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ABSTRACT

Despite his apparent prominence as one of the five 'Young German' writers whose work was banned by the *Bundestagsbeschluss* of December 1835, Heinrich Laube is an author whose *Vormärz* publications are underresearched and inadequately contextualized. This essay seeks to reconstruct a European moment in the work of Laube, beginning with his 1832 book on the Polish November Uprising, and ending with the publication of extracts from the novel trilogy *Das junge Europa* in August Lewald's literary journal *Europa* in 1837. The essay argues that Laube's European moment has been effaced by state censorship and self-censorship, and by the academic politics that have denied Laube scholarship an adequate historical-critical edition of his works.

KEYWORDS

Heinrich Laube;
Europeanism; censorship;
Vormärz

Europe was of twofold significance to German writers in the *Vormärz*. First, Europe was a source of material. Among readers disillusioned with the post-Restoration feeling of stasis in the German Confederation there was a boundless appetite for accounts of other parts of Europe where life was apparently freer, less constrained, more authentic, beautiful, or satisfying. Second, Europe was also a motive-giving context for authorship, a context made up of intersecting literary and political factors. In purely literary terms, Europe was tangible in the form of competition — translations competing with homegrown works for market share. At the intersection of literature and politics, Europe was palpable in censorship — what could or could not be written about members of the pen-tarchy, the five governing powers of Congress Europe. For the ambitious *Bürger*, Europe was the affective reality of *Europamüdigkeit*, the weariness felt by an energetic class struggling for modernization and adequate political representation in a crowded old continent.¹ Contrary to this mood of pessimism was the conviction, forged among writers in exile, that a Europe-wide political transformation was required and possible, a transformation that

¹Ernst Willkomm's novel *Die Europamüden* was published in 1838.

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would replace the *Fürstenbund* of the Congress of Vienna with a *Völkerbund*, a league of sovereign peoples.²

The German commitment to Europe in the *Vormärz* varied in strength, consistency, and political hue, not least for reasons of censorship. This is true of Heinrich Laube (1806–1884), who deserves to be regarded as a representative *Vormärz* writer in terms of his orientation towards Europe. With these variations in Laube's commitment to Europe in mind, I shall speak of the European moment in the works of Laube, and ask the reader to understand by 'moment' a discernible tendency in this author's writings that persists for a certain period of time. In physics, 'moment' denotes the tendency to produce motion, especially rotation around a point or axis, and this sense fits the revolutionary social and political movement to which Laube was in varying degrees and forms committed.

Laube's European moment requires reconstruction because it has been effaced by state censorship and self-censorship. Jeffrey L. Sammons's portrait of the 'robust' and athletic Laube usefully conveys the kind of writer he was in the 1830s.³ In his undergraduate days perhaps more inclined to swordsmanship than the study of theology, Laube possessed considerable if uneven talents in journalism and fiction writing. Nevertheless, the mason's son from Sprottau capped his university career with a doctorate from Jena awarded for his first two books, the dyad *Das neue Jahrhundert*. But it seems right to see in him not an originator of ideas, but a popularizer, a second-tier author or *Unterhaltungsschriftsteller*. Arrest, prosecution, and the banning of his early work undermined Laube's ebullience and derailed his development. In the *Nachmärz*, Laube remade himself into a successful theatre director, and he assiduously covered the traces of his activist *Vormärz* self. The editions of his own work that Laube prepared in the 1860s catered to the image of the successful national dramaturge and obscured the author's European moment.

Laube's Europeanism received vital impulses from Heinrich Heine's *Reisebilder* (1826–31) and Ludwig Börne's *Briefe aus Paris* (1832–34). With the *Reisebilder*, Heine had invented a stylish and witty genre of travel writing that was attentive to the contemporary cultural, political, and social conditions of Germany and her neighbours. The *Reisebilder* addressed the legacy of Napoleonic occupation, and traversed Italy and England. The conditions that were of greatest interest to readers with democratic and liberal political preferences were those obtaining

²On the 'political switch' from a national to a pan-European perspective among the exiled authors Harro von Haring, Heinrich Heine, and Arnold Ruge, see Claude D. Conter, 'Das Exil als Grundlegung des Politikwechsels bei Vormärz-Autoren', *Forum Vormärz Forschung Jahrbuch 2004: Vormärz und Exil*, ed. by Norbert Otto Eke and Fritz Wahrenburg (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2004), pp. 149–84.

³Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Six Essays on the Young German Novel* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 104.

in the two liberal Western powers, Britain and France, and Heine's *Französische Zustände* was the most influential work in this genre. Not only was Laube Heine's closest literary associate, he was in his first term as editor of the *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt* from January 1833 to July 1834 the most effective interpreter of the exiled author's work to readers in Germany.

The scale and scope of Laube's European moment is not sufficiently well known in German studies, despite his prominent position among the five Young German authors, the putative grouping created by the German Confederation decree that banned their work on 10 December 1835. A reader consulting Roger Jones's essay on Laube's novel trilogy *Das junge Europa* in the 1994 collection *Deutschland und der europäische Zeitgeist* will get the impression of a theoretical commitment to cosmopolitan that is ultimately ineffectual because the protagonist of *Das junge Europa* fails to play the revolutionary role created for him by the author.⁴ Jones's reading takes *Das junge Europa* as a finished product, rather than contextualizing it as an emerging complex with reference to Laube's literary criticism, his book on Poland, and his *Reisenovellen*. Such contextualization is needed in order to grasp an engagement with European themes that was short in duration but which resonated strongly despite having been curtailed by censorship and imprisonment.

Laube's European moment began with his first publications on European themes: anonymous book reviews for the *Blätter für litterarische Unterhaltung* from March 1832 to May 1833. The moment ends with the publication of two extracts from Laube's *Die Krieger* in August Lewald's (1792-1871) journal *Europa* in 1837. Laube's arrest and imprisonment in Berlin from July 1834 to February 1835, and his subsequent persecution at the hands of the Prussian authorities, mark an important hiatus and change of direction.

Heinrich Laube's emergence as an author in the 1830s owes a great deal to his belonging to a context that manifested itself both in close relations to an adjacent European culture, and in the kinds of internal political differences that made the German Confederation a heterogeneous aggregate of small European states. Born in the Prussian province of Silesia in 1806, Laube grew up in a region where German and Polish language and culture were in close and frequently irritating contact. He related to the neighbouring culture in the ambivalent way typical of those living in borderlands. There was much about the Poles that he disliked: the habitual arrogance of a half-Enlightened Polish nobility and its aspirations to an aristocratic republic irritated a young Silesian who shared the democratic *Bürger* class-consciousness of many German liberals. Yet Laube sincerely admired the Polish November Uprising of 1830/31, and his first book sought both to capitalize on the keen German interest in that

⁴Roger Jones, "Die Idee ist eine ganz schöne Sache, für fast Alle zu groß, und sie bleibt immer nur Idee": Die Grenzen kosmopolitischen Handelns in Heinrich Laubes *Das junge Europa*, in *Deutschland und der europäische Zeitgeist: Kosmopolitische Dimensionen in der Literatur des Vormärz*, ed. by Martina Lauster (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1994), pp. 151-68.

revolution, and to set it in a specifically European context. In the preface to *Polen*, the first of two volumes titled *Das neue Jahrhundert*, the absolutist European order that had obtained since the Peace of Westphalia (1648) becomes in metaphor ‘die große europäische Maschine’ that thinks for individuals, whose writing is no more than the explication of that mechanistic thinking in the official ‘Kanzleisprache’ in which they had abundant practice.⁵

In its formative phase Heinrich Laube’s interest in Europe moved between two poles: Warsaw and Paris. After the fall of Warsaw and the defeat of the Polish revolution on 18 September 1831, Laube was drawn towards Paris, a city in which Heine had taken refuge in May 1831, and where a Saint-Simonian social revolution appeared to be brewing. These developments formed part of what seemed to contemporaries a chain of revolutionary events, beginning with the French revolution of July 1830, and followed by the Belgian revolution the following month. Civil disorder in the central German states of Hesse and Saxony forced constitutional change. Mass gatherings had produced similar results in the German-speaking Swiss cantons. The campaign for personal freedom and national unity found its most intense expression in the Hambach Festival of 27 May 1832. This mass demonstration was distinctly cosmopolitan and pro-European in character. Whereas the superficially similar Wartburg Festival of October 1817 had been stridently nationalistic, participants in Hambach proclaimed the sovereignty of European peoples and cheered the day when the Metternichian *Fürstenbund* would be replaced by a *Völkerbund*. Heine drew attention to this contrast between Hambach and the Wartburg Festival in his 1840 essay on Ludwig Börne.⁶

