and complete the play was the unforeseen and unexpected affinity that his historical drama was displaying with real-time events when on May 30, 1787 Brussel insurged against the foreign hegemony of the Habsburg monarch Josep II. Goethe – who at that time was traveling through Italy – annotated in his *Tag- und Jahreshefte* under the timeframe title "1787 bis 1788": "Als ich, bey meiner Rückkehr nach Rom, Egmont bearbeitete, fiel mir auf in den Zeitungen lesen zu müssen: daß in Brüssel die Scenen di ich geschildert, sich fast wörtlich erneuerten, so daß auch hier die poetische Anticipation wieder in Betracht kam" (*Werke* XVII/ 16).

The past was claiming its right onto the present, and history was repeating itself. "Ich sah daraus" –explained Goethe to Eckermann years later – "daß die Welt immer dieselbige bleibt" (*Gespräche* 147); most importantly, he was this time history's living eye-witness.⁶⁶³ For the German writer, who would declare: "Über Geschichte" kann man niemand urteilen als wer an sich selbst Geschichte *erlebt* hat", the actual presence and partaking of the historian into the events he decided to put into writing was essential for a truthful assessment of history whose judgement could not prescind from a direct experience with the past.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶³ Cf. his *Conversations* with Eckermann dated January 10, 1825: "I saw from this that the world remains ever the same" (1930: 79).

⁶⁶⁴ "Betrachtungen im Sinner der Wanderer", in *Maximen und Reflektionen* (1829). As Goethe will explain towards Eckermann in January 25, 1822: "Ich habe den großen Vorteil [...], daß ich zu einer Zeit geboren wurde, wo die größten Weltbegebenheiten an die Tagesordnung kamen und sich durch mein langes Leben fortsetzten, so daß ich vom siebenjährigen Krieg, sodann von der Trennung Amerikas von England, ferner von der französischen Revolution, und endlich von der ganzen Napoleonischen Zeit bis zum Untergange des Helden und den folgenden Ereignissen *lebendiger Zeuge* war. Hiedurch bin ich zu ganz anderen Resultaten und Einsichten gekommen, als allen denen möglich sein wird, die jetzt geboren werden und die sich jene großen Begebenheiten durch Bücher aneignen müssen, die sich nicht verstehen" (*Gespräche* 98). Thomas Mann will describe Goethe's realism as one the lends "dem Wirklichen eine poetische Gestalt": "'Der Geist des Wirklichen', sagt Goethe, 'ist das wahre Ideelle' – eine gegen Schiller gerichtete antiideale Form des Idealismus, die sein ganzes Verhalten zum Menschlichen und auch zum Menschheitlichen bestimmt" (Mann 1935: 27).

Just as the Netherlands had revived and reinstated in 1787 count Egmont as national heroic figure, Goethe recognized the meaning of history onto the present, and restored his writing turning his protagonist into the embodiment of the ideal of freedom. Egmont's "allegorization" (Brown 2007: 204-05) transposes the personal drama that the protagonist endures onto the more comprehensive level of a national drama that Egmont, "den alles Volk liebt" (III/ 507) enacts. Goethe himself had juxtaposed Berlichingen with his Egmont on the basis of their private/ public dichotomy that distinguishes the two plays:

Der Aufstand der Niederlande gewann meine Aufmerksamkeit; in 'Götz' war es *ein tüchtiger Mann*, der untergeht in dem Wahn: zu Zeiten der Anarchie sei der wohlwollende Kräftige von einiger Bedeutung. Im 'Egmont' waren es festgegründete Zustände, die sich vor strenger, gut *berechneter Despotie* nicht halten können. (DuW IV.19/ 834, my emphases)

Whereas the first historical drama is summed up as the play that revolves around a "brave man" ("tüchtiger Mann"), Egmont's tragedy evolves within the more comprehensive political picture of a Spanish "tyranny" "willfully" ("berechneter Dispotie") exerted on the people from the Low Countries. In this distinctive role that Götz and Egmont respectively play within the scope and significance of the dramatic action, they reproduce – as we will see in more detail in the forthcoming analysis of Manzoni's plays – Carmagnola's and Adelchi's private and public tragedies.

Egmont, therefore, represents first and foremost a collectivity: the very national community whose ideal of freedom he upholds. While the people juxtapose their foreign and despotic king ("[Der König] hat kein Gemüt gegen uns Niederländer, sein Herz ist dem Volke nicht geneigt, er liebt uns nicht, wie können wir ihn wieder lieben" [I/ 463]) to their found and devoted count, they greet Egmont as the heavenly messenger ("ein Engel des

Himmels" [II/ 486]) who descended to earth to help his people reconquering their "Freiheit und Privilegien! Privilegien und Freiheit!" (II/ 486).⁶⁶⁵ Yet, these very people who acclaimed him initially as their savior, would eventually abandon him to his dreadful verdict. "[D]as schwankende zerstreute Volk" (V/ 532) that Cläre urged to free her Egmont from his frightful captivity and fatal conviction – "Die freche Tyrannei, die es wagt ihn zu fesseln, zuckt schon den Dolch ihn zu ermorden" (V/ 530) – will timorously withdraw: "Nennt den Namen nicht! Er ist Tödlich" (V/ 531). Turned from messianic into mythical force, his name, once synonym of liberty, no one will dare anymore to pronounce for it conjures death. Hence Clärchen's indictment: "Ihr verbergt euch da es Not ist, *verleugnet* ihn, und fühlt nicht daß ihr untergeht wenn er verdirbt" (V/ 533, my emphasis). Akin to Manzoni's *Adelchi* who, forsaken ("verleugnet") and forfeited by his people, will sacrifice himself for the sake of their freedom, Egmont embraces death prospecting his people's salvation: "Kann mein *Blut* für viele fließen, meinem Volk Friede bringen, so fließt es willig" (V/ 548, my emphasis). The explicit reference made to "blood" underscores, on the one hand, the martyr-like nature of Egmont's demise; on the other hand, however, it also deflects its originally religious connotation meaning to the subsequent denotation of "blood witness". As such it defies the rigorously Christian interpretation of the term as eye "witness" to which it is undoubtedly related, but rather as a derivative of its etymological meaning.⁶⁶⁶ Unlike, therefore, the

⁶⁶⁵ In his autobiography years later, Goethe will describe Egmont as a person who can earn the appreciation and admiration of both his friends and foes, and in virtue of his "Gabe alle Menschen an sich zu ziehn [...] und so die Gunst des Volkes, die stille Neigung einer Fürstin, die ausgesprochene eines Naturmädchens, die Teilnahme eines Staatsklugen zu gewinnen; ja selbst den Sohn seines größten Widersachers für sich einzunehmen" (DuW IV.20/ 840)

⁶⁶⁶ See Owens' study: "The word 'martyr' derives from the Greek for a first-hand witness (martus, μαρτυς): one whose knowledge derives from personal observation. Its first appearances in Christian literature—Matthew 18:16

overtly Christian figure of Adelchi who will resort to his faith in God to appeal to and acclaim a freedom in the realm of transcendence, Egmont is aware that his death will be in vain. His atonement sanctions, in Cläre's words, the very end of liberty: "Mit seinem Atem flieht der letzte Hauch der Freiheit" (V/ 532).

In contrast to Manzoni's Christ-figure, in Goethe's character there is no hope for redemption which turns, instead, into wishful thinking as Egmont himself eventually acknowledges: "Leider wirds nicht so werden" (V/ 548). This awareness voiced by the protagonist displays a decisive shift of perspective. Egmont, who had otherwise been – as Goethe himself put it – "fatuous" and oblivious of "danger" ("Er kennt keine Gefahr, und *verblendet* sich über die größte die sich ihm nähert" [DuW IV.20/ 840-41, my emphasis]), suddenly becomes a realist. He sees *in death* the true "face" of human destiny: "the *facies hippocratica* of history" (1977: 166, emphasis in the original) as Benjamin named it in his study on the German *Trauerspiel* (1925), which is the very essence of its allegorical valence, that is the "allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history" (1977: 177). Following and paraphrasing an argument that Benjamin had pursued already in earlier disquisitions on *Goethe's Elective Affinities* (1919-1922), Egmont's death is but only its "semblance" (1996: 335, *passim*) of Adelchi's Christian transfiguration of self-sacrifice. Akin to Ottilie, the female heroine from Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften* (1809), Egmont's martyrdom is devoid of religious connotation: in spite of its sacred appearance, it is secular in its essence. As Benjamin argued with Ottilie, Egmont's sacrifice is only the "material content" of a human drama whose (hi)story is actually driven forth by a mythical (rather than mystical), a

and Mark 14:63—carry this original meaning: that the Apostles were 'witnesses' of Christ's activities and sayings" (2004: 3).

daemonic (rather than divine) force.⁶⁶⁷ This is what Benjamin would describe as the "truth content" of Goethe's drama and the playwright himself would corroborate in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811-1816) with the assertion: "Das *Dämonische* was von beiden Seiten im Spiel ist, in welchem Konflikt das Liebenswürdige untergeht und das Gehäßte triumphiert, sodann die Aussicht, daß hieraus ein Drittes hervorgehe das dem *Wunsch* aller Menschen entsprechen werde" (DuW IV.20/ 841, my emphases).⁶⁶⁸ This "desire" or "Wunsch" is precisely Egmont's "wishful thinking" for a better future. This is why Egmont remains throughout the play a very optimistic driving force whose "ungemeßne Lebenslust, das grenzelose Zutrauen zu sich selbst, die Gabe alle Menschen an sich zu ziehn" (DuW IV.20/ 840) distinguished this life-asserting character up to the play's *dénouement* when he exhorts the son of his enemy: "ich höre auf zu leben, aber ich habe gelebt, so leb auch du mein Freund gern und mit Lust und scheue den Tod nicht" (V/ 547). The resulting idealization of the dramatic protagonist, this "semblance of beauty" (Benjamin 1996: 339) is, therefore, only Goethe's symbolic disguise of an actual allegorical mode of conceiving and conjuring an essentially destructive and dreadful historical reality that he had meant altogether to dismiss. Albeit, in fact, Goethe rooted history in the realm of nature and immanence, he had declared himself opposed to a historical realism that Manzoni had, in contrast, privileged and pursued.

⁶⁶⁷ Benjamin explains how it is actually the "necessity" of Otilie's sacrifice that turns her death into a "mythic" one. It is therefore not only "as a 'victim of destiny' that Otilie falls – much less that she actually 'sacrifices herself' – but rather more implacably, more precisely, it is the sacrifice for the expiation of the guilty ones. For atonement, in the sense of the mythic world that the author conjures, has always meant the death of the innocent. That is why [...] Otilie dies as a martyr [...]" (1996: 309).

⁶⁶⁸ In his essay, Benjamin actually includes a direct reference to Goethe's *Egmont* when he explains: "The idea of the daemonic, which is again found as a conclusion in the *Egmont* quotation of *Poetry and Truth* and a the beginning of the first stanza of 'Primal Words, Orphic' ['Urworte, Orphisch'], accompanies Goethe's vision all his life. It is this which emerges in the idea of **fate** in *Elective Affinities* [...]" (1966: 316, emphases in the original, bold added).

Hence, upon reading in 1827 the first edition of *The Betrothed*, Goethe negative review of a novel that he had otherwise highly praised. Weary of the realistic detail with which the Italian writer had described the Milanese pest, Goethe had lamented in a conversation held with Eckermann on July 23 of that same year the prevalence of the historian over the poet by arguing:

that the historian hurts the poet, for Signor Manzoni *throws off at once the poet's mantle*, and stands for some time as a naked historian. This happens in his descriptions of war, famine, and pestilence – things which are repulsive, and are now made insufferable by the circumstantial details of a *dry chronicle*.
(*Conversations* 218, my emphases)⁶⁶⁹

The metaphor the Goethe employs to illustrate the historian's humiliating victory over the poet reminds of Benjamin's description of Baroque allegorical iconography. Just like the historian, in fact, "throws off the poet's mantle", the "function of baroque iconography is not so much to unveil material objects as to *strip them naked*" (1977: 185, my emphasis).⁶⁷⁰ As a "naked historian", Manzoni had meant to pursue and portray a realistic rather than romanticized image of human history where the ethical concern of poetry had, after *Adelchi* (1822), failed at conciliating itself with its aesthetic claim. With the same figurative rhetoric, Benjamin had distinguished a work's material content from its truth one – i.e. the "criticism" (and consequent "mortification") that it subtly articulates (1977: 182). As the German thinker

⁶⁶⁹ Cf. German translation: "daß der Historiker dem Poeten einen bösen Streich spielt, indem Herr Manzoni mit einemmal den Rock des Poeten auszieht und eine ganze Weile als nackter Historiker dasteht. Und zwar geschieht dieses bei einer Beschreibung von Krieg, Hungersnot und Pestilenz, welche Dinge schon an sich widerwärtiger Art sind und die nun durch das umständliche Detail einer trockenen chronikhaften Schilderung unerträglich werden" (*Gespräche* 340).

⁶⁷⁰ The Baroque iconographer does so by *naming* the represented object, that is by giving it a caption as Benjamin explains in more length in the same passage excerpted from his study on his *Trauerspiel* study: "The emblemist does not present the essence implicitly, 'behind the image. He drags the essence of what is depicted out before the image, in writing, as a *caption*, such as, in the emblem-books, forms an intimate part of what is depicted" (1977: 185, my emphasis). This idea of "captioning" history is precisely what Manzoni does by calling history by its name, that is, by means of historical citation.

explains, the latter comes to the fore when "all ephemeral beauty is completely *stripped off*, and the work stands as a ruin" (1977: 182, my emphasis). It is at this point, as Benjamin had demonstrated through his study of *Goethe's Elective Affinities* (1919-1922), that the allegorical form becomes discernible beyond the symbolic façade.⁶⁷¹ In his subsequent *Trauerspiel* book (1925), Benjamin therefore follows: "Where man is drawn towards the symbol, allegory emerges from the depths of being to intercept the intention, and to triumph over it" (1977: 183).

Upon rejecting the reduction of history to a "dry chronicle", and redefining it as "story" – the more plausibly so in German where the two nouns collapse into one common lexeme of "Geschichte" – Goethe equated history to story writing. As such, the latter fulfilled the chief role of "getting the past off one's neck": "Geschichte schreiben ist eine Art, sich das Vergangene vom Halse zu schaffen".⁶⁷² Nietzsche, who will introduce the preface to *The Use and Abuse of History* (1874) with a quote by Goethe, will name it the "great and increasing weight of the past" that "man is always resisting" as "it presses him down, and bows his shoulders" for "he cannot learn to *forget*, but hangs on the past: however far or fast he run,

⁶⁷¹ See also the definition and distinction of truth vs. material content by Callahan: "Whereas the material content was always a product of the times of the work's creation, bound to the historical circumstances and linguistic/ material conditions of its emergence, the truth content overcame those particular limitations. To redeem a work of art it was thus necessary to destroy its material content, to pry it loose from its particular setting, and therefore to free the truth within it. [...] The material content of their [*sc.* the works of arts] reception might change in different times and places, but great works continue to speak to widely disparate audiences" (2006: 8). As such allegorical writing – and ruins for the matter – discloses an intimate truth that through its associative mode of signification can reach from the past into the present suspending temporal boundaries.

⁶⁷² "Über Kunst und Altertum" III.1 (1821), *Werke* XXI/ 32. The critique that Schiller articulated in his review of Goethe's drama, in contrast, dismantles Egmont's idealized portrayal: "In der Geschichte ist Egmont kein großer Charakter, er ist es auch in dem Trauerspiele nicht. [...] Egmont ist ein *Held*, aber auch ganz nur ein flämischer Held, ein Held des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts; *Patriot*, jedoch ohne sich durch das allgemeine Elend in seinen Freuden stören zu lassen; *Liebhaber*, ohne darum weniger Essen und Trinken zu lieben" (NA XXII/ 201, my emphases).

that *chain* runs with him" (1964: 6-7, my emphases). To free himself from the "chain" of the past and the burden of history, Goethe wrote stories which, like myths – for this is eventually what they turned out to be – fulfilled as etiological narratives an eminently explanatory purpose. Hence while the story of *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) is intended, as disguised myth of Prometheus, to defy Kronos, the edacious time, in *Egmont* (1788) it is the myth of the martyr that finds its reinstatement.

Egmont's martyrdom, as previously illustrated in analogy with Otilie's demise, exemplifies Goethe's use of the symbolic as disguised allegory or, one could say, false symbol. Devoid, in fact, of a Christian connotation, Egmont's death – though finally accepted and freely embraced – resembles strongly the martyr drama of the Baroque, bare of religious and redemptive value. In contrast to the classical Greek drama, the Baroque theatre does not feature the "catastrophe of the tragic hero", but the "very estate of man as *creature* which provides the reason for the catastrophe" (*Trauerspiel* 89, my emphasis). This becomes evident through Egmont's final remarks and reflections about his own human life: "Es glaubt der Mensch sein Leben zu leiten, sich selbst zu führen und sein Innerstes wird unwiderstehlich nach seinem *Schicksale* gezogen" (V/ 549, my emphasis). Egmont accepts his death as his fate – as the fate of every human life and being: hence not as "punishment but atonement", that is, in its creature-like essence, as the "expression of the subjection of guilty life to the law of natural life" (*Trauerspiel* 131). Egmont's demise resembles, therefore, more likely Socrates' stoic contemplation of death in which Benjamin had identified the very origin of martyr drama as the "parody of tragedy" – hence "in one stroke the death of the hero has been transformed into that of the martyr" (*Trauerspiel* 113-14). Through his martyrdom, Egmont sacrificed ("opfre") his life for the idea of freedom ("Freiheit"): "ich schreite einem

ehrenvollen Tode aus diesem Kerker entgegen, ich sterbe für die *Freiheit* für die ich lebte und focht, und der ich mich jetzt leidend *opfre*" (V/ 551, my emphases). Egmont's death, removed – like the Baroque martyr drama – from the implication of a "moral transgression" (*Trauerspiel* 89) that had hitherto doomed the fate of the tragic hero, turns into a "noble death" ("ehrenvollen Tode"). If Egmont's exit from stage and life entails no reference to an afterlife, in the following pages, we shall see how the profoundly Catholic Manzoni would, conversely, charge Adelchi's martyrdom with an explicit and emphatic religious significance.⁶⁷³

⁶⁷³ According to Thielecke's study, Goethe's notion of immortality was one of "entelechy" which manifested itself through the "eternal participation in the cosmos" in form of "eternal return" and "eternal metamorphosis" (1970: 53).

