
**THE POLITICS OF HOSPITALITY AND STATE BELONGING IN
HEINE'S *DEUTSCHLAND. EIN WINTERMÄRCHEN***

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*Man of misery, whose land have I lit on now?
What are they here—violent, savage, lawless?
or friendly to strangers, god-fearing men?*
—Odysseus upon his return to Ithaca (13.227-29)

*How say you?
My prisoner? or my guest?*
—Hermione to Polixenes, *The Winter's Tale* (1.2.55-56)

*Wir haben wahrscheinlich Alle schon an Tischen gesessen, wo wir nicht
hingehörten; und gerade die Geistigsten von uns, die am schwersten zu
ernähren sind, kennen jene gefährliche dyspepsia, welche aus einer
plötzlichen Einsicht und Enttäuschung über unsre Kost und
Tischnachbarschaft entsteht.*
—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (230-31)

When Heinrich Heine undertook the journey that inspired *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen* in 1843, he returned to a country he had not experienced firsthand in over twelve years. This lack of contact with Germany and its political conditions had begun to worry Heine's publisher Julius Campe by the late 1830s. In a letter to Heine from May 22, 1839, Campe complains, "Sie sind allen Verhältnissen entfremdet—, im Vaterhause sind Sie nicht mehr zu Hause! [...] Lebten Sie in Deutschland: Sie würden beßer mit der Nation stehen" (Heine, *HSA* 211-12). Campe repeats himself in a letter from August 21, 1840, warning Heine that his estrangement from Germany could compromise his reception: "Sie sind den Deutschen und Deutschland entfremdet—; kennen die Gesinnungen nicht mehr;— [...]"

Hüten Sie sich! sonst ist Ihre Popularität ganz zum Teufel" (277). Campe's letters convey a distinct anxiety over Heine's ability to deliver effective political commentary on a homeland to which he no longer belongs. His metaphor of the nation as "Vaterhaus" is telling. Estrangement from the fatherland does not, Campe suggests, bolster Heine's authority; the exiled son will not be welcomed as an objective, outside observer of domestic political affairs. In short, because Heine is no longer "at home" in Germany, his opinions are vulnerable to accusations of inaccuracy and irrelevance. By voicing such concerns, Campe identified Heine's ambiguous relationship to Germany as a possible detriment to works like the *Wintermärchen*, whereby the returning exile's perspective is more problematic than privileged. Moreover, by interrogating the relationship between Heine's estrangement from Germany and the force of his political writings about it, Campe anticipated more recent critical discussions of the *Wintermärchen*. Whereas most scholars agree that the poem's speaker refuses to adopt a clear position, they debate whether his ambivalence detracts from the poem's message or enhances it.¹ I argue it is precisely the exile's perspective that underpins the *Wintermärchen*'s political efficacy and I do so by investigating the speaker's irresolute stance in conjunction with his status as a guest who can only visit but never remain in the "Vaterhaus" of the German nation.

The following essay interprets scenes of hospitality in the *Wintermärchen* as ambiguous moments in which the exiled speaker's national identity is both affirmed and undercut. The guest-host relationship thus emerges as an encounter during which the boundaries of national belonging are constantly re-negotiated. Further, hospitality itself is highly ambiguous in the *Wintermärchen*: on the one hand, it promises to alleviate the speaker's estrangement by reintegrating him into the German nation; on the other hand, it reinforces his status as an outsider, thereby exacerbating his alienation. The guest's inclusion, the poem suggests, remains inseparable from his exclusion. This essay traces the relationship between hospitality, estrangement, and national identity in Heine's poem to reevaluate its underlying political message. It begins by reading the speaker's border crossings as part of a larger discourse of national belonging in the *Vormärz*, whereby the attempted standardization of citizenship sought to codify the conditions of state membership. By frustrating the state's efforts to ascertain his identity at

its borders, Heine's speaker draws attention to the reduction of citizenship to a bureaucratic tool of surveillance, persecution, and exclusion. Second, the essay concentrates on the problematic relation between guest and host. Although hospitality promises to reawaken the speaker's dormant sense of national belonging, his hosts prove more hostile than hospitable: instead of making the speaker feel at home once again in Germany, Heine's hostile hosts reject, detain, and persecute him. Finally, by focusing on the host's provision of food and drink, the essay establishes a link between indigestion and state belonging in the *Wintermärchen*, whereby the nation is construed as a body struggling to incorporate its potential members. More than banal details or breaches of aesthetic decorum,² culinary and gastrointestinal references highlight the speaker's efforts to digest Germany into his larger identity. By investigating the ambiguity of hospitality, I judge the speaker's refusal to commit to a political position not as a detriment, but rather as an acute awareness of the imposition of a narrow concept of national identity.³ Ultimately, the rambling, ever-shifting guest evinces a more inclusive, hospitable understanding of state belonging than those who host him.