Laube’s journey westward in the Hambach Summer of 1832 took him not to Paris, but to Leipzig, and — ironically — back to Poland. Refugees from the failed revolution, many of them in transit to France, were in the city. Help was being organized for them by a Polish Committee, one of whose members was the publisher Anton Philipp Reclam (1807–1896), who discreetly placed Laube’s own book on Poland with the Bavarian publisher Korn. One of Laube’s most important contacts in Leipzig was Richard Otto Spazier (1803–1854), himself the author of a history of the Polish revolution, possession of which was punishable by death in the Russian Empire.⁷

It is no surprise that Laube, a young German author who had renounced theology for an interest in contemporary history and politics, should gravitate towards Leipzig, the European capital of German letters in the 1830s. He had set

⁵Heinrich Laube, *Polen* (Fürth: Korn, 1833), p. vii. Laube’s *Polen* appeared late in 1832 but was predated 1833 in accordance with German publishing practice at the time. The second volume of the two-part *Das neue Jahrhundert* was *Politische Briefe* (Leipzig: Literarisches Museum, 1833).

⁶Heinrich Heine, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. by Manfred Windfuhr, 16 vols (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1973–97), xi: *Ludwig Börne: Eine Denkschrift und kleinere politische Schriften*, ed. by Helmut Koopmann (1978), p. 83.

⁷Richard Otto Spazier, *Ueber die letzten Ereignisse in Polen, besonders seit der Schlacht von Ostrolenka* (Altenburg: Hofbuchdruckerei, 1832).

his sights on the editorship of the widely-read *Blätter für litterarische Unterhaltung*, owned by the Leipzig-based publisher Heinrich Brockhaus (1804–1874). Reviews by Laube began to appear regularly in that journal from March 1832, and in June the ambitious Silesian had moved to Leipzig in the hopes of a more substantial role with Brockhaus. The liberal constitutional monarchy of Saxony enjoyed a benign censorship regime that was conducive to publishing. Its capital, Leipzig, was home to the annual book fair. It had witnessed recent civil unrest, and the King of Saxony had yielded to pressure from the bourgeoisie, promising press freedom in paragraph 35 of the new Saxon constitution of 4 September 1831. Publishers like Brockhaus were determined to hold the King to his word.

The most comprehensive edition of Laube's works available is the fifty-volume *Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Heinrich Hubert Houben (1875–1935), whose works on the Young Germans, in particular on Karl Gutzkow, on censorship, and banned books, have laid the foundations for *Vormärz* scholarship.⁸ But this edition is deficient in a number of respects that make it only partly suitable for the reconstruction of Laube's European moment.⁹ It does not contain either of the two parts of Laube's *Das neue Jahrhundert*. It reproduces the *Reisenovellen* in a form consistent with editorial choices made by Laube in the 1870s, at a time when he was covering the tracks of his revolutionary *Vormärz* self. It does not contain any of Laube's journalism. Moreover, the *Gesammelte Werke* lacks the scholarly apparatus and commentary that would make it accessible to students of the *Vormärz*.

It is an irony of academic politics that Houben, the historian of censorship, was unable to present the uncensored Laube in either of his two editions of the Young German author's works: the *Ausgewählte Werke* of 1906, and the *Gesammelte Werke* of 1908–09. Houben may have been constrained by obligations to Laube's family, who in the person of Houben's collaborator on the edition, the Prussian politician and jurist Albert Hänel (1833–1918), Laube's stepson, were prepared to allow the inclusion of some of the historical and political writings omitted from the earlier *Gesammelte Schriften* provided that editorial choices made by Laube in the 1870s were not revisited.¹⁰ Yet Houben had gathered most of the material necessary for the reconstruction of Laube's European moment, publishing some in his 1906 monograph on Laube and more in his 1911 study *Jungdeutscher Sturm und Drang*.¹¹

⁸Heinrich Laube, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Heinrich Hubert Houben, 50 vols (Leipzig: Hesse, 1908–09). Citations in text are indicated by the abbreviation GW followed by the volume and page number.

⁹On the lack of adequate annotated scholarly editions of the works of even prominent *Vormärz* authors see Bernd Füllner, 'Editionen', in *Vormärz-Handbuch*, ed. by Norbert Otto Eke (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2020), pp. 443–52. Füllner refers to Laube on p. 451. The problem of inadequate editions goes unremarked in the preface to the only conference publication on Laube to date: Leszek Dziemianko, Marek Hałub, and Matthias Weber, 'Vorwort', in *Heinrich Laube (1806–1884): Leben und Werk. Bestandsaufnahmen – Facetten – Zusammenhänge*, ed. by Leszek Dziemianko and others (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2016), pp. 9–19.