4.2.2. *Adelchi* (1820-1822)

A personal note that Manzoni included in November 1822 to an edition of *Adelchi* originally published a month before, that he had exclusively binded for his distant devotee Goethe, report the words uttered in the fourth scene of the final fifth act of Goethe's *Egmont* by his eponymous protagonist in sign of cordial affection and admiration for his German patron:

A Goethe
l'autore
Du bist mir nicht fremd. Dein Nahme war's der mir in meiner ersten Jugend gleich
einem Stern des Himmels entgegenleuchtete. Wie oft hab'ich nach dir gehorcht,
gefragt!
(EN XXIX.1/ 321).⁶⁷⁴

Goethe – who, as early as 1818, had named and numbered Manzoni among the "neuartigen Dichtern" ("[t]ra i poeti della nuova maniera" [EN 29.1/ 383]) and, after reading his *Sacred Hymns* (1812-1822), had recognized and reiterated his talent "als einen gebornen Dichter" ("un poeta nato" [EN 29.1/ 390]) – praised *Adelchi's* drama as being "ganz im Sinne und Geist des Grafen *Carmagnola*, nur noch reicher an Charakteren und Motiven".⁶⁷⁵ When

⁶⁷⁴ "Tu non mi sei straniero. Era bene il tuo nome quello che nella mia prima giovinezza mi attraeva col fulgore di una stella in cielo. Quante e quante volte ho ascoltato parlare di te, ho chiesto di te!" (EN XXIX/ 321).

⁶⁷⁵ See Goethe's letter to Schultz from Dec. 9, 1822; *Briefe 1819-1822*, vol. 9.2, no. 631, p. 312; henceforth indicated as "B". Before 1822, Goethe mentioned Manzoni for the first time in a report that he wrote for the Grand Duke Karl August dated Oct. 20, 1818; see *Edizione nazionale ed europea delle opere di Alessandro Manzoni. Carteggi letterari*, vol. 29.1, p. 383, henceforth quoted as "EN". Two years later, in a letter from March 1820 to Gaetano Cattaneo who first introduced him to Manzoni, he expressed his reiterated admiration for the young Italian poet (EN 29.1/ 390). In the *Theilnahme* that precedes his review of *Adelchi*, he had acknowledged Manzoni's literary uniqueness: "so entspringt daraus eine Dichtart in der er wohl *Einzig* genannt werden kann; es entstehen Werke die ihm Niemand nachmachen wird" (1827: XLII, my emphasis). In his letter to Schultz, Goethe had expressed, in fact, his regret for the lack of such literary ingenuity in his own country, as he was about to read Manzoni's play in the hope to render the same homage to a national author: "Es wird mir eine angenehmes Geschäft sein, auch diese Arbeit zu entwickeln; ach! warum kann man denn nicht einem deutschen Zeitgenossen den gleichen Liebesdienst erweisen" (B 9.2/ no. 631, 312). Following Damrosch's remarks on Goethe's increased interest displayed towards foreign literature, the German writer may have suffered from what he called a "*provincial anxiety*" (2003: 10, my emphasis). As Damrosch explains: "For all his pride in his own achievements and those of friends like Schiller, Goethe has an uneasy sense that German culture is provincial, lacking a great history, lacking political unity. He can't afford to grant 'national literature' too much meaning, since he doesn't even live *in* a proper nation at all" (2003: 8, emphasis in the original). As

Goethe published the *Opere poetiche di Alessandro Manzoni* in Jena, an Italian edition of his works to appear in Germany, it was 1827. This was the very year in which Goethe announced to the public his literary program and pursuit of *Weltliteratur*.⁶⁷⁶ By disseminating Manzoni's

much as he was concerned with the insular perspective of the German literati, he was charmed in contrast by that "exotic" quality so inherent to foreign literature: "He loves foreign works as much for their ineradicable difference from his own practices as for their novel employment of themes and strategies that he finds familiar" (Damrosch 2003: 10). It is precisely this "otherness" that had originally attracted him to an author like Manzoni with whom he had, otherwise, little in common. *Adelchi* contributed in strengthening the cordial amity between the two writers: Goethe had, in fact, identified in Manzoni's drama an affinity with his mythological tragedy of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1779/ 1787) inasfar as both protagonists advocate a notion of *humanitas* ("Humanität") that Goethe and Manzoni alike valued highly.

⁶⁷⁶ Although the idea of world literature was not new to Goethe, he first coined the term of "Weltliteratur" on Jan. 15, 1827 (upon reviewing the French playwright Duval's drama) in a journal entry that read: "An Schuchardt diktiert bezüglich französische und *Weltliteratur*"; qtd. in commentary to Goethe's *Briefe* (B 10.2/ 1018-19, my emphasis), see also Strich's introduction to Goethe's *Gedenkausgabe*, p. 1038. A few days later that month, on Jan. 23, Goethe wrote to Streckfuss – who was translating Manzoni's *Adelchi* and whom he helped to interpret *Adelchi*'s final verses of the drama: "Ich bin mir überzeugt, daß eine Weltliteratur sich bilde, daß alle Nationen dazu geneigt sind und deshalb freundliche Schritte tun" (B 10.2/ no. 385, 443). Goethe remitted a copy of his Jena edition to Manzoni expressing his profound admiration for the Italian playwright and poet: "Als Zeugnis unwandelbarer Hochachtung und Mitwirkung" ("quale testimonianza di immutabile stima e collaborazione" [EN 29.1/ 322-23]). The literary appreciation that drew Goethe to Manzoni was soon reciprocated with cordial fondness and friendship. Goethe had soon recognized in Manzoni a new star rising at the horizon of what he had named "universal" literature and that had begun to outline itself in Europe. Already in August 1826 already, the year when he started annotating his thoughts on world literature that were later collated under the title *Historische Studien zur Weltliteratur (1826-1832)*, he announced to the German composer Carl Friedrich Zelter Manzoni's undiscussed talent and his undoubted success: "Manzoni ist ein Dichter, der verdient, daß man ihn studiere. Wenn Jahre dahin sind, wird er in der Literatur einen gar schönen Platz einnehmen" ("Manzoni è un poeta che merita di essere studiato. In futuro occuperà un posto eminente nella letteratura" [EN 29.1/ 436-37]). Although the two writers did not entertain an epistolary correspondence – apart from the letter that Manzoni wrote to Goethe on 23 Jan. 1821 to express him gratitude for the positive review received on *Carmagnola* – they exchanged a not indifferent indirect correspondence attested by their reciprocal esteem that the authors shared in private journals, letters to friends that speaks for the "elective affinity" shared for nearly two decades by two men that were otherwise of disparate dispositions (EN 29.1/ 313-577, *passim*). Without neglecting the reverence and recognition that both authors expressed in their dedication as, for instance, when Manzoni sends Goethe a copy of his *Adelchi* in Nov. 1822 with a quote from *Egmont* (EN 29.1/321), or the first edition of his historical novel in June 1827 with the note: "A Goethe, l'autore lieto di potere nella folla degli ammiratori distinguersi col titolo speciale d'una *tenera riconoscenza*" (EN 29.1/ 322, my emphasis); a month later Goethe was sending Manzoni the original edition of his collected works as they had appeared in Jena. Goethe had been originally introduced to Manzoni by Gaetano Cattaneo who, in a letter from 25 Nov. 1818, forwarded him the *Sacred Hymns*: "sur lesquels" he asked "je serais fort ravi de pouvoir connaitre le sentiment de V.E." (EN 29.1/ 385); and two years later in January 1820 included also "la tragedie du *Comte Carmagnola*, que vient de produire tout recemment à Milan la plume du jeune Poëte Alexandre Manzoni" (EN 29.1/ 387). This friendship experienced a highpoint in the mid twenties – see a report by Cousin from 1825 who, after meeting with Goethe, was asked: "Si vous voyez Manzoni, dites-lui combien je l'estime et je l'aime" (B 10.2/ no. 213, 269), and lasted long after Goethe's death until around 1840 (Battaglia 1989: 100). For a systematic and in-depth study of Goethe's and Manzoni's relationship, see Rüdiger (1990: 194-213), Quattrocchi (1992: 135-45), and the more recent contributions by Gaspari (2000), and Leri (2002).

oeuvre abroad, Goethe appointed him representative of the very notion of world literature that he was advocating.⁶⁷⁷ Included in the Jena edition of Manzoni's plays and hymns was also Goethe's review of *Adelchi*, in which the German writer had commended the Italian playwright for successfully combining – contrary to his former *Carmagnola* drama – historical and fictional narrative:

Hätte sich Manzoni früher von diesem unveräußerlichen Recht des Dichters, die Mythologie nach Belieben umzubilden, die *Geschichte in Mythologie* zu verwandeln, überzeugt gehabt, so hätte er sich die große Mühe nicht gegeben, wodurch er seiner Dichtung unwidersprechliche historische Denkmale bis ins Einzelne unterzulegen getrachtet hat" (1827: XLII, my emphases).⁶⁷⁸

What Goethe had acclaimed as the envisioned "recasting of history into myth" was indeed a *remythization* of history that both writers undertook in their plays. Be it the Promethean fate that Götz reproduced through his downfall, or Christ's passion that *Adelchi* re-enacted with his demise, pagan and biblical myths found their way into the immanent sphere of human history describing, in turn, a diametrically opposite trajectory to what had been witnessed since the onset of this study. Whereas, in fact, Foscolo and Kleist employed mythology as a narrative device that called for a better grasp on history, Goethe's and Manzoni's historical

⁶⁷⁷ The circulation in Germany of Manzoni's works through the Jena edition that appeared in mid-April 1827 contributed to the popularity of his historical novel whose first edition was set to print in the same year. Goethe's attempt to render Manzoni's known abroad was overall successful as the conspicuous correspondence of letters by German intellectuals who had enthusiastically read his works or attempted to translate it as did, for instance, the baron von Bülow who translated *The Betrothed* in 1828 and 1837 (EN 29.1/ 329), and forwarded him his own collection of novellas in sign of deference (EN 29.1/ 338); or the philologist Mohnike who translated Manzoni's *Cinque Maggio* in 1829 (EN 29.1/ 351) – nearly a decade after Goethe's translation of the poem in 1822 (EN 29.1/ 409), cf. also Gaspari (2000: 238); and Schlosser's translation of *Adelchi* in 1830 (EN 29.1/ 259) which had followed Streckfuss's translation from 1827 (EN 29.1/ 444). Manzoni had enjoyed also a strong appreciation among German Romantics such as Tieck who felt "la plus grande considération" of his works (EN 29.1/ 333).

⁶⁷⁸ For the Italian translation of Goethe's *Theilnahme*, the introduction written for his Jena edition of Manzoni's collected works, see Ugoni's *Interesse di Goethe per Manzoni*: "Se Manzoni si fosse convinto per tempo, essere diritto inalienabile del poeta di modificare a suo talento la mitologia, e di *trasformare in mitologia la storia*, avrebbe causato l'improbabile fatica che dové durare per fondare la sua finzione, fino ne' più minuti particolari, sopra storiche non contrastate prove" (1988: 182, my emphasis).

protagonists epitomized, conversely, mythical characters. Yet with respect to the relationship entertained by history and myth, both writers approached the epistemological question of historical veracity from antipodal viewpoints.⁶⁷⁹

if Goethe attributed the highest "lyrical" mark to history ("Die höchste Lyrik ist entschieden historisch" [*Theilnahme* XLIII]), Manzoni ended up deploring the poetic component that had ultimately altered that same historical truth to which he had originally set claim with his new drama: "Il en résulte une *couleur romanesque*, qui ne s'accorde pas avec l'ensemble, et qui me choque moi-même tout comme un lecteur mal dispose".⁶⁸⁰ The

⁶⁷⁹ In contrast to Goethe, Manzoni disapproved of mythology which he viewed as false and misleading, and therefore diametrically opposed to the Christian doctrine of faith and truth. Manzoni articulated his disavowal of mythology already in 1823 – that is shortly after concluding his second and last historical drama – in his letter *Sul Romanticismo* originally written on 22 September 1823 (that is only a few weeks after concluding the first edition of his historical novel *Fermo e Lucia*) to Cesare Tapeaglio D'Azeglio, father of his future son-in-law, who had just published Manzoni's *Pentecoste*. However, he had always been reluctant to publish the letter, which first appeared against his will in print in Paris in 1846 before it was published once more with the author's consent in a second revised edition with the current title in 1871, that is long after Goethe's death (Merolla 1973: 82-83); any quotes in this study will be excerpted from the original edition of 1823. It goes without saying that Manzoni never spoke of Christian doctrine in mythological terms; mythology – which he considered to be a form of idolatry and affabulation – belonged for him exclusively to the profane world of the pagan Gods which he deemed *passé* and denied any poetic value: "La mitologia non è morta certamente; ma io la credo ferita mortalmente; tengo per fermo che Giove, Marte e Venere faranno la fine che hanno fatta Arlecchino, Brighella e Pantalone [...]. Ma la ragione per la quale principalmente io ritengo detestabile l'uso della mitologia [...] è che l'uso della favola è vera idolatria. [...] Ora, che è la mitologia conservata nella poesia, se non questa idolatria? [...] il bello poetico non [è] in quelle trite apparenze [...]; ma nell'ultimo vero, in cui l'intelletto riposa" (1991: 228-30). Manzoni's dismissal of mythology was not only part of his critique of Classicism, but resulted rooted in his religious belief. Hence Christ's life story was in Manzoni's eyes not a biblical myth or fiction, but remained and rested on historical facts.

⁶⁸⁰ *Lettere*, vol. 1, no. 153, p. 248, my emphasis; henceforth quoted as "L". Manzoni eventually contravened against that very "goût romanesque" (1991: 131) that in his *Lettre à M.^r Chauvet* (1821-1823) he had condemned as leading away from the historical truth that poetry ought to pursue; Manzoni's letter to the classicist literary critique Victor Chauvet was published only in 1823 along with Fauriel's French translation and edition of Manzoni's dramas. *Adelchi*'s outcome as historical drama will considerably impact Manzoni's aesthetic theory, in particular with regard to the relationship entertained between poetry and history; the more so after his historical novel when the author ostracized poetry altogether and opted exclusively for strict historical reports. It is indicative, in this regard, that Manzoni interrupted the composition of the second act of his drama to start writing yet under the title of *Fermo e Lucia* the original draft of his novel (Becherucci 1998: XVI). According to Carl Witte, Manzoni declared after visiting him in Brusuglio in 1841, his ultimate disavowal of any form of aesthetization of history: "[...] Manzoni insisted on the axiom that every story could only be either Truth or Falsehood, and that all Falsehood is, and will always be, immoral. In vain, I sought to remind the poet, who thus condemned his own works, of the fact that no historian, in so far as he wished to be creative and not a

extensive and, to a certain degree, enervating compilation of *Adelchi* speaks for what was Manzoni's chief aesthetic concern: the binomial of poetry and history. This is true in particular for his *rapprochement* to history, that is: to its actual sources and their reliability as much as to its significance for the present and the consequent risk of anachronistic distortion.⁶⁸¹ When Manzoni first embarked upon *Adelchi*, he decided to follow the advice imparted to him by Goethe – who had disapproved of the distinction made between imaginary and historical characters in the former tragedy of *Carmagnola* – with results, as we shall see, far from what he had expected and intended. The discussion that follows, departs therefore from Manzoni's appropriation of historical records, setting the premise for

mere chronicler of events, could ever give the bare facts without expressing his own judgement about them, and that therefore every historian writes, although in a more restricted sense of the word, a historical novel. Manzoni censured this kind of historiography and preferred instead a mere collection of dates with scrupulous indication of all sources"; passage qtd. in Beaumont (1939: 139) who provides next to the English translation also the original German text as it was published in *Deutsche Rundschau* from 1907 under Witte's title *Ein Besuch bei Alessandro Manzoni im Jahre 1831*.

⁶⁸¹ Even after the completion of his final version of the drama, when Manzoni will have to review the play to be "approuvé par la censure", he will lament to Fauriel: "la nécessité toujours renaissante de corriger et de refaire" (L I/ 258). As to *Adelchi*'s composition, there are two "autografi" editions of the drama, plus a third one by the hand "di un calligrafo dilettaante per essere presentata alla censura" (Margiotta 1956: 1). Manzoni composed the five acts of his drama between November 1820 and November 1821 (with major revisions made to the 2nd scene of act one, and the 1st scene of acts three and five [Becherucci 1998: XVIII-XXVII]), whereas the two choruses were written after the *Discorso* and the *Notizie*, that is between 13 Dec. 1821 and 19 Jan. 1822 (Becherucci 1994: 385, Becherucci 1998: XXIX) – they mark, therefore, the very end of the tragedy's long gestational process that lasted until March 1822 when the final edition was eventually filed to the censorship (Becherucci 1994: 385). Next to Becherucci, see also the commentary to the genesis of the drama in *Tutte le opere di Alessandro Manzoni* by Chiari and Ghisalberti (1957), henceforth indicated as "Opere"; and the – though older yet still helpful – comparative juxtaposition of both editions by Lesca (1923) with omissions and revisions emphasized in italics. The major changes between the two versions are visible in the different relationship entertained between poetry and history. As Margiotta concisely puts it: "l'*Adelchi* della prima stesura è personaggio storico, ma d'una storia più vera e più palpitante di quella ricercata in seguito dal Manzoni. Esso porta il **riflesso dell'anima contemporanea**, con i suoi ideali sublimi e l'impossibilità di tradurli in pratica" (1956: 116, emphasis in the original, bold added). As I shall render evident in my forthcoming analysis, much of *Adelchi*'s idealization stemmed from an anachronistic reconstruction that Manzoni undertook of his dramatic protagonist whose "sentimentalism" mirrored Manzoni's own national feelings; when he eventually revised selected scenes of the tragedy, he decided to move any references to contemporary history to the chorus.

the actual analysis of the play as I will direct my focus on the allegorization and idealization of its eponymous character.