I. Borders, Belonging, and the Discourse of State Membership

In its depiction of an exile's return to Germany, the *Wintermärchen* participates in a larger discourse of state belonging that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. Immediately upon arrival at the border in Aachen, ambivalence towards Germany overtakes Heine's speaker: his heart races, his eyes well with tears, and when he hears the German language, a strange feeling arouses the suspicion that his "Herz / Recht angenehm verblute[t]" (*DHA* 4, 91). As a space in which two geographical-political identities converge, Germany's border also reflects the convergence of opposing loyalties within the speaker himself. Such ambivalence is evinced in his phrasing: while crossing the German border may inflict the pain of a bleeding heart, it nonetheless gives him a pleasant [angenehm] sensation.⁴ From the poem's very outset, the border thus emerges as an ambiguous space associated with the painful question of belonging. However, given the mutability of the border itself, the speaker's problem of formulating a coherent German identity should come as little surprise. While it marked the edge of the Prussian state at the time of the *Wintermärchen*'s composition, this had only been the case

since 1815, when Prussia acquired vast new territories following the Congress of Vienna. While certainly beneficial to Prussian interests, such acquisitions—including the Rhineland of Heine's childhood—also presented the state with the tremendous task of integrating a diverse body of new subjects (Gosewinkel 68). Accordingly, the Prussian state enacted a law designed to standardize the conditions of state belonging in 1842, two years before the *Wintermärchen's* publication. *Das Gesetz über die Erwerbung und den Verlust der Eigenschaft als preußischer Untertan* sought to replace municipal and regional laws governing citizenship and entrusted this authority to the Prussian state. In addition to policing more extensive borders, Prussia also faced the problem of the mass migrations that followed the liberation of the peasants and the opening of all occupations (Brubaker 65). With more and more people crossing its borders, the state recognized the necessity of developing a practical, systematic code of belonging that distinguished between members and non-members (Gosewinkel 78-79).

Having grown up in Düsseldorf, a city that alternated between German and French control, Heine experienced the fluidity of Germany's borders firsthand. In *Ideen. Das Buch Le Grand* (1826), his narrator recalls the shifting of national boundaries during the Napoleonic Wars and the difficulties he faced in geography class as a consequence: "es [war] nicht meine Schuld, wenn ich von der Geographie so wenig lernte, daß ich mich späterhin nicht in der Welt zurecht zu finden wußte" (*DHA* 6, 188-89). Hence, the impermanence of borders not only confused him as a schoolboy; it also disrupted his ability to find his place in the world later in life. This geographical uncertainty even confuses the narrator's burgeoning sense of national characteristics to the point where he abandons all he has learned: "auch die Charaktere der Völker änderten sich, die Deutschen wurden gelenkig, die Franzosen machten keine Komplimente mehr, die Engländer warfen das Geld nicht mehr zum Fenster hinaus" (189). While Heine's narrator certainly skewers the very idea of national characteristics, he also draws attention to the slippage between reliable political boundaries and national identity. With their borders blurred, the Germans, French, and English may no longer act in accordance with stereotypes, but rather in opposition to them! Similarly, the speaker of the *Wintermärchen* questions the interplay between borders and national identity. During his conversation with Father Rhine, for instance, he construes the river not as a fixed, impenetrable boundary

between France and Germany, but rather as a fluid medium of exchange. When Father Rhine eagerly anticipates French troops once again crossing his shores, the speaker reminds him that traffic between the two nations runs both ways. German philosophy and social practices, he asserts, have already made their way across the river and have begun to influence the French: “Sie philosophieren und sprechen jetzt / Von Kant, von Fische [sic] und Hegel, / Sie rauchen Tabak, sie trinken Bier, / Und manche schieben auch Kegel” (102). Viewed as a response to Prussia’s desire to circumscribe its borders—and, by extension, its subjects—the speaker’s portrayals of the Aachen crossing and the Rhine offer a critique of such efforts. Borders in the *Wintermärchen*, whether political or natural, do not delineate a unified national identity, but rather draw attention to its fluidity.

It was precisely this lack of coherence surrounding the definition of subjecthood that prompted Prussia to enact the *Untertanengesetz* in 1842. Practically speaking, a clear system of rules served the interests of the Prussian bureaucracy, which found itself frequently at odds with other German states over the expulsion of foreigners and the readmission of expelled Prussians (Nathans 58). As a case in point, Heine’s own citizenship status exemplifies the kind of confusion the new law was supposed to combat: before becoming a Prussian at seventeen, he had been a subject of the Duchy of Jülich-Berg, the Palatine, Bavaria, and France (Sammons, *AMB* 31). Further, although he was born in Düsseldorf, he was entitled to reside permanently in France because of a French law passed in 1814 that affected those Germans born in territory occupied by Napoleon’s forces (Hirth 120). To simplify the definition of subjecthood, the *Untertanengesetz* all but forbade dual citizenship (Gosewinkel 85)⁵ and based state membership not on residence in Prussian territory, but rather on descent from a Prussian father (Nathans 56). In short, neither birthplace nor domicile conferred Prussian subjecthood; lineage did. In its preface, Heine’s *Wintermärchen* hints at such issues of state belonging. Defending himself from accusations of betraying Germany and embracing France, Heine insists on an unbroken affiliation with the fatherland by emphasizing his birthplace: “Ja, mir gehört er [der Rhein], durch unveräußerliches Geburtsrecht, ich bin des freyen Rheins noch weit freyerer Sohn, an seinem Ufer stand meine Wiege” (DHA 4, 301). By identifying himself as the free Rhine’s even freer son, Heine offers an alternative to Prussia’s understanding of state

membership. His metaphor, like the *Untertanengesetz*, may link parentage with belonging, but it disavows the law's main criterion for determining subjecthood. For Heine, descent from a Prussian father defines neither his individual sense of German identity, nor does he acknowledge the law handed down from the nation's symbolic father: King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia.