¹⁰Heinrich Laube, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 16 vols (Vienna: Braumüller, 1879–82).

¹¹Heinrich Hubert Houben, *Heinrich Laubes Leben und Schaffen* (Leipzig: Hesse, 1906) and *Jungdeutscher Sturm und Drang* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1911).

The key texts for my reconstruction of Laube's European moment are the literary essays in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* from Laube's period as editor of that periodical (January 1833 to July 1834), the first two volumes of the *Reisenovellen* (1834), and the trilogy *Das junge Europa*, consisting of the novels *Die Poeten* (1833), *Die Krieger* (1837), and *Die Bürger* (1837). Of secondary importance are Laube's anonymous reviews in the *Blätter für litterarische Unterhaltung* (1832–33), and anonymous articles on Goethe and Heine published in Carl Brüggemann's *Conversationslexikon für alle Stände* (1834). Laube's first book, *Polen* (1833), the preface to which I have already cited, is of less interest.

Laube prepared his European moment anonymously with his reviews in the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, and he was fortunate indeed that the authorities subsequently failed to connect him with this work. Houben observes that the books reviewed by Laube would have given the Prussian prosecutor gooseflesh: they included political writings on German unity, on the Polish revolution, and pamphlets on the Hambach Festival.¹² Laube's editorship of the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* from January 1833 marks a step change in European commitment. This is the point at which the author becomes publicly identifiable with a journal whose tendency is decidedly pro-European. This very public juncture also marks the beginning of Laube's collaboration with the Paris-based exile author, Heinrich Heine, from whom Laube sought contributions to the *Elegante*, and with other critics, notably Oskar Ludwig Bernhard Wolff (1799–1859), professor of Modern Literature at Jena.¹³ Sammons has rightly remarked that Laube's essays on literature in the *Elegante* merit a study in their own right.¹⁴ In what follows, my focus will be on their European content and aspect. Laube's engagement with European literature forms part of a wider engagement with the question of what form of literary history is most adequate to the needs of the time. Thus, his favourable review in Nos. 67, 70, and 75 (4, 11, and 18 April 1833) of *Vorlesungen über die schöne Literatur Europas in der neuesten Zeit* by O. L. B. Wolff (1799–1859), appears alongside a searching critique of *Geschichte der neueren deutschen Poesie* by A. W. Bohtz (1799–1880). This latter work is taken to task for its failure to set its authors in a wider context:

Es ist ein Schwarm nackter Gestalten, nur das geübteste Auge erkennt sie ohne das Gewand ihrer Zeit. Es wird von Gellert, Gleim, Klinger, Lessing, Göthe, Schiller, Schlegel, Tieck gesprochen, aber von sonst weiter nichts. Die Leute könnten alle auf jener Küste von Grönland gelebt haben, von welcher wir seit Jahrhunderten nichts mehr wissen, in wohlverwehrten Flaschen könnten all ihre Schriften durchs

¹²Houben lists these reviews in *Jungdeutscher Sturm und Drang*, pp. 345–47.

¹³Renate Stauf, "Wir können uns ohne Frage u. Antwort nicht verlieren in dem Culturprozesse": Die Freundschaft zwischen Laube und Heine im Spiegel ihrer Briefe', in *Heinrich Laube (1806–1884)*, ed. by Dziemianko and others, pp. 208–31 (p. 210).

¹⁴Sammons, *Six Essays*, p. 105.

Meer uns zugeschwommen sein. Ich kann mir Göthe ohne die pillnitzer Coalition und die karlsbader Beschlüsse, Schiller ohne die ersten Pulsschläge der französischen Revolution und die blutigen Septembertage, Tieck ohne die mittelalterliche, deutsche Richtung Deutschlands nicht denken.¹⁵

While Wolff's book fails to live up to the demands of universal history, it nevertheless contextualizes its European poets — among them Alphonse de Lamartine and Pierre-Jean Béranger — in their capacities as 'Staatsbürger', and provides an overview of recent developments in European literature from Ireland to Russia, from Thomas Moore to Alexander Pushkin. Laube's remark regarding the context in which he would perceive Goethe (the anti-Napoleonic coalition and the Carlsbad Decrees) is highly significant, because Goethe and Heine form the pivot around which the 26-year-old Laube hopes the revolution in German letters will turn.