When Manzoni first announced on October 17, 1820 in his notorious letter to Fauriel, the conception of a new dramatic project of such relevance that it would have required his immediate and exclusive attention: "J'ai en main un sujet de tragédie auquel je vais me mettre tout-de-suite pour l'achever dans l'hyver si je peux" (L I/ no. 137, 215), he denounced to his friend the lack of reliable documentation, and exhorted the French historian and literary critic "de m'indiquer quelque ouvrage moderne [...] de ceux qui, bien ou mal, ont voulu débrouiller le chaos de ces établissemens [des conquérans barbares] dans le moyen âge" (L I/ no. 137, 216). Hence Manzoni's intent to compile, after completing his tragedy, "un petit *travail historique* sur les faits qui en forment l'argument et sur la manière dont ils ont été représentés" (L I/ no. 137, 216, my emphasis).⁶⁸² In the attempt to rectify what he would blame as "l'arbitraire de[s] historiens" (L I/ no. 153, 248), Manzoni wrote his *Discorso* (1822) through which – as he explained to Fauriel – he did not claim "qu'il servira à éclaircir l'histoire du moyen âge", but rather "*rendre l'obscurité visible*" (L I/ no. 153, 248). He intended, in other words, to "render visible", and thus shed new light on what official historical records had left in the dark.

It is, therefore, an ineludible imperative for Manzoni to clarify in the *incipit* of his *Discorso* that his own *Notizie storiche* introducing the actual drama are only a selection of

⁶⁸² Manzoni is referring in this context to his *Discorso sopra alcuni punti della storia longobardica in Italia* (1822) which had "de démontrer que l'histoire des établissemens des barbares en Italie *est encore à faire*" with the consequent aim "d'animer quelch'un à l'entreprendre, ou au moins d'*ébranler* beaucoup de croyances très fermes et très absurdes" (L I/ no.137, 216). As Manzoni was about to reexamine, rethink and rewrite the history recorded in official records, he intended to dismantle in his *Discorso* the historical inaccuracy as to the unified and unanimous community that the Italic people established with the Longobards during their foreign invasion.

historical facts: "non son altro che una serie di nudi fatti scelti" (*Discorso* 469). He justifies the selective procedure as being at the very heart of historical writings:

S'è detto scelti; perchè quelle cronache e quelle memorie sono non di rado così discordi tra loro, che dalla lettura di esse risulta tutt'altro che un concetto unico di storia. In casi simili [...] è necessario ricavare dalle relazioni di scrittori, o creduli, o ingannati, o appassionati, e spesso posteriori di molto agli avvenimenti, ciò che ha più carattere di **probabilità**, e s'accomoda meglio con que' **fatti principali** che, affermati da tutti, sono come la parte certa e fondamentale della storia. Chi scrive ha cercato di fare alla meglio una tale scelta; e le *Notizie* suddette sono il risultato del suo ultimo convincimento. (*Discorso* 471; emphasis in the original, bold added)⁶⁸³

According to Manzoni, it is essentially intrinsic to the actual interpretation of history that the truthfulness to which it lays claim falls short.⁶⁸⁴ The selective method that historical facts

⁶⁸³ In his review of *Adelchi*, Goethe had pointed out and praised Manzoni's accurate sense for historical research and its conciliation with poetry: "so findet er auch unerläßlich, daß das historische Element, in welchem er *dichterisch* wirkt und handelt, gleichfalls untadelhaft Wahres, durch Documente Bestätigtes, Unwidersprechliches enthalte. Seine Bemühung muß also dahin gehen das *sittlich ästhetisch Geforderte* mit dem *wirklich unausweichlich Gegebenen* völlig in Einklang zu bringen." (1827: XL-XLI, my emphases) ("così gli parve indispensabile, che l'elemento storico, su cui *lavora*, contenga parimenti verità tutte appurate, confermate con documenti, incontrastabili. Scopo dell'A. sarà dunque di accordare perfettamente *dati reali* ed irricusabili con quanto la morale e *l'estetica* richiegono" [Ugoni 1988: 181]); in a marginal remark, I would like to render Ugoni's text more explicit than his translation of Goethe's passage which omits a detail relevant to Manzoni's actual poetic theory: "l'elemento storico, su cui *lavora*" reads, in fact, in the German review as "l'elemento storico, oggetto della sua rielaborazione poetica". This is significant insofar as what Goethe had upheld as the impeccable conciliation between history and aesthetic – that is poetry – had eventually caused Manzoni's uneasiness with *Adelchi*'s consequent "romanesque tinge". While Manzoni had, in fact, shared initially Goethe's mistrust in historical research and records, that is in the reconstruction of historical truth, Manzoni had gradually distanced himself from this viewpoint. In a passage excerpted from the original draft of the *Notizie storiche* that function as historical contextualization of the play and thus are prefaced to the drama, Manzoni omitted and partially included to the *Discorso* with amendments to the original wording an extensive paragraph in which he both explains his diffidence in historical sources and justifies his preference for poetry over history as long as those "naked facts" ("nudi fatti") cannot be deemed yet to have historical nor are they indicative of the "poetic concept of history": "Questi sono i principali fatti sui quali è lavorata la tragedia che si presenta al pubblico: ma i *nudi fatti* non sono la storia, nè una materia atta e bastante a formare il concetto *poetico* di storia" (*Opere* I/ 671). The fact that this passage was in its final edition expunged speaks for a significant shift in Manzoni's aesthetic theory after his experience with *Adelchi*. As to the composition of the historical prose that goes along with Manzoni's drama, see in particular Becherucci's article who argues that both the *Discorso* and the *Notizie* were written after the play, estimating the composition of the *Discorso* between September and October 1821 (1994: 383; see also letter to Fauriel from Oct. 1821 [L I / no. 153, 248]), and the *Notizie* – of which there at least three different editions – written even later between Nov. 3 and Dec. 13, 1821 (1994: 385).

⁶⁸⁴ In his critique of historicism, the former marxist and historical materialist Karl Popper, will elucidate in poignant detail the "highly selective" nature of "all scientific descriptions" (1963: 260). The comparison that Popper articulates with the "searchlight", whose focus will "depend upon its position, upon our way of directing

undergo relies on a variable degree of "probability" which remains a dynamic criterium of assessment. Moreover, the choice and certainty of those events that are granted major relevance is generally elicited from the extent to which they are most broadly accepted and attested. Hence his conclusion that such erroneous evaluations are rooted in a *misinterpretation* of history itself: "l'errore cominciò con un equivoco, cioè con qualcosa di vero in un senso, ma che non è il senso a cui si mira" (*Discorso* 487).⁶⁸⁵ In this context, Manzoni is arguing against the widely acknowledged assumption that Longobards and Italians had formed one community of people. He underscores his objection by pointing to the "ambiguity" inherent to the readings performed on historical records: "Il carattere è quell'indeterminatezza, quell'ambiguità, che si trova sempre nell'errore [...]; giacchè essere i Longobardi e gl'Italiani diventati un popolo solo, può voler dire cose molto diverse e che si contradicon tra di loro" (*Discorso* 495).⁶⁸⁶ Manzoni's distrust in official historical reports

it" (260), posits, in turn, an inevitability that is reminiscent of Manzoni's very assessment of historical writing. "Thus in history no less than in science, we cannot avoid a point of view" explains Popper, and yet he clarifies: "This does not mean, of course, that we are permitted to falsify anything; or to take matters of truth lightly. Any particular historical description of facts will be simply true or false, however difficult it may be to decide upon its truth or falsity" (261). I will return on this point and on Popper's paradigm of unfalsifiable thesis in the concluding remarks to this section.

⁶⁸⁵ In the historical investigations on the Longobards' invasion of and installation in Italy, Manzoni prefers to confront, contrast and correlate various, at times even contradictory, sources to guarantee the highest degree of objectivity. When attempting to solve the dilemma as to how the Franks were eventually able to gain access to the Italian peninsula, he explains in the first chapter of his *Discorso*: "Ma tutto, se non c'inganniamo, si spiega davvero, accozzando i tre fatti che abbiamo accennati nelle *Notizie Storiche* e che si trovano dispersi, per dir così, in diverse cronache" (479). It is the result of such comparison and collation of reports that, like the colorful stones of a mosaic, can be brought together and rearranged. For Manzoni, historical truth is not to be deemed self-evident or one dimensional, for it can disclose itself anew from different angles and perspectives. This is exactly the procedure for historical research that Walter Benjamin endorsed and illustrated through the image of the "constellation". For Benjamin, historical truth is not to be pictured as one straightforward line of progression, but forms a constellation whose multiple lines that momentarily and unexpectedly lead to each other where they may appear distant in time or theme, yet meet at nonetheless meaningful points of intersection.

⁶⁸⁶ Manzoni comments on the remarkable longevity of what he deemed to be "generalized" assumptions on the peaceful relationship entertained between the Germanic and the Italic people, casting doubt on its alleged validity: "Malgrado questa scarsità di notizie, c'è, sulle relazioni de' due popoli [...] un'opinione espressa con

stems from the preference and pre-eminence endowed by Medieval chroniclers to the history of the conquering Germanic tribe, purposively omitting "tutto ciò che riguarda la popolazione conquistata": "I cronisti del medio evo [...] fanno la storia del solo popolo conquistatore, e qualche volta de' soli re e de' personaggi primari di quel popolo" (*Discorso* 484). Next to probability and popularity, there is therefore also power that dictates which historical events are seized and which are sorted out. Manzoni will experience the influence of political power in his own contemporary times when, confronted with the Austrian censorship, he will find himself denouncing "[c]e maudit discours historique" (L I, no. 158/ 258).

Manzoni, conversely, who was chiefly interested in what history had silenced, concentrated his research on "la condition des peuples indigènes subjugués et *possédés*, qui est le point sur le quel l'histoire est plus pauvre (L I, no. 137/ 216, emphasis in the original). Driven by his predilection for the victims rather than victors of history, he opens the tragedy symptomatically with the figure of Ermengarda repudiated by her sovereign spouse Charles, and returned to her father Desiderio. Originally wedded to the Frankish sovereign to ensure "accord" and "amity" between the Franks and the Longobards ("[...] D'amistà, di pace/ io la candida insegna esser dovea" [I.3/ ll. 221-22]). As mediator of the kingdoms' politics, Ermengarda conjoins the personal with the political sphere. In her individual drama is mirrored the public one, that is the drama of her people. It is the chorus, celebrating and commemorating her demise upon her final retreat in her sister's monastery, that explicitly endorses the tragedy's ethical message and meaning:

Te dalla *rea progenie*

molta sicurezza da scrittori riputatissimi, e ricevuta con fiducia dalla più parte di coloro ai quali piace di avere, *in poche parole, de' giudizi generali sull'epoche importanti della storia*" (*Discorso* 484, my emphasis).

*degli oppressor discesa,
 cui fu prodezza il numero,
 cui fu ragion l'offesa
 e dritto il sangue, e gloria
 il non aver pietà,
 te collocò la provida
 sventura in fra gli oppressi (IV.1/ ll. 97-104)*

Originally descended from the "evil race of savaged oppressors" who upheld the right to carnage and cruelty, Ermengarda turns into the epitome of the oppressed.⁶⁸⁷ As such, she presages through her fate the Longobards' destiny and their destitution of power to the Franks. The former subjugators are, in turn, subjugated, the former conquerors are now conquered. This cyclical understanding of history that Manzoni borrows from Vico, allows him to transcend the historically particular and personal by projecting its significance onto the non-phenomenal universal.

The eminence that Manzoni attributed to human subjects is a distinctive trait of his poetics. Disappointed with the allegedly tangible and trustworthy factuality claimed by historical records, Manzoni turned in his quest for truth to the individuals' inner sentience and

⁶⁸⁷ The English translation of Manzoni's drama will be quoted henceforth from Brunori Deigan (2004). As I shall readdress the key notion of "provvida sventura" in greater detail in my forthcoming analysis, suffice it to specify that Manzoni owes the notion of a providential plan guiding and governing the progress of human history, next to Rosmini, to his much admired and esteemed Neapolitan historian Vico. This providential intervention which tends to struck in moments of misfortune turns into a driving force towards a better destiny for, within the providential design, suffering constitutes a sign of salvation. According to Vico – and thus no less for Manzoni – history displays the unfolding of God's plan by means of his providential acting, yet preserving the humans' free will intact; for more for more details on this point, see fn. 711. This shall be exemplified through Adelchi's death which, for following the character's personal choice, represents an authentic act of martyrdom. As to the fundamental value attributed to the intentional component in martyrdom, Rosoux asserts that this act is "basically twofold: "On the one hand, it is an individual choice; on the other, it is a social act – that of martyr-making" (2004: 83). This at once active and passive facet of one and the same coin is named by the scholar respectively the "psychological" and the "political" viewpoint. Whereas the "psychological approach [...] tends to analyze the individual *intention* of the martyr", in the "political approach [...] the focus is on the representation of those who commemorate martyrdom" (83, emphases in the original). In Adelchi's case both approaches apply. Manzoni stressed, in fact, with emphasis both the protagonist's inner perspective from his initial confusion to the final clarity achieved through his sacrifice, and also weighted the political meaning with which he charged Adelchi's immolation to his king and kingdom.

intimate stance. He expounded this aesthetic tenet in the introduction to his *Discorso* where he denies mere external facts their historical valence: "una serie di fatti materiali ed esteriori [...] foss'anche netta d'errori e di dubbi, non è ancora la storia" (471). For Manzoni, historical veracity is instead derived from what he describes to be the "dramatic concept" of historical facts: "il concetto drammatico d'un avvenimento storico" (471), which he identifies in the human agents rather than the heroic actions of history: "i personaggi operanti", that is their motives and sentiments: "i loro fini e le loro inclinazioni" (471). His preference for the human individual rather than the historical event set Manzoni off from the traditional Aristotelian drama.⁶⁸⁸ Goethe, who supported and shared Manzoni's "humanism", acknowledged in his review of the play this "purely human sense and sentiment" ("reinem humanem Sinn und Gefühl" [1827: XL]) as the playwright's "true poetic Talent" ("wahrhaft poetische Talent"). It was, after all, still Manzoni's belief that only poetry could expose and impart the universal truths of human history: "le cose eternamente vere sono le più sentite e le più lodate" – as he explains in a dialogue with Schlegel on *The Eternal Truth in Poetry*.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁸ Aristotle expressed his preference for "action" over "characters" in his *Poetics* when he writes: "[t]ragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons [ἀνθρώπων] but of *action* and life [πράξεων καὶ βίου]. [...] In a play, accordingly they do not act in order to portray the Characters; they include the Characters *for the sake of the action*" (1941: 1461, 1450a, ll. 15-21, my emphases); for the original Greek text, see Fuhrmann (1982: 20). Manzoni – and in this respect he shared an important viewpoint with Goethe for whom history and poetry were – contrary to Aristotle who considered the former "singular" and the latter "universal" (1941: 1464, 1451b, ll. 6-7) – far from inconciliable; on the dichotomy of thought between Aristotle and Manzoni, see Santini (1904: 18-9).

⁶⁸⁹ See *Il vero eterno nella poesia*, in *Opere inedite e rare*, vol. II, p. 441. Manzoni had conveyed the same concept in his fragment *On the Morality of Tragic Works* where he asserted: "la perfezione morale è la perfezione dell'arte", locating this moral virtue in the human heart: "Più si va in fondo al cuore più si trovano i principii eterni della virtù, i quali l'uomo dimentica nelle circostanze comuni e nelle passioni più attive che profonde e nelle quali hanno gran parte i sensi" (*Opere inedite* III/ 162) – hence poetry's essential role to restore these eternal values to human memory and mind. This peculiarly human quality of Manzoni's anthropological theory allowed him to see in every individual both their virtues and vices. Ambivalent characters can be encountered, in fact, throughout Manzoni's entire literary production: one may recollect, for instance, in *Adelchi*'s drama Desiderio's request for mercy and King Charles condoned pardon at the end of the tragedy or Martino's betrayal of his beloved friend Carmagnola; in his historical novel, Manzoni will confront the reader

Hence the priority allocated to the historical drama over historical documents: "Quindi" – as Manzoni concludes his introduction to his *Discorso* – "lo spirito storico del dramma è [...] opposto a quello che esce [...] dalle più riputate storie moderne" (471, my emphasis). This "historical spirit" is what he justifies as the "tragedy's historical concept" for it is the historical drama that contemplates the general principles which act as *movens* of a history that is rooted in mankind. It is within the scope of human actions, in the intimate motives that guide their choices where the ethical value of history is to be found.⁶⁹⁰

In his incomplete discourse *On the Morality of Tragic Works*, Manzoni had already asserted: "La rappresentazione dei dolori profondi e dei terrori indeterminati è sostanzialmente morale, perchè lascia impressioni che ci avvicinano alla virtù" (*Opere inedite* III/ 162).⁶⁹¹ Charged with a religious connotation, Manzoni's concept of *virtus*

with many more characters that are converted from villain to virtuous and vice versa. Annoni had identified this aesthetic approach as unprecedented and named it "la rivoluzione copernicana del tragico" to the extent that it overthrew all axioms of classical Aristotelian drama theory (1997: 26).