The problem of articulating national identity occurs throughout the *Wintermärchen*, particularly when the speaker enters a new political territory. When Prussian customs officials inspect his luggage, for instance, the poem lingers on a moment in which national identity is to be stated and confirmed: the speaker is, after all, obliged to identify himself and reveal his political loyalties by declaring the contents of his baggage. His interaction with the authorities is, however, characterized not by the assertion of identity, but rather by its concealment. At no time does he state his name or show his passport,⁶ and while he does open his luggage, he conceals his most important cargo, namely the radical thoughts planted in his mind (93-94). Similarly, when the speaker enters the town of Minden, a corporal stops him and demands to see his identification. The speaker's answer: "Ich heiße Niemand, bin Augenarzt / Und steche den Star der Riesen" (131). However, by referencing Odysseus's encounter with Polyphemus, the speaker does more than simply compare himself with perhaps the most famous exile struggling to return home; he also aligns the Prussian corporal with a one-eyed giant who seeks to identify, capture, and persecute his guests. Like the bloodthirsty cyclops, the corporal, as a representative of the Prussian state, violates the same code of hospitality invoked by Odysseus in Polyphemus's cave: "Respect the gods, my friend. We're suppliants—at your mercy! / Zeus of the Strangers guards all guests and suppliants" (Homer 9.303-05). Both the *Odyssey* and the *Wintermärchen* recognize the ascertainment of the guest's identity as key to the host's power; and both Odysseus and Heine's speaker survive by adopting a name that is no name at all: "Nobody." Remaining unidentified allows both protagonists to thwart the efforts of their monstrous hosts: in Homer's case, Polyphemus fails to devour Odysseus; in Heine's, the Prussian state fails to subdue the speaker. Moreover, by referring to Polyphemus's blinding, the speaker critiques the state's efforts to police its borders. Like the one-eyed giant, Prussia suffers from impaired vision. In other words, it sees those who enter its territories from a single,

limited perspective. Ultimately, the speaker's refusal to reveal his identity "blinds" the corporal, thus frustrating Prussia's attempts to monitor and ensnare unwanted guests at its borders.

Yet the concealment of identity is not the only way Heine's speaker challenges narrow conceptions of state membership. His critique of efforts to dictate the bounds of belonging also surfaces during the Aachen border crossing, where a fellow traveler extols the Prussian Customs Union, which, he asserts, lends coherence to an otherwise fragmented nation (94). In the following two stanzas, the traveler commends not only the Customs Union, but also the censorship authorities:

Er [der Zollverein] giebt die äußere Einheit uns,
Die sogenannt materielle;
Die geistige Einheit giebt uns die Censur,
Die wahrhaft ideelle –

Sie giebt die innere Einheit uns,
Die Einheit im Denken und Sinnen;
Ein einiges Deutschland tut uns Noth,
Einig nach Außen und Innen. (94)

Germany's unification, for the traveler, hinges on external and internal definitions of national identity. While the Customs Union will lend coherence to a jumble of disjointed states by enforcing Germany's borders, the censors will impose unity on German intellectual life by silencing dissidents. On the textual level, the traveler's desires for unity are mirrored in his diction: he monotonously repeats the word "Einheit" as well as words within the same semantic field such as "Zollverein," "Ein einiges Deutschland," and "Einig." As a result, such repetitions empty the notion of unity of its entire meaning. Significantly, the poem puts such words into the mouth of a figure who, like the speaker, returns to Germany from abroad.⁷ However, whereas the traveler blindly accepts Germany's homogenization as the price of unification, the speaker has developed a more critical eye during his time in exile. Upon returning to the fatherland, he does not, like his fellow traveler, succumb to the patriotic zeal of his countrymen. Hence, despite Campe's fears that estrangement from Germany would undermine Heine's ability to assess its political conditions, his anxiety proved unfounded. As an exile, the

speaker has gained a level of objectivity similar to that ascribed to the foreigner in Georg Simmel's "Exkurs über den Fremden." Because he is no longer tied to the "einseitigen Tendenzen der Gruppe," the speaker has been able to cultivate an "Attitüde des 'Objektiven' [...], die nicht etwa einen bloßen Abstand und Unbetheilgtheit bedeutet, sondern ein besonderes Gebilde aus Ferne und Nähe, Gleichgültigkeit und Engagiertheit ist" (Simmel 687). As an outsider who reenters his former homeland with a fresh perspective, he possesses special insight into the shortcomings of the Customs Union and the censors,⁸ recognizing such measures as impoverished expressions of national identity. External unity has not been achieved through the establishment of a democratic, constitutional state, but rather through a bureaucratic coalition intended to further Prussian interests; and internal unity springs not from intellectual debate, but rather from its suppression. In hindsight, the speaker's estrangement from Germany allows him to see the great "Douanenkette" (94)—and measures like it—for what it really is: a chain that strangles the German states as much as it binds them together.