The series of interlinked reviews of literary histories culminates in Laube's review of Heine's *Zur Geschichte der neueren schönen Literatur in Deutschland*, better known as *Die Romantische Schule* (the title of the second edition).¹⁶ Heine's intellectual history of German literature, with its organizing dualism of mind and matter, satisfies for Laube the postulate of a literary history as 'Seelenlehre der Weltgeschichte', a literary history depicting human intellectual development and, by implication, material and political progress.¹⁷ This review is effectively co-authored by Laube and Heine; indeed, the greater part of the review consists of direct quotations from Heine's book. The reviewer is humbly proud to recognize 'Gedanken aus unserem Literaturblatte' in the work of the 'stärkerem Vater zu Paris'.¹⁸ The concluding part of Laube's review reproduces Heine's controversial Goethe critique, familiar from the *Romantische Schule*. Here Goethe's works are likened to 'schöne Statuen' that adorn the garden of the fatherland, but which are 'unfruchtbar', incapable of bearing fruit for 'die politische Entwicklung [sic] Deutschlands'.¹⁹ Here, too, we find the label 'Indifferentist' applied to a Goethe who we are asked to believe is too immersed in his pantheistic beliefs and in his studies of the natural world to take an active stance on the 'höchsten Menschheitsinteressen'. The reviewer states that the review does not permit him to show where he does not agree with Heine's 'fulminante Meinung', but Laube's own Goethe critique in the *Reisenovellen*, agrees with Heine in every respect. Before turning to Laube's critique of Goethe it is necessary to consider the next development in Laube's European moment: the publication of the first part of *Das junge Europa*.

¹⁵*Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 4 April 1833, p. 267.

¹⁶Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der neueren schönen Literatur in Deutschland* (Paris: Heideloff & Campe, 1833). See Laube's review in *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 18 April 1833, pp. 297–300 and 25 April, pp. 317–18.

¹⁷*Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 4 April 1833, p. 266.

¹⁸*Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 18 April 1833, p. 298.

¹⁹*Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 25 April 1833, p. 318.

Laube's novel *Die Poeten*, the first part of the trilogy *Das junge Europa*, was published by Wigand in July 1833, an event that marks an intensification of the European moment, because it launches the phrase *Das junge Europa* as the striking coinage of the literary author 'Heinrich Laube'. Laube had hitherto been known for his revival and brilliant editorship of the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, and while the European interests of the journal were plain to see, the novel created an association between the names of Laube and the intriguing entity known as Young Europe. Was that entity fictitious or real? Was it literary or political, or some combination of both? There was an echo of *Giovine Italia*, the name given by Giuseppe Mazzini to a secret organization established in Marseille in July 1831 and dedicated to the creation of a united Italian republic. Laube's phrase *reflected* current political developments; but it also *anticipated* them. It reflected the growing covert cooperation among the various European national and republican movements (especially among Italians, Poles, and Germans) in the struggle against the Metternichian system. This tendency had been evident in Germany since the Hambach Summer of 1832. It anticipated Mazzini's *Giovine Europa* — the name of a real political organization established in Berne, Switzerland, in April 1834 and dedicated to the aim of a European republic — by a matter of months.²⁰ At the hands of Laube 'das junge Europa' became a winged phrase, one that would recoil upon the author in the form 'junges Deutschland', the term used by the German Confederation in December 1835 to raise the false spectre of a writers' conspiracy.

The phrase 'das junge Europa' is the resonant achievement of *Die Poeten*. The work is otherwise too evidently a first novel. It is neither aesthetically satisfying nor thematically coherent. Sammons notes a 'lack of substance and the meagreness of characterization'.²¹ But *Die Poeten* was ambitious. It consists of the letters exchanged by a group of five young European men, members of a 'poetischer Verein', alternating with those of three women who play significant parts in the lives of the friends. The narrative is set in the period from March 1830 to March 1831, encompassing the Paris July Revolution and the Polish-Russian War.