⁶⁹⁰ In contrast to Goethe's "elitist" standpoint, Manzoni's attention was directed to "i desiderî, i timori, i patimenti, lo stato generale nell'immenso numero d'uomini che non ebbero parte attiva" (*Discorso* 471), that is: those people that history had not deemed worthwhile remembering, and who had thus fallen into oblivion. Manzoni will render this perspective more tangible in his historical novel whose chief protagonists will be a young couple of peasants. The tragedy's *Discorso*, composed after both its editions were completed (cf. fn. 681), articulated an ethical discourse that Manzoni had already begun to implement in his historical novel on which, in fact, he had already set his pen in while working on *Adelchi*. In April 1821, in fact, after concluding the second act of tragedy, Manzoni decided to put his play momentarily aside and began to write his *Fermo e Lucia* (Becherucci 1998: XVI). Yet both his historical dramas attest the author's attempt to speak for the histories of those individuals that would emerge more assertively out of the ground of what is known as official History. In his analysis of *The Betrothed*, Livorni described this *modus scribendi* so characteristic for Manzoni as the "intersection [...] between *collective history* destined to come down to posterity condensed in the names of a few individuals of power and the *individual story of characters*" (2011: 136, my emphases).

⁶⁹¹ Manzoni's work remained incomplete and was only published posthumously as a collection of fragments. From a letter to Fauriel from October 1821, we can infer that Manzoni began to write it while he was reviewing *Adelchi*, and as he was about to start the *Discorso*: "Je corrige actuellement *Adelchi* et le discours pour les livrer à la presse, je rédigerai après un autre discours, que je médite depuis long-temps, sur l'influence morale de la tragédie" (L I/ no. 153, 249, emphasis in the original). The collected fragments of Manzoni's reflections on the moral value of tragedy were first published in the Bonghi's edition of Manzoni's inedited and rare works, albeit with the omission of the original draft of chapter one and other pages that report Manzoni's thought on Rousseau's and Bossuet's dramatic theory; see comment by Riccardi/ Travi in *Opere*, vol. 5, p. 434.

envisages, as a consequence of anguish, the idea of salvation. Ermengarda exemplifies this Christian virtue in her willingness to forget her offense: "O padre, / tanto non chiede il mio dolor; l'oblio / sol bramo; e il mondo volentier l'accorda agl'infelici" (I.3/ ll. 217-20) – against her father's wish for retaliation, and forgive her offender: "ch'io gli perdono" (IV.1/ l. 73). Despite her martyr-like claim to death: "[...] io sento / una pienezza di martir, che il core / m'inonda [...]" (IV.1/ ll. 186-88) as she declares shortly before expiring, Ermengarda's martyrdom cannot be described as an actual act of self-immolation, neither in its literal nor its metaphorical sense.⁶⁹² Compared to the classical martyr heroine, her death does neither resemble Iphigenia's originally commended subsequently consented sacrifice for the Greeks' sake, nor does it echo Lucretia's outcry of innocence.⁶⁹³ There is, in other words, neither an intentional nor an ideal component to her martyrdom. Contrary to Annoni's definition of Ermengarda as "specificazione [...] femminile dell'offerta *sacrificale*" (1997: 162, my emphasis), her sacrifice does not qualify as the deliberate means to a higher end, but rather remains an end in itself. Unlike Iphigenia, her death is not demanded by some outside instance who acts beyond her personal will, nor does she like Lucretia commit suicide.⁶⁹⁴ She

⁶⁹² See Rosoux who traces the development from the literal, that is the etymological meaning of the word, ist metaphorical application: where the "sacred cause", in the wake of the historical resemantization and secularization of the word, comes to denote the nation and thus acquire political meaning: "On the political stage, the use of the word 'martyr' ceases to be literal and becomes metaphorical, the definition of martyrdom depending not upon the manner of death but upon the *present context*" (2004: 84, my emphasis). In Adelchi's case, both literal and metaphorical meaning intersect heightening the allegorical ambivalence of the play that advocates a religious patriotism in which the lesson and legacy of the Italian Risorgimento were rooted.

⁶⁹³ Following the insights that Moss (2013) provides in her innovative study that exemplifies the role of martyrs embodied by classical female figures, I am arguing against the widely shared theory of Ermengarda's alleged martyrdom; as to the assimilation of Ermengarda with a martyr figure, see for instance Filosa (1973: 121), De Sanctis (1983: 156), Annoni (1997: 162-63).

⁶⁹⁴ For the profoundly Catholic Manzoni, the idea of suicide remains, of course, out of question; even when this option comes to cross briefly Adelchi's mind, he will eventually deny and shy away from his original thought: "[...] Se nulla / ti resta a far quaggiù, non puoi tu solo / morir? Nol puoi? Sento che l'anima in questo / pensier

is neither sentenced to death as will be Carmagnola's case, nor is she – unlike her brother who will succumb on the battlefield – subject to a lethal act of violence. She literally dies of grief as her sister Ansberga first realizes: "[...] Vedete: il suo dolor l'uccide" (IV.1/ ll. 129), and then she herself declares after learning of her husband's remarriage: "[...] O Carlo, / farmi morire di dolor, tu il puoi" (IV.1/ ll. 145-46). The harm inflicted to her is essentially of an emotional kind that seeks to end with her life as the chorus proclaims: "fuor della vita è il termine / del lungo tuo martir" (IV.1/ ll. 17-18). It is, therefore, I argue, not the manner of her death, but its moral value that claims its significance in the tragedy. Viewed in this light, Ermengarda's drama and demise turns into the expression and *exemplum* of an ethical truth that had always been at the root of Manzoni's aesthetic claim. Next to her enduring marital devotion, it is her explicit innocence (I.1/ l. 36), and excruciating agony that will allow her to be apotheosized by the chorus to the status of saint: "e al Dio de' santi ascendere / santa del suo patir" (IV.1/ ll. 23-24).⁶⁹⁵ Her *modus moriendi* thus ensues its meaning primarily as

riposa alfine: ei mi sorride, / come l'amico che sul volto reca / una lieta novella. Uscir di questa / ignobil calca che mi preme; il riso / non veder del nemico; e questo peso / d'ira, di dubbio e di pietà, gittarlo!... / Tu, brando mio, che del destino altrui / tante volte hai deciso, e tu, sicura / mano avvezza a trattarlo... e in un momento / tutto è finito. – Tutto? Ah sciagurato! / [...] / E affrontar Dio potresti? e dirgli: io vengo / senza aspettar che tu mi chiami; il posto / che m'assegnasti, era difficil troppo; / e l'ho deserto! – Empio! fuggire? e intanto, / lasciar questa memoria; il tuo supremo / disperato sospir legargli! Al vento, / empio pensier. [...]" (V.2/ ll. 63-88). Suicide turns, consequently, in Manzoni's view into a sacrilegious and pusillanimous act.

⁶⁹⁵ In a systematic comparison between the Aristotelian tragedy and Manzoni's dramatic theory, Annoni juxtaposes the classical tragic hero as "personaggio mezzano", whose *mediocritas* is far from virtuous, to Manzoni's "innocente sventurato" who reenacts through his or her unmerited suffering Christ's passion. Annoni argues that these innocently suffering characters constitute a permanent feature not only of Manzoni's dramatic production, but of his entire literary *oeuvre*, poems naturally included (1997: 24-27). It is essentially a Christian notion of innocence that stands in contrast to other representations of innocent heroines. Compared, for instance, to Ottilie's innocence in Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* (1809) which Benjamin views as actual explanation for her alleged martyrdom and denies for being "[n]ot purity but its semblance" (1996: 335) – Benjamin was trying to dismantle through Gundolf's interpretation of the novel (336-37) – Ermengarda's innocence is rooted in Christian thought and belief. Ermengarda's death is, therefore, charged with an ethical value that Manzoni exemplifies through Ermengarda's piousness. Consequently, and conversely to Ottilie – Ermengarda does not, and cannot commit suicide.

foreshadowing the sufferance of her people, and foretelling Adelchi's self-sacrifice in which Manzoni will transfigure Jesus' passion for humanity.

While the *passio Christi* parallel may appear too obvious from the dramatic development to remain unnoticed by literary critics who have already extensively examined the play – Bognetti, for instance, describes the tragic protagonist as "l'allegorico suo [sc. Manzoni's] protagonista" (1972: 152) – I will add to it that the analogy Adelchi *qua* Christus Rex lends itself to a renewed interpretation through the lens of Walter Benjamin's *Trauerspiel* theory.⁶⁹⁶ As expounded in the introduction to this section, Benjamin's study demonstrates how the Christological allegorization that Manzoni undertook of his historical character lends itself to what I argue results in the historization, and thus immanentization, of that divine Providence which Manzoni believed to unfold within and along with human history.⁶⁹⁷

In *Adelchi*, the concept of "provvida sventura" is explicitly addressed in the elegiacal chorus that mourns Ermengarda's passing, and comes overtly to the fore in the course of the dramatic action as indicative of its manifest presence in history. In the role of "Providential woe", it pursues within misfortune a salvific end as part of a divine plan. God is already

⁶⁹⁶ See also Ruggieri, for whom the entire drama constitutes "una tragedia allegorica" to the extent that Manzoni associated the Middle Ages with his own present and its "programma patriottico, in armonia con l'orientamento del nascente romanticismo che cercava nel passato paradigmi al presente" (1975: 13). It is the same "allegorical veste medievale" that Bognetti had originally pointed out, locating in the Carbonari revolts of the 1820s that had inflamed in Naples and then throughout the peninsula the very inspirational source of *Adelchi's* drama (1972: 63).

⁶⁹⁷ See De Castris' thesis who argues that Manzoni's conversion was brought about "nella speranza, nell'esigenza e nella volontà di *razionalizzare l'irrazionale*, di *storicizzare Dio*" (1962: 69, my emphases). De Castris identifies in Manzoni's transposition of the divine within the immanent sphere the passage from the mysticism of his *Sacred Hymns* to a historical realism that led eventually to his dramatic production where the *Pentecost* symptomatically attests the beginning and end of a religious crisis that had afflicted the author since 1817.

presented in the first act as who "[...] in cor del reo sovente / mette una smania, che alla *pena* incontro / correr lo fa; [...]" (I.5/ ll 344-46, my emphasis). The ambiguity of the word "*pena*" charges the Italian term with the double connotation of "punishment" and "*pietas*". Whereas the first meaning is reminiscent of the vindictive God of the Old Testament, the second meaning entails the Christian values of compassion and conciliation characteristic of the New Testament. In the drama, the two definitions are not mutually exclusive, but instead complete one another and come forth at once on the intra- and the extradiegetic level. On the intradiegetic level, while Ermengarda and Adelchi promote the idea of *pietas*, their royal father Desiderio figures initially as the perpetrator of punishment:⁶⁹⁸

DESIDERIO [...]. L'ira del cielo,
 e l'abbominio della terra, e il brando
 vendicator, sul capo dell'iniquo,
 che pura e bella dalle man materne
 la mia figlia si prese, e me la rende
 con l'ignominia d'un ripudio in fronte! (I.1/ ll. 22-27)

After the intent to originally avenge the dishonourable dissolution of the conjugal arrangement settled between her daughter and Charlemagne met with his own defeat by the Frankish conquerors and champions of the papal cause, the Longobard king becomes aware of the actual target of divine sanction: "Oh! come grave / sei tu discesa sul mio capo antico, / mano di Dio! [...]" (V.7/ ll. 292-94).⁶⁹⁹ At this point, however, the Janus-faced God shows

⁶⁹⁸ Ermengarda incarnates Manzoni's key notion of *pietas* in terms of "religious devotion" that permeates the entire tragedy. It is no coincidence that the tragedy sets on with the stagelights directed onto Ermengarda. In her character, pity is a consequence of her piety: "qui giace la pia" (IV.1/ 5) chants the chorus upon her death. In her *pietas*, pity (i.e. compassion) and pardon (i.e. reconciliation) coincide, and before her demise and exit from the tragedy her prayers go both to the perpetrated and the perpetrators: "io pregherò [...] / [...] per quei che soffrono, per quelli / che fan soffrir [...]" (IV.1/ 45-47).

⁶⁹⁹ In the same guise, Desiderio is unaware that the "blood" he invokes to spill against his foe to avenge king Charles for repudiating his wife, and thus cleanse the "stain" of dishonor with which his daughter had been stigmatized: "Quando all'oltraggio / pari fia la mercè, *quando la macchia fia / lavata col sangue*; allor, deposti /

himself from his better side for he is not only the one who castigates, but also the one who comforts as his son will remind him shortly before his death: "Il Dio / che di tutto consola" (V.8/ ll. 365-66), and condones as Desiderio himself will come to realize: "quel Dio ch'è presso ai travagliati [...]" (V.5/ ll. 173), or recollecting Gonzaga's word of sympathy to Carmagnola's wife and daughter for the count's inevitable death sentence: "il Dio degl'infelici" (EN III/ l. 225).⁷⁰⁰ In this awareness he will approach his royal foe and follower on the throne, and ask for mercy: "[...] innanzi a cui / Dio m'inchinò, m'inchino: a supplicarti / vengo; [...]" [V.5/ ll. 165-68]). As he implores the Frankish monarch, he admonishes the reticent sovereign to envision his own day of "dire fortune" and plea for pity:

DESIDERIO Ah! m'ascolta: un dì tu ancor potresti
 assaggiar la *sventura*, e d'un amico
 pensier che ti conforti, aver bisogno;
 e allor gioconda ti verrebbe in mente
 di questo giorno la *pietà*. [...]

(V.5/ ll. 193-97, my emphases)

In the persona of king Charles, Manzoni managed to concentrate both notions of "pena" equally. Despite the callousness with which he receives his captive enemy: "[...] un vano / da me conforto di parole attendi. / Che ti direi? ciò che t'accora, è gioia / per me; [...]" (V.5/ ll. 148-51), he responds with contrition at the announced arrival of Adelchi "offeso

i vestimenti del dolor, dall'ombre / la mia figlia uscirà [...]" (I.2/ 72-76, my emphasis), is actually Adelchi's own blood poured to remove the sinful "stain" that had marked his own politics of subjugation and conquest. Manzoni announced this fate that strikes the victors in *Carmagnola* with chorus' sanction: "Torna in pianto dell'empio il gioir" (EN III/ l. 116).

⁷⁰⁰ He is, in fact, presented by Adelchi as early as in the first act as "every man's God": "[...] il Dio di tutti, il Dio che i giuri ascolta / che al debole son fatti e ne malleva / l'adempimento o la vendetta [...]" (I.6/ ll. 340-41). This concept of "the God who hears / The vows made to the helpless and lends them / Surety either for fulfillment, or for / Avenging their breach [...]" (Brunori Deigan 2004: 228), has been announced in Carmagnola's chorus with the sentence: "Solo al vinto non toccano i guai" (EN III/ l. 115), and will be at the core of Manzoni's historical novel.

d'immedicabil colpo" (V.5/ ll. 287-88) by relinquishing him from his foes: "[...] digli / che non ha più nemici" (V.6/ ll. 291-92) and entrusting him to God's hands:

CARLO [...]. Nemico io fui
 d'Adelchi; egli era il mio, nè tal, che in questo
 novello seggio io riposar potessi,
 lui vivo, e fuor delle mie mani. Or egli
 stassi in quelle di *Dio*: quivi non giunge
 la *nimistà d'un pio*. (V.7/ ll. 310-17, my emphases)

Reminiscing Carmagnola's plea for forgiveness: "[...] È così dolce / Il perdonar quando si vince! e l'ira / Presto si cambia in amistà ne' cori / che batton sotto il ferro. [...]" (EN III/ ll. 57-61), pity for king Charles – as dictated by that very sense of Christian piety or *pietas* – comes to the fore when faced with death as the extreme case of misfortune for it is the sight of mortality that refers to the Almighty, to whom detains all earthly and heavenly power, and reminds of one's own human weakness. Manzoni's attention in history for what is human, rather than heroic, explains his effort to reclaim the "poca umanità" erroneously inferred from the silence that the chroniclers had originally imposed on history.⁷⁰¹ Manzoni's quest for historical authenticity goes so far as to portray this character with his faults and flaws, and thus render him all around human.⁷⁰² In contrast to Ermengarda, who epitomizes at once

⁷⁰¹ In his *Discorso*, Manzoni accuses the historian to arbitrarily complete omissions and gaps of fragmentary records and advocates more cautiousness when it comes to advance moral judgements: "Così il Muratori; e, prima e dopo di lui, molt'altri scrittori hanno fatto intendere che sotto questo silenzio sospettavano qualcosa d'atroce e di misterioso. Ma il silenzio di que' cronisti, anche sui personaggi più importanti, è troppo frequente e comune, per esser significante: chi lo volesse interpretar sempre, avrebbe un gran da fare; tante cose hanno lasciate fuori!" (483). He warns against reading too much into the intentional silence of chroniclers "verosimilmente per non rivelare un fatto che tornava in discredito di esso Carlo" to avoid the risk of ungrounded and untruthful assumptions.