II. HEINE'S HOSTILE HOSTS: THE ESTRANGING EFFECTS OF HOSPITALITY

In addition to its specific reference to Polyphemus's blinding, the *Wintermärchen* also draws on a more general theme from Homer's *Odyssey*, namely the relation between host and guest. Like Odysseus, Heine's speaker undertakes a dangerous voyage home during which he relies on the kindness of his hosts. Both protagonists also experience hospitality as an ambiguous encounter: some hosts comfort the guest and help him complete the journey home; others threaten him, take him hostage, and forestall his return. Further, hosts in both works alleviate as well as exacerbate their guests' feelings of estrangement. When Odysseus finally arrives on Ithaca, he not only perceives his homeland as a foreign country—"whose land have I lit on now?" he wonders—but also suspects his most recent hosts, the Phaeacians, of betraying him, of sending him to a "no-man's-land" (Homer 13.239).⁸ Home, for Odysseus, has become utterly foreign. In the *Wintermärchen*, hospitality also renders the speaker's homecoming into an alienating experience. Although the German featherbed in Cologne promises relief from the sleepless nights he suffers in exile, his longing for the "Süßigkeit / Des

vaterländischen Pfühles” is met with a bitter nightmare of estrangement. No source of comfort, the bed becomes the site of a horrific dream in which he confronts his double.⁹ Admittedly, this uncanny figure fulfills the speaker’s wishes by converting thought into deed: at the speaker’s command, he smashes the “Skelette des Aberglaubens,” the statues of the three wise men in the Cologne Cathedral (109). However, the double is more than a psychic manifestation of repressed political thoughts; he also reveals the speaker’s ambivalence toward Germany on the first night of his return. At the dream’s end, the double’s ax both shatters the wise men and rips open the speaker’s chest, a wound that mirrors the trauma of his estrangement. Given the double’s designation as a “vermummten Gast” (103), he thus manifests the speaker’s self-definition as a masked stranger who can neither reveal his true identity nor permanently remain in Germany.

The bed in Cologne is not the only way the *Wintermärchen* links hospitality with the fatherland. Indeed, by attributing the role of host to several metaphorical fathers, the poem construes Germany as a paternal entity that receives the exiled son as a guest. Father Rhine, for example, greets the speaker as his long, lost son: “Willkommen, mein Junge,” he bellows (101). As the allegorical father of a reawakened Germany, Barbarossa also hosts the speaker. Yet, unlike his largely cordial reunion with Father Rhine, his visit with Barbarossa ends in outright hostility when the king suddenly turns on his guest and threatens to dismember him: “Warte, du Bürschen, ich werde dir schon / Die kecken Flügel stutzen!” (128). As the symbolic father of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV never faces the speaker. The king nonetheless functions as an important host-father when one considers Heine’s choice of *Ein Wintermärchen* as a subtitle. By referring to Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, the poem not only evokes the melancholy chill of a German November; it also identifies Shakespeare’s drama as an intertext in which a child is estranged from its father and its fatherland. First, while Shakespeare’s Perdita returns to Sicilia and reunites with her father, King Leontes after 16 years of exile in Bohemia, Heine’s speaker returns to Germany and reunites with his fatherland after 13 years of exile in France. Second, both works feature a son whose desire to tell a “winter’s tale” is threatened by his tyrannical father. Whereas King Leontes interrupts Mamillius’s efforts to entertain his listeners with a fantastic tale meant to pass a long winter’s night,¹⁰ Friedrich Wilhelm interrupts—through

editorship and persecution—the efforts of Heine’s speaker to console his readers with a political tale meant to pass the long winter night of the Restoration. After their initial estrangement, father and child eventually reconcile in Shakespeare’s drama; conversely, despite the speaker’s initial hopes, the tirade against Friedrich Wilhelm in the poem’s final caput not only underscores the exiled son’s estrangement from the fatherland, but also their mutual enmity.¹¹

The hospitality offered by the poem’s mother figures also includes undercurrents of hostility. While the speaker’s mother certainly expresses enthusiasm over her son’s first visit in thirteen years, their stilted conversation suggests tensions between hostess and guest. Her questions irritate him so much that he pleads, “Du darfst mich jetzt nicht stören” (135). Undeterred, she continues to press him: “Mein liebes Kind! in welchem Land / Läßt sich am besten leben? Hier oder in Frankreich? und welchem Volk / Wirst du den Vorzug geben?” (136). Although he hints at his preference for France over Germany in his comparison of their cuisines, the speaker ultimately skirts her real question, namely the question of his national identity. Given his characterization of his mother’s interrogation as a set of “verfängliche Fragen” (136), he also construes her efforts as subtly sinister. A form of ensnarement, her questions aim to force him to commit to one nation, a commitment he views as a trap. His mother’s hospitality thus emerges as an entanglement from which he fears he might not be able to extricate himself. The poem’s other prominent mother figure, the allegorical matron of Hamburg, Hammonia, also tries to hold her guest captive.¹² However, whereas the speaker’s biological mother, he fears, attempts to entrap him with her questions, the goddess tries to ensnare him with the promise of pleasure. Having likened himself to Odysseus, the speaker implicitly compares Hammonia with Circe, a comparison further strengthened by Hammonia’s white tunic and the resemblance between her ankles and a pair of Doric columns (143). Like Homer’s temptress, Hammonia uses hospitality as a means to hold her guest hostage: she lures him into her room with the promise of alleviating his homesickness, but in the course of their conversation, she tries to bring about the speaker’s permanent return to Germany. She assures him, “So übel war es in Deutschland nie, / Trotz aller Zeitbedrängniß – / Glaub’ mir, verhungert ist nie ein Mensch / In einem deutschen Gefängniß” (150). Given her promise of abundant food and drink to the speaker if he