Contemporaries could plainly see that each of the five male protagonists represented an aesthetic outlook or political stance typical of the year 1830. In his review of *Die Poeten*, O. L. B. Wolff — whose *Vorlesungen über die schöne Literatur Europas* we have mentioned above — said of the characters that 'jede [ist] in ihrer Art irgend ein Repräsentant der mit einander kämpfenden Elemente unserer chaotischen Zeit'.²² The greatest amount of space is devoted

²⁰Andrea Weibel, 'Junges Europa', in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS)*, <<https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/017237/2008-02-11/>> [accessed 15 November 2021].

²¹Sammons, *Six Essays*, p. 110.

²²O. L. B. Wolff, 'Das junge Europa: Novelle von Heinrich Laube', *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 236 (December 1834), 449–56 (p. 451).

to the letters exchanged between the two most highly politicized figures — Konstantin and Valerius. Both espouse liberal views, with Konstantin tending to Jacobin activism, while the historian Valerius appears more reflective. Two of the other figures, Hippolyt and Leopold, are hedonists whose modish libertarianism serves the pursuit of private interests. The reactionary William stands for monarchism and a conformist Christianity.

The firebrand Konstantin commends the history of the French Revolution to the Germans, so that they might write their own revolutionary chapter. Konstantin is given to declarations of the following tenor: 'O rote Freiheitsmütze. Wann sieht dich Europas bleiche Sonne wieder!' (GW, 1, 52). But the more moderate Valerius is also preparing himself mentally for 'größere Wirren, denen ich in Europas Hauptstädten entgegengehen will' (53). Konstantin is rapidly disillusioned by the chaos of the July days in Paris, ultimately seeking refuge in a Goethean commitment to form and order. In the final novel of the trilogy, *Die Bürger*, Konstantin will return to represent the Metternichian order in his role as Valerius's interrogator. The turncoat Konstantin, whose Wertherian *cri de coeur* opens the novel, is a revolutionary flash in the pan. But Valerius is a slow burner. His political commitment matures only in the second volume, *Die Krieger*, the account of his participation in the Polish-Russian conflict and subsequent disillusionment. While the first volume uses letters to put these various views and stances into dialogue with each other, the second and subsequent volumes appear to aim at an encounter between the characters' worldviews and the political realities of contemporary Europe. Indirect support for this hypothesis regarding the author's plans for *Das junge Europa* comes from the autobiographical essay prepared by Laube while in captivity, though in it Laube is careful to put an anti-revolutionary gloss on his intentions, claiming that he sought to demonstrate the failure of the characters in their one-sided pursuit of 'allgemeine Prinzipien', meaning political goals: 'Zweck des Ganzen ist eine Darstellung der inneren Zerissenheit des jetzigen Europa.'²³

Die Krieger narrates Valerius's career with the Polish insurgents. It is considered by Houben and Sammons to be the best work of Laube's youth, but it was not published until 1837, following Laube's arrest and detention. As such the novel occupies a distinct place in the author's engagement with and commitment to European themes.

Despite its obvious weaknesses, *Die Poeten* rang alarm bells with the Prussian censors. Laube's *Polen*, published late in 1832, had been banned in Prussia since February 1833. Laube's critical essays in the *Elegante* had attracted further attention from that quarter. With the appearance of *Die Poeten* and the phrase 'das junge Europa' the name Laube had become too troubling to

²³Heinrich Laube, 'Laubes Selbstbiographie aus den Akten', in Ludwig Geiger, *Das junge Deutschland und die preussische Censur* (Berlin: Paetel, 1900), pp. 78–101 (p. 87).

ignore, and the Prussian authorities were determined to clip the young author's wings. The problem posed by *Die Poeten* was less one of actual political virulence than that of the perceived threat posed by talented young authors capable of clothing political ideas in attractive literary form. Novels offered at least potential possibilities for communicating ideas to readers in a more engaging way than journalism. Especially novels of the epistolary kind had a dialogic potential. They permitted the discussion of revolutionary ideas to be staged in such a way that engaged a reader's imagination. In so doing, the novel harboured the potential to make the translation of ideas into certain kinds of action imaginable, a troubling prospect for the authorities.