⁷⁰² In his letter to Cousin from 21 Febr. 1821, Manzoni had warned against a one-sided representation of historical characters in favor of a more truthful and thus realistic portrait: "je suis jusqu'au cou dans une tragédie, occupé à faire parler un Charles Magne qui ne sera ni le chef de paladins de l'Ariosto, ni le saint de quelques auteurs ecclésiastiques, ni le législateur de quelques grands hommes, ni le savant de quelques membres de l'Université, ni le coquin de quelques philosophes, ni le héros de ceux qui recevaient des pensions

compassion and condonation, and who moribund wonders naïvely whether the Frankish leader might regret her loss and repent his deeds: "– E, se all'annunzio di mia morte, un novo / pensier di pentimento e di pietade / assalisse quel cor? [...]" (IV.1/ ll. 106-08), Charles' inclination to pity and pardon remains restrained, and Adelchi is well aware of it when he expresses his final wish to the king:

ADELCHI [...] Che tanta preda
 tu lasci in libertà... questo io non chiedo...
 chè vano, il veggo, il mio pregar saria,
 vano il pregar d'ogni mortale. Immoto
 è il senno tuo; nè a questo segno arriva
 il tuo perdon. [...] (V.8/ ll. 374-79)

The result is a more realistic character than his idealized counterpart Adelchi or his saintly former wife Ermengarda.⁷⁰³

In contrast to Ermengarda, who appears self-absorbed in her personal tragedy, Adelchi's source of sorrow lies in his kingdom's politics of conquest, that is: the injustice and iniquity perpetrated by his own people. In a confidential exchange with his trusted friend Anfrido, Adelchi denounces the incessant dissemination of death and destruction on occupied soil:

ADELCHI qual guerra! e qual nemico! Ancor ruine
 sopra ruine ammicchierem: l'antica

de son frère cadet, mais qui pourra après tout être bien un personnage *pauvrement conçu*" (my emphasis "a not well known character!" [L I/ no. 145, 231]).

⁷⁰³ Goethe had praised this more objective portrait as proof of Manzoni's minute attention for historical veracity. In a report written by Cousin from 1825, we learn how Goethe upheld Manzoni's practice as historical dramatist: "Qui, Manzoni se tient à l'histoire et aux personnages réels qu'elle fournit; mais il *les élève jusqu'à nous* par les caractères qu'il leur donne; il leur prête *nos sentiments humains*, libéraux même, et il a raison. Nous ne pouvons nous intéresser qu'à ce *qui nous ressemble un peu*, et non aux Lombards ou Longobards et à la cour de Charlemagne, qui serait aussi un peu trop rude" (EN 29.1/ 431). It is precisely this "humanitas" that Manzoni had upheld since his early *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1821-23), and that has the merit to render his characters more realistic and thus more plausible: "C'est de l'histoire que le poète tragique peut faire ressortir, sans contrainte, des sentimens humains; ce sont outjours les plus nobles, et nous en avons tant besoin!" (*Opere* V.3/ 160).

nostr'arte è questa: ne' palagi il foco
 porremo e ne' tuguri: uccisi i primi,
 i signori del suolo, e quanti a caso
 nell'asce nostre ad inciampar verranno,
 fia servo il resto, e tra noi diviso;
 e ai più sleali e più temuti, il meglio
 toccherà della preda. [...] (III.1/ ll. 66-74)

The trial held against the violence and violations perpetrated by foreign invaders had not been in Manzoni's original intention of the first scene of act III which was eventually radically rewritten. In its very first outline, the scene featured instead a conversation among Longobards deserters – fearful of the Franks' retreat and the consequent forfeiture of Charlemagne's *tutelage* – which ended with the renegades' reprobation: "Pera colui / Che allo stranier si fida".⁷⁰⁴ After the failed patriotic uprising in 1820-21 and the consequent reinstatement of Austrian hegemony, Manzoni denounced the brutality and belligerence brought about by hegemonic control, and condemned who relied upon foreign sovereignty. This stance is adopted and articulated in the play through the protagonist's inner perspective. By doing so, the author disguises his personal *j'accuse* into an examination of conscience which appears initially devoid of prospect:

ADELCHI [...]. – Oh! mi pareo,
 pur mi pareo che ad altro io fossi nato,
 che ad esser capo di ladron; che il cielo
 su questa terra altro da far mi desse
 che, senza rischio e senza onor guastarla. (III.1/ ll. 74-78).

Yet unaware of the role he had been called to fulfil, the remorseful Longobard prince is torn in his affliction between filial obligation and intimate inclination, between his head and his heart ("cor"), his fate ("fortuna") and his faith:

ADELCHI Il mio *cor* m'ange, Anfrido: ei mi comanda

⁷⁰⁴ For the original passage, see Becherucci (1998: 226).

alte e nobili cose; e la *fortuna*
 mi condanna ad inique; e strascinato
 vo per la via ch'io non mi scelsi, *oscura*,
senza scopo; e il mio cor s'inaridisce,
 come il germe caduto in rio terreno,
 e balzato dal vento. (III.1/ ll. 84-90, my emphases)

Incognizant of the inscrutable divine plan in which he is partaking, Adelchi finds himself walking along an "obscure path" void of purpose. As he beholds a past of brute conquering and bloodshed that ruthlessly piles up and progresses into the present, contemplating an irreversible future unable to suspend the tragedy, Adelchi's standpoint in the midst of the ongoing historical catastrophe brings to mind Klee's *Angelus Novus* in Walter Benjamin's ecphrastic reading of the painting.⁷⁰⁵ As Klee's angel gazes terrified at the "debris" of the past, it is caught in the unmitigable wind of progress that incessantly and inexorably blows him against an irreparable future. In the ninth of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1942), Benjamin writes:

But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his [*sc.* the angel's] wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. *This storm is called progress* (257-58, my emphasis).⁷⁰⁶

Benjamin criticizes this negative semantization of progress that unfolds along an unceasing and unbounded "chain of events" which the angel views as a "single catastrophe" (1973: 257). While actual progress should consist, instead, in halting and thus severing this endless

⁷⁰⁵ Benjamin defined catastrophe as a "missed opportunity" for change, that is for arresting the ineluctable course of events and redirecting its route with the consequent "critical" risk that "[threatens] the status quo to be preserved" (*Arcades* N10,1/ 474).

⁷⁰⁶ Benjamin's *Theses*, albeit published only posthumously in 1942, were written in 1940, and thus locate themselves between the composition of the *Trauerspiel* book (1925) and the comprehensive *Arcades* (written between 1927-1940, but published only in 1982). As link between Benjamin's dissertational and his lifelong *Arcades* project, the *Theses* display significant intersections of thoughts with the other two works.

concatenation of events, the "angel would like *to stay*, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed" (1973: 257, my emphasis). And yet – inasmuch as it requires the actual sight and consciousness of the catastrophe for it to be reversed – the potential of authentic progress results inherent to the catastrophe itself.⁷⁰⁷

To bring this potential forth into being, one must be able to catch a glimpse in the present of what Benjamin calls the "Messianic power" of the past (1973: 254). This messianic power, however, is of a "weak" kind for its "image of redemption" risks to be lost if not acknowledged at the very moment in which "it flashes up" (1973: 254). "For every image of the past" – as Benjamin puts it – "that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably" (1973: 255). Adelchi is able to "seize hold" of this messianic potential at the very moment of his death when he will come to realize the *ultima ratio* of his existence: "Gran segreto è la vita, e nol comprende / che l'ora estrema. [...]" (V.8/ ll. 342-43). Upon acknowledging through the rhetorical question: "[...]. Non era questo / il tempo di morir? [...]" (V.8/ ll. 339-40) the salvific role he had been endowed to perform, Adelchi consoles his father, the deposed king, for his dethronement will

⁷⁰⁷ As Benjamin explains in the *Arcades*, true progress is meant to be subversive for "it blows cool like the wind of a coming dawn": "Progress has its seat not in the continuity of elapsing time but in its *interferences* – where the truly new makes itself felt for the first time, with the sobriety of dawn" (N9a,7/ 474, my emphasis). Benjamin is thus trying to rectify the negative connotation of progress in its most frequent and flawed acceptance that he intends to dismantle. Progress arises out of the awareness of a catastrophe which Benjamin defines as the "missed opportunity" (N10,2/ 474): as such it arrests instead of advancing, it corresponds to "the first revolutionary measure taken" (N10,2/ 474). Benjamin sees this notion of progress and catastrophe most tangibly visualized in Klee's *Angelus*, caught as it is with open wings by the "wind of progress" in a dialectic motion of standstill while it attempts to resist its vigor that would otherwise blow him into the future – a wind of progress that, beware, comes from the future and yet blows from the past! In her engaging study on the antinomies of Benjamin's philosophy, Buci-Glucksmann explains this apparent contradiction as follows: "the Angel of history melancholically shatters the temporal continuum [...], replacing it with a catastrophist, messianic instance that will *release the future buried in the past and build it with the present*" (44, my emphasis). Klee's *Angelus* like Adelchi is half-human and half-divine, and as such also highly allegorical: at once a terrified and terrifying figure; for a more extensive understanding of the ambivalent nature of Klee's angel, see the insightful article by Buci-Glucksmann (1994: 41-45).

prevent him from further wrongdoing: "Godi che re non sei; godi che chiusa / all'oprar t'è ogni via: loco a gentile, / ad innocente opra non v'è [...]" (V.8/ ll. 351-53, my emphasis).

Adelchi encourages his father to take comfort in his misfortune, and view it as a blessing for it will cease the crimes of the past.

It is in the catastrophe that "provvida sventura" manifests itself, as "woe" that results providential. This providential – or to say it with Benjamin "messianic" – power is already implied in Adelchi's suffering which entails – as Anfrido foresees – "hope" for redemption.

ANFRIDO – Soffri e sii grande: il tuo destino è questo,
finor: *soffri, ma spera*: il tuo *gran corso*
comincia appena; e chi sa dir, quai tempi,
quali opre il cielo ti prepara? il cielo
che *re* ti fece, ed un tal cor ti diede. (III.1/ ll. 98-102, my emphases).

The "grand course" that the devoted companion of the Longobard prince discerns behind a divine plan yet unintelligible, anticipates Adelchi's martyrdom. This implication is more explicit in the first version of Anfrido's response which originally read: "Toglierti la tua / splendida *croce* non poss'io; ma posso / Teco *portarla* almeno –" (III.1/ ll. 131-33, my emphases), and was eventually slightly amended in: "Toglierti la tua / splendida *cura* non poss'io, ma posso / teco sentirla almeno" (III.1/ ll. 92-94, my emphasis). Before being replaced by the more generic term of "woe" ("woe"), the tangible token of the "cross" ("croce") that Anfrido offers to "carry" ("portare") in place of his sovereign created a direct reference to Christ's *Via Crucis*.⁷⁰⁸ Akin to Jesus' sacrifice to humanity, Adelchi's death will liberate his people from their crimes as subjugators and lift the moral burden that was

⁷⁰⁸ The original draft of the scene is quoted from Becherucci (1998: 82). Manzoni was clearly employing the term "croce" in its double meaning, that is: both literally as the physical cross, and figuratively as the suffering that it ensued.

oppressing his conscience, eventually finding solace in his martyrdom: "non dee finir così? Questo felice, / cui la morte fa più fermo il soglio, / cui tutto arride, tutto plaude e serve, / questo è un uom che morrà" (V.8/ ll. 361-64).

If the historical catastrophe is perceived as "provida sventura", then Adelchi's drama turns into the allegory of a providential redemption that Manzoni saw realizing in the present. As representative of the new generation, Adelchi follows his calling and fulfils his commitment. In the second of his *Theses* (1942), Benjamin laid out this right that the past claims to the present as "agreement" between former and future generations:

The past carries with it [*sc.* history] a temporal index by which it is referred to **redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth.** Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim.
(1973: 254; emphasis in the original, bold added).

On the broader extradiegetic level then, the juxtaposition of punishment and pity, cruelty and contrition, murder and mercy points to a trajectory in history that progresses, alternatively, from suppressor to surrender, from mighty to martyr. It is precisely this cyclical acceptance of history that sets the premise for the revolutionary power of messianic intervention, where "revolution" need be understood literally as the "revolving" or the complete "turn" described by circular movement.⁷⁰⁹ Manzoni's drama exemplifies, in this

⁷⁰⁹ Benjamin calls it, in the seventh of his *Theses* (1942), the "Messianic *cessation* of happening": "a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past" (1973: 263). Despite, in fact, the analogy established in this context with Benjamin, it must be specified that the image he employed to represent history was not that of a circle – which would describe for him a mythical, that is an eternally recurrent and thus doomed motion that he wished instead to break "in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history" (1973: 263) – but it was that of a constellation. Likewise, Manzoni's acceptance of history, though cyclical, was not caught in the iterative motion of a circle that "falls back" to its initial point of origin, but resembled the progressive "unfolding" of a spiral. Though in a different context, Manzoni distinguishes these two movements in a metaphor that he employs in his *Lettre à M.^r C**** (1820) when juxtaposing Racine's classical French theater that he criticizes – for its "action qui marche toujours sur les mêmes échasses, qui *se replie* [...] à chaque

respect, what Benjamin described in his *Trauerspiel* book as "[t]he constantly repeated drama of the rise and fall of princes [...] as the natural aspect of the course of history, essential in its permanence" (1977: 88).⁷¹⁰ This Vichian notion of history, in its subsequent stages of "corsi" and "ricorsi", that Manzoni reinstates and reworks into his own poetics, consents him to describe the development from evil to good, villain to virtuous, sinner to saint. Despite the providential design, Adelchi's demise is not merely a consequence of God's will: "Non tu, nè questi, ma il Signor d'entrambi" (V.8/ l. 329) – as he explains to his father who blames

instant, et toujours à peu près de la même manière *sur elle-même*" (1991: 90, my emphases) – with Shakespear's innovative theater where, instead "l'action se *déroutera* d'une manière plus conforme à la réalité" (90, my emphasis).

⁷¹⁰ In contrast to Baroque drama, however, where the tyrant's fall "is less a manifestation of morality" (1977: 88) than it is of his suffering, in Manzoni it serves to voice that "moral truth" that he believed to find through poetry in history. As Benjamin specifies, the term "tyrant" in the Baroque theater is not necessarily charged with a negative connotation for it indicates first and foremost the person who detains absolute power as his distinguishing and necessary feature of identity: "The theory of sovereignty [...] *positively* demands the completion of the image of the sovereign, as tyrant. The drama makes a special point of endowing the ruler with the gesture of executive power as his characteristic gesture, and having him take part in the action with the words and behaviour of a tyrant *even where the situation does not require it*" (1977: 69, my emphasis). If in the Baroque and in Manzoni's drama alike "the tyrant and the martyr are but the two faces of the monarch" (1977: 69), the Baroque's acceptance of history knows no transcendency, no continuity between the immanent and the transcendent sphere as God dwells in the material and murderous world. With its primary emphasis on the phenomenological realm and on physical suffering, the Baroque martyr figure will feature a stronger resemblance instead with Goethe's *Egmont* and his historical dramas, where no space is left for the transcendent to partake in immanence. If both the Baroque's and Goethe's martyrs enact on stage their actual agony, for Manzoni's martyrs suffering is always and only a means to salvation; as he declares in his notes collated under comprehensive title of *Materiali estetici* (1816-1819): "Questa vita mortale [...] il Cristianesimo ce la fa considerare come vita di preparazione. Quindi gli avvenimenti si riguardano non solo pel diletto o pel dolore che arrecano con sè, ma ancora, anzi principalmente, pei rapporti con la *vita futura*" (*Opere* V.3/ 45); in this perspective "i dolori presenti" – whether they are suffered by the virtuous or the villain – become a providential device of redemption: "come espiazione dei falli da cui nemmeno i più puri vanno esenti, stromento di perfezionamento in chi soffre, come preparazione a beni futuri, e quindi come veri beneficj della Provvidenza" (*Opere* V.3/ 46). On the various perceptions and conceptualizations of transcendence and immanence, in particular with regard to the different acceptations of allegory and allegorical interpretation, see Machosky's thought-provoking monography. In her study, the scholar transitions from the medieval notion of allegory – as the means to relate the immanent with the transcendent by rendering the obscure text of the Bible accessible, yet keeping the two spheres distinct and separate –, to Protestantism with its emphasis on the narrative continuity persisting between historical world and divine plan which has become part of the phenomenal realm, and finally to the Baroque era which eventually disrupts the illusion of such continuity with allegory acquiring – as result of the loss of meaning that the transcendent used to provide, and the consequent dichotomy between signifier and signified, convention and meaning, expression and explanation that have gradually fallen apart – its highest degree of ambiguity only to render what is apparently self-evident obscure; through the suppression of the transcendent sphere, secular and sacred realms have become unbridgeable (2013: 155-59).

himself for his son's lethal injury in battle: "[...] io che t'uccido!" (V.8/ l. 328). Adelchi instead views his sacrifice as partaking in the "lofty and noble deeds" that his heart had been commanding him (III.1/ ll. 84-85), and thus welcomes his end: "Ora per me di pace, / credilo o padre, è giunta; [...]" (V.8/ ll. 334-35). It is a duty that he is determined to fulfil as he had declared at the end of act three upon learning of his loyal friend's death, and imploring God's strength: "Oh Dio!... Dio che mi serbi / in vita ancor, che un gran dover mi lasci, / dammi la forza per compirlo" (III.9/ ll. 402-4). As we shall see again in *The Count of Carmagnola* (1820), the providential intercession does, consequently, not exclude the individual's freedom of will, nor does it exonerate from the ethical responsibility of choosing between good and evil.⁷¹¹ Following Benjamin's considerations in the *Critique of Violence* (1921), the violence to which Adelchi succumbs at the end of the tragedy can be qualified as "divine", that is: as

⁷¹¹ This is an essential point of Manzoni's humanism that he seems to share with Machiavelli (D'Alessandro 2008: 743) and more importantly with Vico, his esteemed historian next to Muratori; as a matter of fact, De Castris described Manzoni's "ideale storiografico" as being "una sintesi tra Muratori e Vico" (1965: 19). Vico and Manzoni alike insist on the relevance of human free will, which they intend to preserve. In the 1725 edition of the *New Science*, Vico explicitly mentions free will as one of the two chief "principles of truth" after "divine providence": "due gran principi: uno, che vi sia *provvidenza divina* che governi le cose umane; l'altro, che negli uomini sia *libertà d'arbitrio*" (Bk. I. i./ 172, my emphases). Regardless of the fact that history is orchestrated by the universal and eternal law that God presides, both Vico and Manzoni believe that it remains nonetheless a history made by men – this is, after all, how Vico explains the fact that one and the same universal law is so differently enacted by various societies at various times. Akin to Vico's *verum est factum* principle, Manzoni anchors truth in the tangible sphere of the phenomenological world where divine providence unfolds and acts which, according to Vico, is meant to protect the individuals from their egoistic strife, and prevent them from harm and evil. This consents both Vico and Manzoni to ensue their metaphysical claims from evidence provided within immanent history; as to the influence and evidence of Vico's thought in Manzoni's writings, see also Caserta's article (1973: 233-34). In his essay *Del romanzo storico* (1827-1850), Manzoni will justify the alliance of religion with history in its pursuit of truth: "una religione che, essendo verità, non può convenientemente adattarsi a variazioni arbitrarie, e ad aggiunte fantastiche" (*Opere* V.3/ 363-64) – a tenet that Manzoni will reiterate in his subsequent dialogue *Dell'invenzione* (1850); as to the chronology of the above-captioned works, it must be specified that while Manzoni began reconsidering the relationship of poetry and history in *Del romanzo storico* as early as in 1827, originally conceived as a letter to Goethe and as a response to his personal question as to whether history can be considered true, his essay was only written between 1848 and 1850, year of its publication; see Portinari detailed introduction to Manzoni's disquisitions (EN 14/ XIX-LXXIX). *Dell'invenzione* witnessed instead a shorter, yet nearly simultaneous gestational process as it was composed in 1841 and published also in 1850 (Caserta 1973: 249); the chronology of both works, which attest a significant shift in Manzoni's original aesthetic theory, speaks for an ideological affinity that conjoins these two writings; Portinari's introduction provides an in-depth overview of Manzoni's change of mind and its subsequently revised aesthetic theory as it is documented in his rich epistolary correspondence.

violence that "accepts" sacrifice, rather than "demanding" it as does instead "mythic violence" (1996: 250).