remains with her in Hamburg (153), the German prison she evokes might not be some Prussian dungeon; it could allude to her own room, where she, like Circe, tempts her guest to exchange his freedom for the bliss of indulging his animal instincts.

In addition to fathers and mothers, taverns and inns also accommodate the speaker. Upon first glance, these visits encourage him to reconnect with Germany by reawakening positive memories from his youth. The coaching inn at Hagen, for example, not only provides him with an opportunity to recover from his journey, but also arouses his affection for the fatherland through the cuisine it serves (112). Further, the tavern in Unna not only provides him with a few warm moments before he must reenter the chilly coach; it also serves as the backdrop against which he fondly recalls the “Freundschaftsbündniß” he forged with fellow students in Göttingen (113). However, given the political and social significance of Rhenish inns and taverns at the time of the *Wintermärchen*’s composition, the hospitality the speaker enjoys in Hagen and Unna appears in a different light. As the primary meeting place in villages and towns, the Rhineland tavern provided an essential public forum where patrons from various social classes distributed political literature, criticized the monarchy, sang songs in support of liberal causes, and celebrated revolutionary figures like Napoleon (Brophy 155-59). Yet Heine’s speaker does not describe the taverns he visits as social centers of vigorous political debate; on the contrary, solitude, not sociability, characterizes his stops in Hagen and Unna. Granted, Heine disparaged German popular politics in works like the *Wintermärchen* and *Atta Troll*, and he often mocked oppositional writers like Ferdinand Freiligrath, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, and Georg Herwegh.¹³ Still, as much as Heine distanced himself from popular politics, the speaker’s tavern visits in the *Wintermärchen* contrast with the reality of tavern life in the *Vormärz*. Instead of participating in a community of tavern patrons, he sits alone and indulges in wistful contemplation. In other words, the poem stages a failed re-integration, whereby the speaker’s status as an outsider is confirmed by his lack of engagement with the communities he re-enters. Whereas he could join his fellow patrons in discussing political literature, criticizing the king, singing songs, and toasting Napoleon, he remains an exile. As metaphors for the communal space of the nation, the taverns portrayed in the

Wintermärchen fail to foster a sense of belonging. In the end, they too serve to highlight the speaker's isolation.

In addition to highlighting the speaker's seclusion, the poem's portrayal of inns and taverns indicates a hostile relationship between host and guest. Given the names of many of the inns that dotted Heine's travel route through Germany in 1843, the state itself emerges as a host that uses hospitality to monitor and control foreigner and subject alike. For example, the 1842 edition of Baedeker's *Handbuch für Reisende durch Deutschland* includes the "Königlicher Hof" and the "Kaiserlicher Hof" in its list of inns in Cologne (329). Further, the inn at Unna visited by Heine in October 1843 was entitled the "König von Preußen," and while he only stopped briefly at the coaching inn at Hagen, he could have visited the "Prinz zu Preußen," one of the town's most prestigious inns (Woesler 936). Although they provided space for political expression, inns also functioned as sites of state surveillance. By the end of the eighteenth century, innkeepers established in Prussia were obliged to report the identities of all overnight guests to the local magistrate or constable.¹⁴ Accordingly, the speaker's nightmare during his stay at the inn in Minden testifies to the state's scrutiny of those passing through its territory. Before he even falls asleep, the bed itself becomes as oppressive as the Prussian fortress that surrounds the inn: "Ging schlafen sogleich, doch schlief ich nicht, / Mich drückten so schwer die Decken" (131). The state's inhospitality is also invoked by the bed's other features: its red damask curtains, faded gold canopy and dirty tassel recall, of course, the colors of the national flag. Once his feverish nightmare begins, the tassel hanging over the speaker first threatens him as the daggling sword of Damocles, then as a snake's head that hisses, "Du bist und bleibst in der Festung jetzt, / Du kannst nicht mehr entweichen!" (132). Next, ghostly gendarmes encircle the bed, carry him off, and chain him to a cliff, where the Prussian eagle tortures him (132). Although perhaps most extreme in its depiction of the state's hostile treatment of its guest, the episode at the inn in Minden nonetheless resembles the speaker's encounters with his other hosts. Given the dangers bound up with the guest-host relationship in the *Wintermärchen*, Heine's speaker seems justified in despairing as Odysseus does upon his arrival in Ithaca. Like Homer's wanderer, he too suffers the estranging effects of hospitality; yet unlike Odysseus, he never truly returns home,

and his expectation of accommodation seems inseparable from the disappointment caused by rejection, confinement, and persecution.

III. DIGESTING NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE POLITICS OF THE STOMACH

Food and drink also shape the speaker's struggle to reconcile his German identity. Upon his arrival in Cologne, for instance, he links the inhalation of sorely missed "deutsche Luft" with his reawakened appetite for German food: "Ich aß / Dort Eyeruchen mit Schinken, / Und da er sehr gesalzen war / Mußt' ich auch Rheinwein trinken" (97). But the connection between cuisine and national identity is articulated most explicitly during the speaker's lunch in Hagen, where he reencounters "Die altgermanische Küche" (111). Sautéed fieldfare ["Krammetsvögel"] chirp "Willkommen, Landsmann" and admonish him for fooling around with foreign birds, while the dried cod and the kippers make him feel like a native once more: the first dish he describes as "heimisch"; the second he associates with heartfelt loyalty to the fatherland (112). Yet food does not only influence national identity; it also promises to help the speaker regain a sense of communal and familial belonging. First, the meal at Lorenz's Cellar both recalls the first oysters enjoyed as a youth in Hamburg (137) and reacquaints him with a circle of old friends (142). Second, the meal at his mother's home not only sates the returning son's hunger, but also frames their reunion by punctuating the entire conversation (135-36). Eating represents a metaphor for the speaker's ambivalent relationship to his homeland, whereby he tries to reconnect with it by consuming its food. Put more precisely: on the one hand, his ability to digest German cuisine parallels his ability to assimilate Germanness into his wider identity; on the other hand, the question of whether food can be incorporated into the body mirrors the question of whether he can be included in the nation. Although the speaker's heart begins to throb upon his return to Germany, his stomach indicates his ambivalence just as profoundly.¹⁵

However, food does not only renew the speaker's feelings of national belonging. Considering intratextual references, in fact, most of his positive culinary experiences are rendered negative by the poem's end. His meal in Hagen exemplifies this interplay between references. While he may relish the eggs he is served in Hagen, his stomach later turns at

the thought of the Prussian eagle's eggs in Hamburg (139). Further, while the cod and kippers he devours in Hagen evoke positive connotations of the fatherland, he later worries about choking on a fishbone as he dines with his mother (135). Moreover, although the fieldfares in Hagen greet him as a fellow countryman, he hesitates to eat the goose meat served immediately afterward, criticizing it as "sehr zähe" (112). Even the pleasurable sociability associated with the feast in Lorenz's Cellar is diminished when one examines the speaker's reference to the memory of his first oyster. As he strolls through Hamburg, he is confronted with a city he hardly recognizes. The fire of 1842 has consumed the familiar sights of his childhood, including the oyster cellar in which this positive culinary memory was formed (137). Significantly, the speaker's estrangement from the Hamburg of his youth is further aggravated by culinary reminiscences: he wistfully searches for the pavilion where he once ate several cakes (137), and to his surprise, even the dietary habits of the local Jewish community have changed during his time in exile (141).¹⁶ Thus, as much as food links the speaker with his past, it also underscores his separation from it. Culinary memories may, in other words, hint at the continuity of his identity, but they also remind him of his status as an outsider. Finally, while the mother's dishes promise to ease the speaker's reintegration, they largely fail to do so. Instead of encouraging him to commit to Germany, food inhibits a clear declaration of his national identity. With his mouth full of German goose meat (136), he cannot articulate an unequivocal answer to the mother's question of his national loyalty. While the fatherland's food momentarily sates the speaker's hunger, it ultimately fails to sustain his sense of national belonging.

Similarly, while alcohol seems to foster the speaker's reintegration, its power to do so ultimately flags. His visit to the inn at Unna, for instance, calls particular attention to the relationship between drink and belonging in the *Wintermärchen*. Here a warm glass of punch conjures memories of his place in a larger community: "Viel süße Erinnerung dampfte der Punsch, / Ich dachte der lieben Brüder, // Der lieben Westfalen womit ich so oft / In Göttingen getrunken, / Bis wir gerührt einander an's Herz / Und unter die Tische gesunken!" (113). The punch thus reawakens the sweet memory of the speaker's inclusion in a brotherhood whose members were bound together by alcohol. Paradoxically, however, the memory of this community is bound up with

forgetting: the speaker and his Westphalian brothers may have joined hearts during their drinking bouts, but such a bond—one forged between members lying inebriated under the table—seems fragile and fleeting given the circumstances of its genesis. This scene is, of course, echoed later during the speaker's visit with Hammonia. In both episodes, attractive female hosts influence his memory and sense of belonging through the provision of alcohol. Yet unlike the barmaid in Unna, Hammonia uses drink strategically to manipulate his memory. Just as Circe does with Odysseus, she plies the speaker with a potion designed to make him forget. After giving him cups of tea mixed with rum, she pleads with him, "Bleib bey mir in Hamburg, ich liebe dich, / Wir wollen trinken und essen / Den Wein und die Austern der Gegenwart, / Und die dunkle Zukunft vergessen" (153). And like Circe, Hammonia concocts an elixir intended to make her hostage forget about his mission—the liberation of his comrades from oppression—and simply give in to his baser appetites. Thus, even when alcohol promises to aid the speaker's reintroduction into the German national community, it also threatens to plunge him into a stupor in which he accepts the very conditions that drove him into exile.