Adelchi's assimilation to Christ is rendered obvious by Anfrido in the central act three, shortly before expiring and thus exiting the scene as captive of the Franks: "[...] rammenta / che, regnante o caduto, è tale Adelchi, / che chi l'offende, *il Dio del cielo offende / nella più pura immagin sua*. [...]" (III.7/ ll. 276-79, my emphasis).

By declaring that any offense imparted to Adelchi is to be deemed an offense directed to God "in his purest image", Anfrido endows his royal friend with divine attributes coalescing at once the earthly with the heavenly king. Through Adelchi's intervention in the role of Christ, and the consequent intercession of divine violence, the doom and death that mythical violence had been sowing can be suspended:

ADELCHI [...]. Una *feroce*
 forza il mondo possiede, e fa nomarsi
 dritto: la man degli avi insanguinata
 seminò l'*ingiustizia*; i padri l'hanno
 coltivata col sangue; e omai la terra
 altra messe non dà. [...] (V.8/ ll. 354-59, my emphases)

Adelchi blames the "fierce force" ("feroce forza") that has seized the world and calls itself the "law" ("dritto") – where the word "dritto" in Italian means also "right", implying the idea of a rightful claim to enforce the law, and thus legitimize the violence that it perpetuates and the injustice that it promotes. Adelchi's reasoning displays a significant affinity with the notion of "Gewalt" whose legitimacy Benjamin seeks to clarify in his homonymous essay on *The Critique of Violence* (1921). The German word, in fact, that appears in the title of Benjamin's disquisition, can mean at once "force" and "power", locating – akin to Adelchi –

the idea of violence as intrinsic to the very notion of power.⁷¹² As Benjamin explains: "If mythic violence is *lawmaking*, divine violence is *law-destroying*" (1996: 249, my emphases).⁷¹³ The divine violence enacted through Adelchi's sacrifice serves to discontinue the law that detains the power and rules with force. The price paid to "destroy" such law is his own life. Although Benjamin explains that divine violence occurs without bloodshed, Adelchi's *sanguis Christi* is martyr blood in the name of mercy and salvation. Benjamin describes this form of violence "a moral means" for "just ends", and names it "natural law" in

⁷¹² More importantly, Benjamin juxtaposes "power" to "justice", the former being derivative of mythical, the latter of divine violence: "*Lawmaking is powermaking*, assumption of power and to that extent an immediate *manifestation of violence*. *Justice* is the principle of all divine endmaking, *power* the principle of all mythic lawmaking" (1996: 248, my emphases). Whereas divine violence justifies its (just) ends, mythical violence justifies its (violent) means. In his former drama, *The Count of Carmagnola* (1820) had already proven that justice is not possible among humans, it remains transcendent, that is: it can only be achieved in the realm of religion, not of law for it is never human reason, but God who can decide on the matter of justice (1996: 247); D'Addio has conducted in his monography an insightful analysis of Manzoni's work from the perspective of power and its justification in religious rather than political terms (2005: 149-78). While Manzoni was writing *Carmagnola*, he interrupted his tragedy, to compose a longer essay *Sulla morale cattolica* (1819) where the author asserts that only the Catholic Church is able to guarantee justice on earth. In the course of his disquisitions, Manzoni articulates the very dichotomy of law vs. divine that Benjamin will readdress, in his *Critique of Violence* (1921) a century later. In the second part of his essay, Manzoni writes: "Le leggi hanno un inconveniente necessario, ed è: che non possono creare un dovere senza far nascere un corrispondente diritto: bisogna quindi che per ottenere il loro effetto armino l'uomo contro l'uomo. La Religione impone dei doveri ad una parte, senza dar diritti all'altra; comanda p. es. al ricco di dare il superfluo, senza conferire al povero il diritto di ripeterlo, comanda all'offeso di perdonare, senza che l'offensore possa pretendere il perdono. Da questa differenza consegue che la Religione può prescrivere alcune cose bellissime ed utilissime che non possono prescrivere le leggi, perchè i diritti che conferirebbero con ciò sarebbero cagione di gravissimi mali, e la legge ne sarebbe inapplicabile, o distruttiva (*Opere* 535). Manzoni, who had published the first part of his essay in 1819, and meant to continue with the second part after *Carmagnola*, left his work incomplete as he set pen to his second historical drama, and between 1821 and 1827 composed his major poems *Marzo 1821* and *Cinque Maggio*, rewrote the *Pentecost*, and started his historical novel; on the exact chronology, see the notes to the essay (*Opere* 814). In *Adelchi*, earthly justice will remain once more out of reach, eventually claiming its right only beyond earthly life.

⁷¹³ In his deconstructionist commentary on Benjamin's opposition between "mythical and violent foundation of law in the Greek world" versus "divine violence in Judaism", Derrida explains that whereas the former remains "a privilege of kings, of the great or powerful", the latter is "the violence of God" (2002: 287). This point need be kept in mind when adopting Benjamin's theory in conjunction with Manzoni's Catholic creed and his Christian view of history. When Benjamin, in fact, asserts that mythic violence is "bloody" and thus stands in contrasts to divine violence which is "lethal *without* spilling blood" (1996: 249, my emphasis), Benjamin is speaking of course from a Judaic point of view that knows of no Jesus yet nailed at the cross and whose Messiah is yet to come.

contrast to "positive law", the violence of society and the state: "It [*sc.* natural law] perceives in the use of violent means to just ends no greater problem than a man sees in his 'right' to move his body in the direction of a desired goal" (1996: 237).⁷¹⁴ Adelchi's bloodshed is in Manzoni's Christian perspective the price of forgiveness: "[i]l prezzo del perdono" (l. 22) as he named it in the fifth of his *Sacred Hymns*, the "Pentecoste", that he was in the process of revisiting and rewriting while working on *Adelchi* – and before then more explicitly in the former hymn on Christ's "Passion": "Sì quel Sangue sovr'essi discenda; / Ma sia pioggia di mite lavacro: / Tutti errammo; di tutti quel sacro / Santo Sangue cancelli l'error" (ll. 85-88).⁷¹⁵ Adelchi's death both grants and gains pardon: it redeems the perpetrator and restores peace.⁷¹⁶ In this resides the messianic potential that Manzoni saw in history and juxtaposed to

⁷¹⁴ As Benjamin sets forth explaining: "According to this view (for which the terrorism in the French Revolution provided an ideological foundation), violence is a product of nature, as it were a raw material, the use of which is in no way problematical unless *force is misused for unjust ends*" (1996: 237, my emphases).

⁷¹⁵ Manzoni, who – in April 1812 when beginning to write in the month of Easter his first hymn titled "Resurrection" – had originally meant to complete a cycle of twelve sacred poems – eventually never went beyond his fifth and last one which, however, encompassed the author's spiritually most troubled and tormented period of life.

⁷¹⁶ *Adelchi* is, after all, a tragedy of forgiveness (with Ermengarda forgiving her former husband, King Charles forgiving Adelchi and honoring Anfrido, Desiderio asking the Longobard sovereign for mercy and forgiveness) and as such upholding an ethical canon that is characteristic of the New Testament whose protagonist Adelchi embodies. While I shall return on this point in more detail when comparing Adelchi to Carmagnola, I would like at this point to argue on this ground against Boggione's assumption of Manzoni's historical pessimism – "com'è del resto pessimistica l'intera tragedia" (2008: 141) – that became more prominent and permanent after the negative outcome of the insurrectional vicissitudes of 1821. Whereas Boggione is right in stating that following the disillusion of the March revolution Manzoni pictures history as inevitably and incurably dominated by the law of violence, it is also true – even more so in the second and final edition of the play – that the Christian ethics of reconciliation and redemption functions in the tragedy as counterpart to the adversities and afflictions that unfold instead in human history. It is not Benjamin, but Ricoeur in this context whose philosophy of forgiveness represents the most distinguishing trait of his approach to history, conferring it a more positive outlook if compared to Benjamin's historical theory of death and decay. Ricoeur posited a "spirit of forgiveness" that was at the heart of what he called the "eschatology of memory, and, in its wake, of history and of forgetting" (2004: 459). His plea to forgive the perpetrators without forgetting the victims, aimed at moving on with the past and making space for a better future. History, in this sense, functioned for Ricoeur as a "sepulcher" that activates a "work of mourning" which "separates the past from the present and makes way for the future" (2004: 499). Pointing to Klee's *Angelus Novus*, Ricoeur interpreted the paralyzing storm of the future as the inability of mankind to forgive and move on. To the extent that history is always *human* history, Ricoeur

myth, as much as Benjamin viewed history to be "on the side of this divine violence, and precisely in opposition to myth" (Derrida 2002: 290). Following Derrida's elucidation of Benjamin's essay, the German thinker claimed on this ground the inception of:

a "new historical era" [*ein neues geschichtliches Zeitalter*] that should follow the end of the mythic reign, the interruption of the magic circle of the mythic forms of law, the abolition of the *Staatsgewalt*, of the violence, power, or authority of the state. This new historical era would be a new **political era** [...]. (2002: 290; emphases in the original, bold added).

Hence a religious palingenesis that entails and ensues, in turn, a political one. Likewise in Manzoni's drama, Desiderio appoints Adelchi "Salvator d'un regno" (III.2/ l. 107) where the redemption (literally "salvation") of the King's secular kingdom coincides and coalesces with the renewal of God's sacred kingdom on earth.⁷¹⁷ Similarly, in the final version of the "Pentecost", Manzoni implored the descent of the Holy Spirit:

Noi t'imploriam! Placabile
Spirto discendi ancora,
Ai tuoi cultor propizio,
Propizio a chi t'ignora:
Scendi e ricrea: rianima
I cor nel dubbio estinti:
E sia divina ai vinti
Il Vincitor mercè. (ll. 89-96, my emphasis)

Akin to Christ's victory over mortality as a consequence of the triumph achieved through his passion over human trespasses, Adelchi remains despite his defeat the actual "vincitor" for

deemed it eventually to be in the responsibility of the citizen, rather than the historian, to come to term with the past (2004: 500): "It is up to the recipients of the historical text to determine, for themselves and on the plane of public discussion, the balance between history and memory" (2004: 499).

⁷¹⁷ The coalescence of religious and political rhetoric was a distinctive trait of the Italian Risorgimento and the religious patriotism that Manzoni, like Schiller before him, had advocated. In a letter to monsieur Henri Martin from 21 May 1866, Manzoni described the notion of faith and love of one's country as being naturally allied: "la foi et l'amour de la patrie, ces choses si naturellement amies", without helping himself to think of the French heroine Jeanne d'Arc where the ideals of "justice" and "human dignity" found their exemplary representation: "il pense à Jeanne d'Arc, car l'amour de la patrie ne peut être sincère et profond, qu'autant qu'il s'accorde avec la justice et le respect de la dignité humaine [...]" (L III/ no. 1428, 320).

his martyrdom has rendered him immortal. As his loyal friend had proclaimed already to King Charles: "Lo vinci tu di fortuna e di poter, ma d'alma nessuno mortale [...]" (III.7/ ll. 279-81). Adelchi is at once King, Messiah and Savior who redeems his people from their sins as subjugators and their subjugation to the Franks by pleading for mercy: "[...]. Mite, / quant'esser può, scevra d'insulto sia / la prigionia di questo antico, [...]" (V.8/ ll. 380-82) – and providing forgiveness: "Il tuo nemico / prega per te, morendo" (V.8/ ll. 392-93). Through the figure of Adelchi, Jesus descends once more among humans and enters the course of immanent history. "Even the story of the life of Christ", Benjamin explains in his *Trauerspiel* study, "supported the movement from history to nature which is the basis of allegory" (1977: 182). By placing Christ back into the natural phenomenological realm, Manzoni's drama achieves through this allegorical re-enactment of Jesus' passion a "shock" effect that aims at stripping reality naked and by taking off its façade, it "humiliates" it (1977: 183-84). "And that is what the allegorist does in this age drunk with acts of cruelty both lived and imagined" (1977: 185) concludes Benjamin. Through his death, Adelchi is able to restore a justice that – in the second revised edition of the play – Manzoni claimed no longer to be sought among mortals: "[...] non resta / che far torto, o patirlo. [...]" (V.8/ ll. 351-54, my emphasis). The Machiavellian dictum that did not appear in the drama's original version sanctions eventually the very inevitability and immanence of evil.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁸ See also D'Alessandro's comment on Adelchi's quote (2008: 750). In her insightful study, the scholar analyzes the impact of Machiavelli's thought on Manzoni's thinking and writing with particular emphasis on his second historical drama. D'Alessandro demonstrates the strong influence that Machiavelli exerted on Manzoni by moving beyond his dramatic experience and detecting more explicit references in his dialogue *Del romanzo storico* (1827-1850), and as far in the second edition of Manzoni's essay *Sulla morale cattolica* from 1855 – displaying a relationship towards the Italian historian and diplomat that was not always of consent, but also of critique (2008: 729). On Manzoni's borrowing from Machiavelli, see Annoni's earlier study, in particular pp. 173-179. Annoni had identified in the character of Svarto the emblematic Machiavellian figure embodying both the lion's fierceness (*feritas*) and the fox's slyness (*calliditas*) (1997: 162). In line with the personality of

Manzoni's decision to rewrite the last act of his tragedy was set off by his endeavours to reproduce historical reality as truthfully as possible: "Scartare tutto e rifar l'atto in modo più conforme alla storia" reads an autograph note added onto the first draft of his manuscript.⁷¹⁹ In a letter to Fauriel on October 3, 1821 – that is upon rewriting act five in September 1821 – the playwright had expressively lamented his dissatisfaction with the dramatic end-product: "ma tragédie d'Adelchi était terminée, sauf révision, il faut que je vous dise aussi que *je n'en suis pas content du tout*" (L I/ no. 153, 247-48), and reiterated a few months later in the *Notizie storiche*:

Per ciò che riguarda la *parte morale*, s'è cercato d'accomodare i discorsi de' personaggi all'azioni loro conosciute, e alle circostanze in cui si sono trovati. Il carattere però d'un personaggio, qual è presentato in questa tragedia, *manca affatto di fondamenti storici*: i disegni d'Adelchi, i suoi giudizi sugli avvenimenti, le sue inclinazioni, tutto il carattere in somma è *inventato di pianta*, e intruso fra i caratteri storici, con un'infelicità, che dal più difficile e dal più malevolo lettore non sarà, certo, così vivamente sentita come lo è dall'autore. (1980: 332, my emphases)

After signalling and sorting out those anachronistic references in the play that had resulted from his dramatic adaptation of the historical records, the "avvenimenti materiali e *certi* della storia" (1980: 331-2) of which Manzoni had availed himself, he points to the moral core of the story that one ought to find in the protagonist's character, but that he blames to lack "historical foundations".⁷²⁰ Yet Manzoni's anachronisms had met Goethe's approval and

this characters is also the etymology of his name that Annoni infers from the German "Scharz", that is: "gloomy" and "sinister", and thus juxtaposed in his calculative and self-interested personality that bounds him so tightly to the immanent sphere, to the idealized figure of Adelchi whose name Annoni derives from the German "adelig" (noble) akin to Anfrido (or Manfredi) as "fidelis" or trusted and loyal (1997: 172).

⁷¹⁹ See Becherucci's detailed introduction to the historical-critical edition of Manzoni's play (1998: XVIII).