In addition to food and drink, the process of digestion itself is thematized in the *Wintermärchen*. In the preface, for instance, the speaker describes the expansion of German territory in gastrointestinal terms: "Elsaß und Lothringen kann ich freylich dem deutschen Reiche nicht so leicht *einverleiben*, wie Ihr es tut, denn die Leute in jenen Landen hängen fest an Frankreich wegen der Rechte, [...] die dem bürgerlichen Gemüte sehr angenehm sind, aber dem *Magen* der großen Menge dennoch Vieles zu wünschen übrig lassen" (301, emphasis added). Even if Alsatia and Lorraine were ingested and incorporated into the body of the German state, they would, because of their adherence to French liberty, ultimately upset the kingdom's stomach. Yet the speaker employs the metaphor of digestion not only to criticize dreams of German expansionism; he also uses it to mock the fear of territorial loss incited by the Rhine Crisis of 1840, when France planned to annex the river's left bank.¹⁷ During his conversation with Father Rhine, the old river complains of the stomach pains he suffers when hearing Nikolaus Becker's patriotic song "Der deutsche Rhein" (101). The nation is also attributed with the ability to digest when the Prussian eagle consumes the speaker's liver during his nightmare in Minden. An obvious allusion to

Prometheus's punishment, the eagle's attack does more, however, than align the speaker with a great liberator of humanity. By ingesting his liver, this incarnation of the Prussian state draws attention to one of the organ's primary functions: detoxification. As a political metaphor, the liver thus hints at the state's desire to filter out "poisonous" voices like the speaker's. Because of his political views, in other words, he cannot be incorporated into the body of the state. Lastly, by reducing Charlemagne's throne to a chamber pot, the speaker reemphasizes Germany's excretion of undesirable members. Instead of digesting and assimilating disparate voices in a process beneficial to all, the body of the state simply expels them as waste. While certainly crude, Heine's metaphor of digestion nonetheless performs an important critique: it denounces the politics of state belonging as a disgusting form of exclusion.

Like the state he critiques, Heine's speaker also suffers from digestive problems. In fact, his ability to stomach Germany, both literally and figuratively, wanes in the course of the *Wintermärchen*. As the portrayal of an ever worsening case of indigestion, the poem begins optimistically, touting itself as the proclamation of a new age in which the lazy bellies of the upper class will no longer devour food produced by the diligent hands of the poor (93). Despite the speaker's initial hopes for political and dietary equality, his vision of harmony gives way to one of discord, and this deterioration is clearly registered by his stomach. By the time he reaches Minden, for instance, the nation's cuisine has become almost inedible: "Das Essen wollt mir nicht schmecken," he complains (131). Given several allusions to indigestion, even the speaker's enjoyment of Hamburg's food appears diminished. Indeed, while he certainly enjoys the rounds of oysters and Rhine wine in Lorenz's Cellar, the excess of cayenne pepper in Hamburg's mock turtle soup and the greasiness of its carp, he infers, could cause an upset stomach (139). Moreover, considering his prayer to God after leaving Lorenz's Cellar—"Nun laß mich, Vater, diese Nacht / Das Essen gut verdauen!" (143)—it seems that his ability to digest Germany's food, and by extension, the nation itself, has been compromised. As the *Wintermärchen*'s climax, the night in question contrasts starkly with the poem's initial promise of a culinary utopia in which the well-fed body of the German nation has achieved harmony.¹⁸ On the contrary, by construing Charlemagne's chamber pot as a window into Germany's developmental trajectory, the

Wintermärchen culminates in an image of repulsion and discord. Yet this image does not only address the state's inability to successfully incorporate all its members. Given the speaker's prayers for good digestion, his overindulgence in food and drink, and his admission of illness to Hammonia, the chamber pot also functions as a window into his development throughout the *Wintermärchen*.¹⁹ Indeed, his "use" of the pot at the poem's end suggests that his homesickness—the "Vaterlandsliebe" he equates with a "Krankheit" (147)—is not only an expression of the exile's broken heart, but also an indicator of his struggle to digest the German aspects of his identity. The speaker's "Heimweh" (146)," the poem implies, is inextricable from his "Bauchweh."

IV. CONCLUSION: THE ACHING BELLY AND THE CRITICAL EYE

Taken as a nasty case of indigestion, the *Wintermärchen* seems to offer little resolution. Indeed, by insisting on a metaphor that emphasizes discord, expulsion, and incompatibility, the poem apparently withholds any positive answers to the political ills it goes to such great lengths to depict. Yet by developing a politics of the stomach, the *Wintermärchen* does, in fact, deliver an astute piece of political commentary. To return to Nietzsche's analogy in this essay's third epigraph: by revisiting the fatherland, Heine's speaker reencounters a national table to which he no longer seems to belong, and because of the disappointment over the quality of Germany's food and his table companions, he suffers a dangerous case of dyspepsia. However, more than an eruption of literal and figurative bile that follows profound disappointment, the poem also clearly demonstrates the other word Nietzsche designates as the cause of indigestion: "Einsicht." Although the *Wintermärchen* hardly represents a neat and tidy political treatise with definite answers to definite problems, it does provide shrewd insight into the construction of German national identity in the mid-nineteenth century. As a guest in his own homeland, Heine's speaker bears witness to processes intended to tighten the bounds of state membership, and through his depiction of the hospitable encounter, he exposes the increasing narrowness and latent hostility of such ambitions. Moreover, his estrangement from Germany may engender feelings of ambivalence strong enough to turn his stomach, but it also accords him a privileged perspective into the conditions of state

belonging. The status of outsider, the poem insists, lends the speaker insight that his hosts simply do not possess. Lastly, by uncovering the ambiguity of hospitality, the *Wintermärchen* not only critiques state efforts to regulate membership; it also portrays a speaker with a deep awareness of the intersections between personal and national identity. While certainly sickened by what his hosts offer him, Heine's speaker undergoes his own struggle to arrive at a stable notion of what it means to be German, and ultimately recognizes that national identity, like digestion, is a process in constant flux. Partly absorbed, partly rejected, the German aspects of his identity are rarely settled, and accordingly, neither is his stomach. Yet although his digestive tract may rumble as it goes through this dynamic process, another part of the body profits from the upset. Heine's poem offers more than waste at the end of its own process of digesting Germany; an aching belly also results in a critical eye.

END NOTES

¹ Atkinson decries the poem's lack of a definite position (200) and dismisses it as a "political speech without politics" (202), while Tonelli maintains it wallows in polemics without offering genuine, positive alternatives (191). Hannah also identifies the burden of discerning coherence in the *Wintermärchen* (303) and concludes that it is "ineffectual" and "impotent" as a political treatise (307), while Pugh asserts that Heine had difficulty in taking himself seriously as a political actor (676) and delivers a rather pessimistic assessment of progressive politics in the *Wintermärchen* (680). By pointing out the poem's absolute negativity, Hermand initially express a position similar to those of the aforementioned critics, but he eventually praises its condemnation of the German "Misere" as a "historisch-dialektische Betrachtungsweise" (247). Similarly, Würffel lauds the modernity of the poem's negative dialectic as the tactic of a speaker who refuses to adhere to one viewpoint or political party (436), and Dethlefsen views the poem's lack of a coherent position as the attribute of a sharp observer of European political life (211). Finally, Horstmann-Nash praises the ambivalence of the *Wintermärchen*, describing its contingencies as the expression of an aesthetic that eschews universal truths and elicits sympathy with the downtrodden (33), while Zantop, whose position most closely resembles my own, asserts that the speaker's ever-shifting position allows him to parody the ideology of an exclusive national identity. My argument differs from hers in that she focuses primarily on the issue of Heine's Jewishness (178-79).

² Here I disagree with Sammons, who dismisses the speaker's feast in Hagen as a "dull chapter about food" (*EP* 293). Although I agree with Kolb that food in the *Wintermärchen* alludes to aesthetic and political revolution (202-09), I would add that it also represents an engagement with the articulation of national identity.

³ Atkinson criticizes the speaker as the poem's "greatest 'fool,'" claiming he becomes so entangled in his irony that he cannot recognize the seriousness of the problems addressed in the *Wintermärchen* (201).

⁴ Hannah makes a similar observation, identifying this ambivalence as a "quandary from which he [the speaker] will not escape for the remainder of the entire text-journey" (292).

⁵ Also see Nathans for a discussion of the nobility's fight for the retention of dual citizenship (59-61).

⁶ See Gosewinkel for more on the implementation of a standardized passport system (74).

⁷ He confirms his identity as an expatriate not only because he stands next to the speaker, facing the customs officers, but also through his repeated use of the pronoun "uns."

⁸ See Knox's introduction for more on what he calls the *Odyssey's* "code of hospitality" (29-36).

⁹ See Dethlefsen for a more thorough discussion of the double's political significance (214-20).

¹⁰ When asked to tell a story, Mamillius responds thus: "A sad tale's best for winter. I have one / Of sprites and goblins" (2896). As soon as he begins, however, Leontes appears on stage, and the son's tale is never heard.

¹¹ Zantop characterizes the speaker's invective against the king as a "hymn to the powers of language," whereby the fictional reality he creates provides an alternative to the "inhospitable" one created by Friedrich Wilhelm (182).

¹² Hammonia is, indeed, a mother. She scolds the speaker at one point for his treatment of her sons (146).

¹³ See Sammons for a discussion of Heine's relationship to these poets (*AMB* 253).

¹⁴ See paragraph 439 of the "Allgemeines Preußisches Landrecht" (1794) at http://www.smixx.de/ra/Links_F-R/PrALR/pralr.html

¹⁵ Here I would dispute Hannah's privileging of the heart as the only seat of the speaker's "opposing drives and feelings" (306).

¹⁶ See Zantop for a discussion of the poem's treatment of Jewish identity (183-85).

¹⁷ Zantop describes the conflict in more detail in her analysis of Prussia's extension of "its hegemony to the Rhine" (180).

¹⁸ Hermand takes the first caput at face value and ignores the poem's pessimistic end. He claims Heine strikes "auch einige 'positive' Klänge" at the beginning of the *Wintermärchen* (248-49).

¹⁹ Atkinson makes a similar observation, mostly to demonstrate the speaker's ironic treatment of political issues (200).

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