⁷²⁰ Manzoni's acknowledgment that poetry had failed in its quest for moral – that is authentic – verity (as opposed to the tangible certainty of material factuality provided by chronicles and written records) of history, is the first decisive step towards the gradual dissolution of Manzoni's aesthetic equation of poetic *qua* moral truth. Undoubtedly, the major anachronism that Manzoni himself points out in the play's *Notizie storiche*, is the anticipated death of Adelchi who had, in reality, fled the Franks after Verona surrendered to their invasion and

admiration in his review of the tragedy, and had acclaimed them as a sign of true poetry:

"daß alle Poesie eigentlich in Anachronismen verkehre; alle Vergangenheit die wir heraufrufen, um sie nach unsrer Weise den Mitlebenden vorzutragen", and even justifies the historian's right to poetic alteration by endowing the educated reader of the responsibility to recognize what is not accurately historical: "der Poet mag hierüber mit seinem Gewissen übereinkommen, der Leser aber muß gefällig durch die Finger blicken" (*Theilnahme* 1827: XLI).⁷²¹ As a matter of fact, Goethe had identified in the tragedy's coalescence of history

sought originally refuge in Constantinople: "Adelchi abbandonò Verona, che s'arrese; e di là si rifugiò a Costantinopoli, dove, accolto onorevolmente, si fermò: dopo vari anni, ottenne il comando d'alcune truppe greche, sbarcò con esse in Italia, diede battaglia ai Franchi, e rimase ucciso" (1980: 331). Under this light, the historical Adelchi divests Manzoni's dramatic protagonist of his martyr-like valence.

⁷²¹ Cf. Italian translation by Ugoni: "Bisogna confessare, che ogni poesia converte i soggetti che tratta in anacronismi. Se riproduci il passato per mostrarlo ai contemporanei vestito nella nostra foggia, devi concedere all'antico maggior coltura che non ebbe. Però la coscienza del poeta diasi pace, e il lettore chiuda un occhio" (Grüning 1988: 182, my emphasis); once more the Italian translation is too free to convey at the end the specific role that Goethe attributed to the educated reader to actively recognize the anachronisms, and acknowledge them as poetic device. It must be added to this preference that Goethe expressed for the insertion of anachronism in a work of art, that the German poet disliked any reference that literature would make to present reality, and any sentiments of revolts such allusions would be able to stir and instill. He disapproved, for instance, of the recent articles published in *Le Globe* that he used to read, as vehicles to foster political enthusiasm and perhaps even a revolution: "Die Herren Globisten schreiben keine Zeile, die nicht politisch wäre, das heißt, die nicht auf den heutigen Tag einzuwirken trachtete. Sie sind eine gute, aber eine gefährliche Gesellschaft [...]. Sie können und wollen ihre Absicht nicht verleugnen: den absoluten Liberalismus allgemein zu verbreiten. Deshalb verwerfen sie alles Gesetzliche, Folgerechte als stationär und schlendrianisch [...]. Das gibt ein Beben im Innern, ein Schwanken im Äußern, das sehr unbehaglich empfunden wird, indem man sich vor lauter Freiheit erst recht befangen fühlt" (*Gedenkausgabe* XIV/ 868-69, my emphases). It comes, therefore, less of a surprise that Goethe did not dwell too long onto the contemporary historical critique voiced by *Adelchi*'s first chorus, which was obvious enough to the Austrian censorship to be asked to suppress those verses most overtly citing contemporary history. Instead, he limited to acknowledging in his review the felicitous concomitance and concurrence of past and present circumstances: "so sind die beiden Chöre die das Trauerspiel Adelchi beleben, gleichfalls wirksam, um das Unübersehbare vergangener und augenblicklicher Zustände dem Blick des Geistes vorzuführen" (1827: XLIII-XLIV). Goethe's dismissal of any kind of political changes that would be brought forth by insurrectional force stemmed from his disappointments of the aftermath witnessed with the French Terror where the notion of freedom had led to a ferocious revolution and, in turn, again to a tyrannical form of oppression. In this regard, Manzoni shared – not only with Goethe, but with many other intellectuals of his time – a more moderate line of progress, one that would uphold an idea of liberty "che consiste nell'essere il cittadino, per mezzo di giuste leggi e di stabili istituzioni, assicurato, e contro violenze private, e contro ordini tirannici del potere [...]" (EN XV/ 228). This is how the once Jacobinian author will express his critique against the French revolution in his late years in a comparative essay on *La rivoluzione francese del 1789* that he began to write after the Italian independence between 1862 and 1864, was interrupted in 1868 and published only posthumously in 1889. Akin to Manzoni, Rosmini had before him warned against the absolutism, or exclusive power of "civil society" that eventually ensued from the French terror after the

("untadelhaft Wahres") and poetry ("dichterisch"), fact and fiction, reality and imagination, the ideal conciliation of aesthetic and ethical claim ("das sittlich ästhetisch Geforderte") that only Schiller had accomplished before him:

[...] so findet er auch unerlässlich, daß das historische Element, in welchem er *dichterisch* wirkt und handelt, gleichfalls *untadelhaft Wahres*, durch Documente Bestätigtes, Unwidersprechliches enthalte. Seine Bemühung muß also dahin gehen das *sittlich ästhetisch* Geforderte mit dem wirklich unausweichlich Gegebenen völlig in Einklang zu bringen. Nach unserer Ansicht hat er dieß nun vollkommen geleistet, indem wir zugeben was man anderwärts wohl zu tadeln gefunden hat, daß er nämlich Personen aus einer *halbbarbarischen Zeit* mit solchen zarten Gesinnungen und Gefühlen ausgestattet habe, welche nur die höhere *religiöse* und sittliche Bildung *unserer Zeit* hervorzubringen fähig ist. (*Theilnahme* 1827: XLI, my emphases)⁷²²

people had rebelled against the despotism of the king and monarchy: "il dispotismo della stessa società civile, che è il più radicale e il più fatale di tutti, ed esiste allorquando sia invalsa la dottrina oltre misura ingiusta e tirannica, che la società civile possa tutto, ch'ella assorbsca tutte le altre società, ch'ella annienti tutte le individualità e le località, che debba esistere ella sola, e che tutto il resto esista precariamente per una grazia e per un favor suo" (1952: 276); on Rosmini's political thought, see also Botto's detailed study (1992), and the more recent contribution by Dossi (2007: 40-43).

⁷²² Contrary to the Romantics' blend of art and religion, Goethe welcomed Manzoni's inclusion of the religious component in his works of art. He viewed, in fact, Manzoni's religion as one rooted in human ethics which he had so highly valued in his poetics since he first read the *Sacred Hymns* where "Religion und Poesie, auf ihrem ernsten tiefern Grund die sämtliche Welt [vereinigt]" (*Werke* XX/ 423). In his review of the hymns, first published in *Über Kunst und Altherthum* from 1820, Goethe emphasized precisely the lack of dogmatism in Manzoni's creed: "Der Verfasser erscheint als *Christ ohne Schwärmerey*, als römisch-katholisch ohne Bigotterie, als Eiferer ohne Härte"; see *Goethe Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 20, p. 423; henceforth quoted as "Werke". Goethe thus recognized that Manzoni pursued through his Catholicism a "useful" goal in his works: "die katholische Religion [ist] ihm vorteilhaft, aus der viele Verhältnisse poetischer Art hervorgehen" (*Gedenkausgabe* XXIV/ 265) – so Eckermann in his report on their conversation from July 21, 1827. Manzoni's religion performed and pursued a chiefly "humanizing" function on the individual that Goethe valued highly. This is the synthesis of ethics and aesthetics that reminded him of his once beloved friend Schiller, whose unexpected death in 1805, left a vacuum behind that only Manzoni was able to fill. It is, therefore, not a coincidence that Goethe compares Manzoni with no other but Schiller, in particular with regard to their dramatic readaptation of history. Eckermann reports on 23 July 1827, the esteem towards both writers that Goethe communicated during one of their conversations: "*Manzoni* ist ein gebornener Poet, so wie *Schiller* einer war. Doch unsere Zeit ist so schlecht, daß dem Dichter im umgebenden menschlichen Leben keine brauchbare Natur mehr begegnet. Um sich nun aufzuerbauen, griff Schiller zu zwei großen Dingen: zu Philosophie und Geschichte; Manzoni zur Geschichte allein" (*Gedenkausgabe* XXIV/ 267) ("*Manzoni* è un poeta nato, come lo era Schiller. E tuttavia il nostro tempo è così gramo che nella vita umana attorno a lui il poeta non riesce più a trovare un soggetto accettabile. Per elevarsi Schiller ha fatto dunque ricorso a due grandi sostegni: alla filosofia e alla storia; Manzoni soltanto alla storia" [EN XXIX.1/ 497]). Manzoni who had originally admired Schiller and his work, will soon distance himself from the German playwright. He, in fact, reconsidered his stance already when writing *The Count of Carmagnola* (1820) as I will illustrate when addressing Manzoni's drama theory on the moral value of tragedy in the section that analyzes his first historical play.

It was precisely the attribution of present-time precepts and pursuits to a medieval character that Goethe had so highly valued, which conversely displeased Manzoni who blamed his imagination ("J'ai imagine") for relying on facts that he had assumed as being reliable ("que j'ai cru fondées"), but that had actually been lacking historical grounds:

J'ai *imaginé* le caractère du protagoniste sur des données historiques que j'ai *cru* fondées, dans un temps où je ne connaissais pas encore assez l'aisance avec la quelle on traite l'histoire j'ai bâti sur ces données, je les ai étendues, et je me suis aperçu *qu'il n'y avait rien en tout cela d'historique* lorsque mon travail était avancé. (L I/ no. 153, 248)⁷²³

If Manzoni's friend Ermes Visconti had assumed that the partial and patchy historical accounts on the Longobardian domination in Italy and their relationship with the local population would have benefited the "profoundly historical" conception of the tragedy: "ideata su un piano più profondamente storico e nuovo, trattandosi di sviluppare molte cose poco conosciute",⁷²⁴ it led essentially to an idealization of the dramatic protagonist who had not encountered the author's favor nor fondness – and who Goethe would later describe "un caractère de l'invention de Manzoni" (EN 29.1/ 431) – only for its historical credibility and plausibility to be dismissed altogether by his author.

Drawn in his interpretation of the past by contemporary historical concerns, Manzoni inevitably envisioned his medieval hero as advocate of the Italian Risorgimento, and endowed him with a national enthusiasm that appeared alien and anachronistic to the Middle

⁷²³ In his letter to Fauriel, Manzoni spoke, in this context, of his friend writer Grossi whose historical "roman poétique" he upheld as exemplary: "Il a inventé les faits et les personnages principaux sur les bases de l'histoire, et il rendra avec le plus de précision la partie historique" (L I/ no. 153, 250). It was precisely this inclusion of invention based on historical accuracy at which Manzoni aimed. He will give his aesthetic ideals one last chance with the historical novel – after *I promessi sposi*, he will definitely disjoint poetry from history.

⁷²⁴ See *Carteggio di Alessandro Manzoni*, vol. 1, no. 250, p. 504.

Ages.⁷²⁵ In the aftermath of the disillusioned aspirations to freedom that had followed the unsuccessful Carbonari revolts, Adelchi's personality was reshaped by resigning his former part of "eroe guerriero" and partaking, instead, in the role of "eroe avvilito" (Annoni 1997: 182). In the process of revising his drama in the fall of 1821, Manzoni decided to remove from the dramatic action any allusions to and alterations brought about by present history that were, consequently, relegated to the tragedy's first chorus with which act three ends. Despite the numerous verses that the Austrian censorship requested Manzoni to eventually expunge from the chorus due to references deemed too overtly reminiscent of Italy's current political circumstances and national resentments, patriotic overtones remained nonetheless audible to the receptive ears of the Risorgimento revolutionaries.⁷²⁶ It is precisely through the association that the present establishes with the past that the chorus derives its allegorical connotation. This occurs both on the contextual and the metatextual level. On the contextual level, the ruins portrayed in the incipient verse "Dagli atrii muscosi, dai Fori cadenti" (III.9/ l. 1) are an admonishment to the reader that the glory now reduced to

⁷²⁵ Adelchi had originally voiced his anachronistic aspirations in the desire to merge the Longobards and Italic people into one community. It had been Manzoni's attempt, in fact, to emphasize the hostility rather than harmony that historical reports had thus far assumed between the invaders and the indigenous people – a theory that he had been keen to dismantle without predicting, however, the consequences. As Manzoni was trying to prove the commonly accepted thesis of peaceful coexistence wrong, he intended to identify in the locals' enmity the actual cause of the Longobards' weakness and their loss to the Franks; on *Adelchi's* "matrice risorgimentale" see Becherucci's extensive introductory comment (1998: XLIV-XLVIII). Eventually, in his *Discorso* – written after the second and final edition of the play – Manzoni will come to realize the impossibility to provide an ultimate answer to the question of what relationship the Longobards did truly entertain with the Italic people: "Da queste ultime osservazioni, si può francamente concludere (poca cosa pur troppo) che l'opinione dell'unità politica de' Longobardi e de' Romani chiude ogni strada, e a conoscere, e anche a cercare quali fossero le vere relazioni tra i due popoli" (1980: 506). Manzoni's conclusion is also the acknowledgment of his own limitations as a historian, more interested in exploring the depths and crevices of "human nature" rather than the mere facts and implications of the historical event: "qui si sente subito, che la scoperta di quell'errore non è tanto una *cognizione* quanto una sorgente di *curiosità* per chi nella storia vuol vedere in quante maniere diverse la *natura umana* si pieghi e s'adatti alla società" (*Discorso* 506, my emphases).

⁷²⁶ The chorus was reduced from 84 to 66 verses; cf. Becherucci for the original unabridged text (1998: 309).

a "misero orgoglio d'un tempo che fu" (III.9/ l. 12) need be remembered and restored. This is how the chorus sets on, only to oppose the image of this past grandeur to the present crisis where the ruins act as signifier of both former magnificence and current misery. It is precisely from the juxtaposition of these contrasting images that allegory ensues its ambivalence, while the ruins themselves as token of decay point to that immanent realm of nature, and its cycle of life and death where allegory ultimately resides. On the metatextual level, the entire chorus scene – more so in the original than in the final abridged version that was cut down by nearly twenty verses – is a citation of and a commentary on Manzoni's contemporary history. The third strophe, for instance, later completely expunged portrays – following the thread of bygone glorious times spun already in the introductory lines – what was once a triumphant Roman Empire reduced to a "flock" "plundered" since its downfall by Germanic tribes:

È il volgo gravato del nome *latino*,
 Che un'empia vittoria conquise e tien chino,
 Sul suol che i trionfi degli avi portò;
 È il volgo che inerte, qual *gregge predato*,
 Dall'*Erulo* avaro nel *Goto* spietato,
 Nel *Winilo* errante dal *Greco* passò. (III/ ll. 13-18, my emphases)

While I will elucidate the notion of allegory as historical citation in my forthcoming analysis of Manzoni's first tragedy, suffice it here to remark that it served a chiefly critical purpose. Here Manzoni's invective is voiced loudly against the subduers who perpetuated the captivity of the land they invaded: "A frangere il giogo che i miseri aggrava, / Un motto dal labbro dei forti bastava; / E il labbro dei forti proferto non l'ha" (III/ ll. 70-73), and against the very "flock" that was led astray by false promises and foreign persecution: "Stringetevi cheti l'oppresso all'oppresso, / Di vostre speranze parlate sommessò, / *Dormite* fra sogni giocondi

d'error" (III/ ll. 76-78, my emphasis).⁷²⁷ The flock's "dormancy" admonished by the chorus points to an inertia and an inhibition that stands in sharp contrast with the martial invocation that Manzoni had articulated in *Marzo 1821* – a civil poem written in times when hopes for national liberation had just rekindled: "O stranieri, nel proprio retaggio / Torna Italia, e il suo suolo riprende" (ll. 41-42).⁷²⁸ The more resigned and restrained disposition that overshadowed the failed Carbonari insurrection emerges sublimated in Adelchi's personality which stands in sharp contrast against the "condottiero" figure of Carmagnola.⁷²⁹ Adelchi's

⁷²⁷ For the original draft of the chorus, see Becherucci (1998: 309-312).

⁷²⁸ "La Tirannia, che Libertà si noma" (*Poesie* 113/ l. 126) is how Manzoni described in the fourth "canto" of an unpublished poem titled *Il trionfo della libertà* the false promise of freedom promoted by foreign invaders. Manzoni wrote his poem in 1801, right after the successful battle of Marengo – that witnessed the victory of the Frenchs over the Austrians, and their consequent expulsion from the Italian peninsula by the Napoleonic troupes – when still young and animated by Jacobinian fervor. Manzoni's hopes would be bitterly disappointed after realizing the hegemony imposed by the French empire, lamenting in *April 1814* the tributes that the Italians were forced to pay to the foreign administration: "Ma che monta per Dio? Terra che l'oro / Porta costretta a lo straniero, è schiava" (*Poesie* 167/ ll. 38-39) – the civil poem that the author had originally written after the Austrians had expelled the French from the peninsula and renewed, in turn, the aspiration for freedom, was eventually never published following the disillusion of a renewed foreign domination. The ode *Marzo 1821* was, instead, composed after beginning the tragedy's second act at the end of January 1821, and shortly before starting his new writing project with the novel *Fermo e Lucia* at the end of April 1821 (Becherucci 1998: XVI); for a comparison between ode and tragedy, see Margiotta (1956: 47-48).

⁷²⁹ The analogy between Manzoni's eponymous protagonist and the Spanish Marquis featured in Schiller's *Don Carlos* (1787/ 1801) originally suggested by De Sanctis (1953: 106), and later by Kostka who, in his study, describes Adelchi a "figure shaped after Schiller's Marquis Posa" (1997: 25) on the ground of their shared and strong idealism, appears too generic as it overlooks two major aspects of distinction between the two characters. The first distinctive trait is that Adelchi lacks Posa's activism and enthusiasm – he is not really fond of war ("ADELCHI Odio l'aurora che m'annunzia il giorno / della battaglia [...] [I.2/ ll. 177-78), and attempts instead to convince his father to compromise with the Franks and come to a peaceful resolution: "ADELCHI sgombriam le terre de' Romani; amici / s'iam d'Adriano: ei lo desia [I.2/ ll. 190-91]). Note, however, that in the original draft of the second scene of act one – that is, in the wake of the rekindled hopes for national emancipation that had ensued from the successful insurrections for freedom first in the Kingdom of Naples in 1820 followed by the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1821 – Adelchi was still portrayed as pugnacious and proactive prince that suggests to arm his subjects in a war against the Franks and the Pope: "ADELCHI [...]. Gregge di schiavi / Spesso tremendo, inutil sempre, in fido / Eterno stuolo di guerrier devoti / Trasmutarli, sta in noi. Togliamo i ceppi / Da quelle mani, e rendiam loro i brandi" (ll. 317-21, my emphases [Becherucci 1998: 28]); see on this point also Filosa (1973: 115), and Annoni (1997: 179). In contrast to his predecessor Carmagnola, Adelchi of the second revised edition of the play is the disillusioned result of the yet fervent zeal for independence brought forth in the wake of *March 1821* when Manzoni could still invoke the fight for freedom: "Forti, armati de' propri dolori, / I tuoi figli son sorti a pugar. / Oggi, o forti, sui volti baleni / Il furor delle menti segrete: / Per l'Italia si pugna, vincete!" (ll. 87-91). The second difference is that Adelchi's death opens up a much brighter perspective than Posa's, simply because Schiller lacked that Cristian faith that helped Manzoni rely his trust onto a better future.

patient and peaceful suffering culminates in the tragedy's concluding lines when the protagonist invokes the "King of kings" to whom, betrayed and forsaken, he offers himself in sacrifice: "O Re de' re *tradito* / da un tuo Fedel, dagli altri abbandonato!... / vengo alla pace tua: l'anima stanca / accogli" (V.10/ ll. 401-04). If in the final verses we are reminded of the *Pentecoste's* hope-filled faith that Manzoni had envisioned for the moribund ("Brilla nel guardo errante / Di chi sperando muor" [ll. 143-44]), the motif of treason which had gained major emphasis in the revised edition of the play, had been already thematized in its Christian allegorical disguise in *The Count of Carmagnola* (1820) where it first originated – albeit devoid yet of the collective connotation witnessed in *Adelchi*, while resting on a more individual and thus circumscribed level. In this regard, *Adelchi* marks the culminating stage of development of Manzoni's religious creed on which he had begun to reflect and to elaborate since his *Sacred Hymns* – a Catholicism that encountered even the favor of an agnostic like Goethe who had praised it, precisely in relation to *Adelchi's* final scene of demise, as "naïf" and "virtuous".⁷³⁰

At the end of the tragedy, both Posa and Carlos die and tyranny is reinstated with the futile sacrifice of two people; *Adelchi* dies too, but forgiveness is obtained on both fronts and the last scene leaves space for a prospect of peace to come both in this world and beyond.

⁷³⁰ The complete quote reads: "Il y a longtemps que j'avais connu son âme et sa manière de sentir dans ses *Inni Sacri*. C'est un catholique naïf et vertueux" (EN 29.1/ 431) For Goethe, *Adelchi* had marked the highpoint of a success that he had intuited since he first read Manzoni's *Sacred Hymns* in 1818 (see Gaetano Cattaneo's letter to Goethe from Nov. 25, 1818 [EN 29.1/ 385]), and first reviewed them in the 1820 issue of his literary journal *Über Kunst und Altherthum* on the subject "Klassiker und Romantiker in Italien, sich heftig bekämpfend". The same review was included again with some additions in the Jena edition of Manzoni's works from 1827.

4.2.3. Summary

The aesthetization, and thus allegorization, of history that Goethe and Manzoni respectively undertake through their dramas features in both cases history in war with and in defiance of time. As Manzoni writes in the introduction to his historical novel: "L'Historia si può veramente deffinire una *guerra illustre* contro il Tempo, perché togliendoli di mano gl'anni suoi prigionieri, anzi già fatti cadaueri, li richiama in vita, li passa in rassegna, e li schiera di nuovo in battaglia" (2002: 5, my emphasis). Goethe's ambition to write history, and historical dramas, as a way of dealing with the past and its specters that project themselves into the present, situates itself in this perspective, albeit with a different ethical claim. If, for Goethe, to forget the past meant to *fictionalize* it, for Manzoni, to forget the past meant to *face* it – where forgetting the past corresponded for the Italian author to the Benjaminian mode of relating to history anew, of rereading and rewriting it. Unlike Goethe, for Manzoni – as for Walter Benjamin – forgetting implied the simultaneous act of remembering those who had fallen into oblivion. In order to illustrate the discrepancy that distances Goethe's from Manzoni's stance, I would like to conclude this analysis with a brief cross-reference to Jacques Derrida by means of an analogy that links Benjamin's disquisitions on history to the discourse on "hauntology" that the French philosopher developed in his work *Spectres of Marx* (1993). Akin to his German predecessor, in fact, Derrida charged the past with a meaningfulness that reached into the present by means of what he named the "haunting spectres" of the past. As he pointed out: "the spirit comes by *coming back* [revenant], it figures *both* a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself,

again and again" (1994: 10, emphases in the original).⁷³¹ Like Benjamin, Derrida underlined the relevance of confronting oneself with the past for how dreadful it might be. The spectres, in this guise, would seek – Derrida explains – their emancipation from a past (and thus a history) that had not yet rendered them justice, and their consequent redemption in the present: a "messianic" potential that resides in the future trajectory described by the past as it projects itself into the present. Unlike Benjamin, however, Derrida's "use of the word 'messianic' bears no relation to any messianistic tradition" (1999: 250, emphasis in the original).⁷³² Derrida argues that in order to liberate the specters from the temporal limbo that detains them, one must "speak *to the* specter", in other words, confront and converse with them: "to speak with it, therefore especially *to make it or let a spirit speak*" (1994: 11, emphases in the original). Unlike Manzoni, who did not shy away from lending the ghosts of the past the voice of which historical memory had deprived them, Goethe preferred not to

⁷³¹ In his study of Derrida's theory of hauntology, Hardcastle summarizes the crux of his thought by comparing the "ghosts" to "traces of a past that continue to intervene in contemporary perception. While these historical ghosts may elide knowledge, they continue to provide new meaning for the past and transform the meaningfulness of the present" (2005: 129). This is true also for Benjamin for whom the past reaches into the present and by doing so transforms both its own and the present's meaning.

⁷³² In his article on "Ghostly Demarcations", Derrida is arguing against Fredric Jameson's claim that Derrida altogether assimilated "that very conception of the messianic to which [he] appeals at the climax of his book on Marx" (Jameson 1999: 63). Derrida in his objection asserts: "I do not believe, as Hamacher and Jameson *do*, that the continuity between the Benjaminian motif and what I am attempting is determinant" (1999: 249, emphasis in the original). As he points out: "the interpretation of the messianic that I propose does not [...] much resemble Benjamin's. It no longer has *any* essential connection with what messianism may be taken to mean, that is, at least two things: on the one hand, the memory of a determinate historical revelation, whether Jewish or Judeo-Christian, and, on the other, a relatively determinate messiah-figure" (1999: 251, emphasis in the original). Derrida thus prefers to speak, instead, of a "messianicity *without* messianism" (1999: 250, emphasis in the original). One would assume that in view of this agnostic, if not atheistic, connotation of the messianic, Goethe's philosophy of history could have been closer to Derrida's notion of the messianic than to Benjamin's. In contrast to Derrida, however, Goethe prefers not to deal with the specters of the past that evoke death and dread. Goethe's very understanding of history was devoid of a teleological and eschatological trajectory, and was thus not projected towards the future. Goethe's phenomenological acceptance of history was cyclical like his pantheistic notion of nature: it manifested itself in the organic and never ending cycle of life following death. In contrast, in fact, to Benjamin's allegorical theory – rooted in this very notion of nature-history – Goethe viewed nature's transcendent quality as life asserting rather than in the Baroque and Benjaminian terms of death and decay.

conjure them back into life. Instead, he opted to disguise his own historical present in the symbolic appearance of past times: the Middle Ages. In contrast to Manzoni, whose poetry had been originally directed towards the pursuit of truth, Goethe's aesthetization of history drew upon its symbolic outlook or embellishment – as Benjamin would put it: upon the image of its "beauty as a symbol" (1977: 176).

V. CONCLUSION

The study carried out thus far portrayed the re-appropriation, and reinterpretation of myth and history within the larger picture of national formation. Through the enactment of mythical, and subsequently historical narratives, the collective memory of the community had been able to renew its temporality on stage, and reinforce national awareness. As Karl Marx described it in his essay on *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852): "Men make their own history" by "fashion[ing] the material handed down by the past" (1943: 23). According to Marx, this retrospective contemplation occurs "in such epochs of revolutionary crisis", in other words "[a]t the very time when they seem to be engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things" when "they are eager to press the spirits of the past into their service, borrowing the names of the dead, reviving old war-cries, dressing up in traditional costumes, that they may make a braver pageant in the newly-staged scene of universal history (1943: 23).⁷³³ Both myth and history had partaken in this process of national claim and construction in which the theater had acted, in Bhabha's terms, as "national stage" where "diverse acts and actors" had performed "the imagined world of the nation" (1994: 158). In the course of this process, the *cultural* myth of the nation had been gradually transfigured into a *political* myth which was informed by militant and revolutionary fervor. This was particularly true for Germany and Italy where the binomial Romanticism and Nationalism had gone hand in hand.

It is possible to trace, at this point, a brief line of development. At first, myth had served as narrative device, as rhetorical surrogate for national identity, functioning with

⁷³³ It is indicative that Marx wrote his essay after 1848 after Europe forfeited its cosmopolitan aspirations succumbing to its demise, and after the consciousness of a common tradition grounded in the classic value of *humanitas* vanquished beyond the nationalistic ambitions to power of old and new states.

Foscolo and Kleist as self-signifying entity. During the process, however, of secularization myth acquired the increasingly negative connotation of fable or falsehood, and was consequently redefined in opposition to the truth content of history. The latter, eventually, asserted its primacy over myth as Schiller and Pellico demonstrated in their dramas. In the visual arts, this paradigmatic shift was symptomatically illustrated by Hayez's paintings which portrayed, against their Medieval and Renaissance background, scenes detracted from a patriotic past which were meant to foster the Romantic strife for national emancipation.⁷³⁴ After forfeiting its Christian *telos*, the individual became in charge of history in the attempt to control its arbitrariness and the contingency that had suddenly befallen the notion of time. As Blumenberg remarked: "man had been promoted to the status of the subject of history" (1985: 52).⁷³⁵ Upon presiding over history, the individual did no longer turn his gaze to a mythical time, but rather viewed his own historical present as standpoint from which to restore the past and relate it to posterity. Absolved from the theological framework that justified the continuity of history, past and future were henceforth no longer subject to a predetermined unfolding and development, but were informed by a reinterpretation, and therefore by the attribution of new meaning. Ricoeur described this process of historical reconstruction as one in which the significance that had been originally assigned to the past resulted constantly subject to change: "Si, en effet, les faits sont ineffaçables [...], le sens de

⁷³⁴ In his comment to Hayez's historical paintings, Sacchi sanctions this decline of myth in the pervasive assertion of history: "Finalmente le Veneri, gli Adoni, gli Amori, le Minerve, le Psiche, e i Ganimedi, le barbe venerande e spaventose di Giove e di Plutone, in fine tutte le piazze e laide avventure della mitologia, sono sbandite dalla savia pittura del secolo XIX, e più non vengono a infestare le sale delle belle arti, a contaminare d'incresciute ricordanze, di sconce avventure, i sensi e i cuori di coloro che amano consolarsi coi cari ricreamenti del bello [...]" (2006: 9).

⁷³⁵ See also Alt's study on Goethe's and Schiller's dramas (2008: 157-58).

ce qui est arrivé n'est pas fixé une fois pour toutes; outre que des événements du passé peuvent être racontés et interprétés autrement, la charge morale liée au rapport de dette à l'égard du passé peut être alourdie ou allégée" (2000: 496).

This emphasis on present history had been driven by the very urgency of national interest and independence.⁷³⁶ Relegated outside the realm of immanent contingency, myth would eventually reclaim its allegiance to history only in its allegorical disguise along with a gradual process that witnessed the transition from its original demythization – as Foscolo and Kleist had undertaken it – to its opposite remythization in either Christian and Pagan terms – as it had been respectively brought about by Manzoni and Goethe. For Goethe and Manzoni alike, all history was first and foremost human history, that is, it featured the individual as its chief agent and actor in the struggle to assert himself against the dialectic relationship entertained between fate and freedom. In view of the dramatic scope dictated by this historical realism, the Aristotelian unities were no longer deemed adequate for a theater that could not expect the spectator to undergo anymore an experience of mere catharsis and contemplation, but urged him conversely to concrete action in order to willfully influence the unfolding of history. It is indicative, in this regard, that Nietzsche will introduce *The Use and Abuse of History* (1874) with a quote by Goethe to exemplify his own pragmatic understanding of and approach to history: "We would serve history only so far as it *serves life*" (1964: 3, my emphasis).

⁷³⁶ Sengle observes how this secularized attitude would sanction "das Auseinanderfallen des mythischen und geschichtlichen Erlebens, deren Zusammenhang seit Herder die innere Quelle des Geschichtsdramas gewesen war" (1969: 156).

Within this scope, the final allegorization of history pursued the Benjaminian objective of criticizing and questioning established meanings. In its rejection of classicism and the rules imposed by the traditional Aristotelian dramatic theory, Romantic criticism intended to judge the work of art for itself. In this respect, Benjamin identified an affinity between the historical drama of the Baroque and the 19th century, coining the term of "romantic *Trauerspiel*" (1977: 82, *passim*; emphasis in the original) that he employed to refer equally to the Spanish 17th century dramatist Calderón, and the 18th century German playwright Schiller.

After Goethe and Manzoni, that is, after the individual had succumbed to a historical necessity that had imposed itself upon men in all its irrationality and indifference, the historical tragedy was destined to experience a gradual dissolution driven forth by the prevailing bourgeois drama which began to emerge in both countries, replacing the former historical realism with a new form of "naturalism" that Germany and Italy alike had inherited from the influence that was being exerted in Europe from France. Myth's and later history's idealized protagonists, who had once inspired the character dramas of the late 18th and the early 19th century, were to be replaced by the more collective and comprehensive nucleus of the family in which the private sphere was to ultimately substitute and suppress altogether the political and patriotic motif that had so eminently inspired the preceding historical plays.⁷³⁷

The upheavals that distinguished the years 1848/1849 and before that, the European revolutions and repressions that marked the year 1830/1831, had brought along with the collapse of the old aspirations for freedom and independence, the crisis of established values.

⁷³⁷ As Schröder explains: "mit dem Verlust des Individuums läuft der Verlust der Geschichte einher; der Glaube an eine sinnvolle, zusammenhängende oder gar fortschreitende menschliche Geschichte und damit die authentische Möglichkeit, Geschichtsdramen zu schreiben, gehen verloren" (1994: 14).

Among these values was undoubtedly that of man as individual able to act upon and impact the course of history. The disillusion and distrust in the human subject and in history led, in turn, to questioning both the individual and history itself inaugurating the end of the Romantic historical tragedy that would find a new form of expression in the parodistic plays of the uprising bourgeois drama (Schröder 1994: 13-14). Quoting once more from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852): "upon the stage of universal history, all great events and personalities reappear in one fashion or another [...], on the first occasion, they appear as *tragedy*; on the second, as *farce*" (1943: 23, my emphases).⁷³⁸

The disillusioned optimism, in fact, that had distinguished the positivistic belief in historical progress experienced, for instance, its dramatic enactment in Italy through Giocosa's comedies, and the critique that Praga articulated in his dramas against the double morality of the bourgeoisie; while in Germany the historical plays would unfold into a new dramatic form that featured, for example, Max Frisch's and Dürrenmatt's parodies.⁷³⁹ The influence, in turn, exerted by the French naturalism had brought along a two-fold consequence. On the one hand, it led to the rejection of the Romantic mythical drama privileging instead a historical realism, in particular after the past (be it ancient or medieval) had been dismissed as too legendary and mythical (Sengle 1969: 155-156). The crisis that with the European revolts of the 1800s had caused a profound mistrust in history would remain unresolved and eventually lead to a dismissal of the historical drama as national

⁷³⁸ In the above-captioned citation, Marx is actually commenting on a quote by Hegel that he completes with his personal remarks on the shift from an originally dramatic to a subsequently farcical reenactment of history.

⁷³⁹ Sengle reports in his study the emergence in Germany of the so-called "historische Lustspiel": the historical comedy as a new genre that was first attested in 1837 (1969: 182-183).

narrative.⁷⁴⁰ On the other hand, the emphasis that Naturalism had posed on the social subject, the collectivity and the masses, shifted the focus of attention from the individual to the people reinforcing the collective sense of identity and imagination, and reiterating the feeling of national belonging that would eventually culminate in the formation of the nation states of Italy in 1861 and, a decade later, of Germany in 1871.

⁷⁴⁰⁷⁴⁰ Sengle exemplifies this new attitude, in particular, through Hebbel and his dramatic production.

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