While *Die Poeten* was an apprentice piece, the talent of its 26-year-old author was evident — not least to the censor. It had an obviously Wertherian figure in the Jacobin Konstantin — but a Werther prepared to translate disaffection into political action. It combined an erotic libertinism of Saint-Simonian provenance with an ardent and youthful interest in contemporary revolutionary activity in Europe. Judging that *Die Poeten* was, with the exception of a few passages, not political, the Prussian censor paid Laube a backhanded compliment with the assessment that the work was nevertheless 'eines der unzünftigsten und dabei durch eine geistreiche, von vielem Talent zeugende Form für viele in ihrer Gesinnung noch unbefestigte Gemüther leicht verführerischsten Bücher'.²⁴ The censor observed that the particular hazard of the work lay in 'die enge Verbindung der rohesten sinnlichen Lust mit feineren geistigen Motiven und Tendenzen'. As we shall presently see, it is precisely by blending sensual delight and political topicality that Laube sought to appeal to readers of the *Reisenovellen*.

Laube's critique of Goethe, and indeed the *Reisenovellen* themselves, in their first published form, have long been hidden from view by the available editions of Laube's work. It is the first two volumes of the *Reisenovellen*, the fictionalized account of Laube's travels in the autumn of 1833 in Germany and Northern Italy, that are of interest here — the subsequent volumes were deemed sufficiently harmless to be approved by the Prussian censor.²⁵ The *Reisenovellen* are an offshoot of Heine's highly successful *Reisebilder*. The titular term 'Novelle' denotes not a novella in the strict sense of a formal mid-length prose piece. Rather, it refers to the 'novelties' that the travelling narrator recounts, an idea in keeping with Laube's rootedness in journalism.

²⁴Heinrich Hubert Houben, *Verbotene Literatur von der klassischen Zeit bis zur Gegenwart: Ein kritisch-historisches Lexikon über verbotene Bücher, Zeitschriften und Theaterstücke*, 2 vols (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1924 [vol. 1]; Bremen: Schönemann, 1928 [vol. 2]), 1, 473.

²⁵Heinrich Laube, *Reisenovellen: Erster Band* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1834). The second volume also appeared in 1834 with Wigand.

Any reader seeking information about the significance of Laube's journey in Austria and the Austrian-controlled Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia for his European moment will not be well served by volumes IV and V of Houben's *Gesammelte Werke*.²⁶ Volume I of the first edition of the *Reisebilder* consists of twenty-seven chapters: the first is 'Breslau,' Laube's Silesian alma mater, and the last is titled 'Franzensbrunn,' a spa in Bohemia. Volume II of the first edition has forty-nine chapters, beginning with 'Baiern,' and concluding with Chapter 76, 'Metternich'. Chapter 49, recalling the incident of 14 September 1786 in which Goethe was briefly mistaken for an Austrian spy at Malcesine on Lake Garda, irreverently imagines Goethe haranguing the people. Chapter 50, titled 'Goethe' contains a rounded yet highly critical biography of the German poet.

In the *Gesammelte Werke* the first volume concludes with Chapter 28, 'Bozen'. The second volume opens with 'Der Gardasee' and concludes with Chapter 51 'Von Triest nach Wien'. Laube's journey in the *Gesammelte Werke* is a full twenty-five chapters shorter than that presented in the 1834 first edition. There is no Malcesine chapter in the *Gesammelte Werke*, no chapter on Goethe, and none on Metternich.

The long shadow of Goethe in the *Reisenovellen* is most visible in the chapter given over to the poet's biography. The chapter opens with the narrator's recollection of being accosted on his return to Leipzig from Italy by his 'Herr Verleger' with the urgent request for a biographical piece on Goethe that should have gone to print fourteen days before. 'Herr Verleger' is most likely Otto Wigand (1795–1870), the publisher of the *Reisenovellen*, and soon to be owner of *Brüggemanns Conversationslexikon*, in which Laube's articles on Goethe and Heine appeared.²⁷ As the publisher of Laube's three most important and original early works — *Die Poeten* (1833), and the first two volumes of the *Reisenovellen* (both 1834) — the Leipzig-based Wigand was midwife to the young author's European moment.²⁸ Wigand was undoubtedly the most European of all the *Vormärz* publishers, both in terms of outlook and professional experience. His *Wanderschaft* brought the apprentice bookmaker from Göttingen via Dresden and Graz to Budapest in 1827, where he established his own firm, with a branch in Leipzig. With his *Ungarisches Conversationslexikon* the enterprising Wigand capitalized on growing national sentiment

²⁶Transcriptions of the first editions of the six volumes of Laube's *Reisenovellen* (1834–37) are available online at the *Projekt Gutenberg-DE* website: <<https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/autoren/namen/laube.html>> [accessed 15 November 2021]. While it is more easily readable than the scans of the first edition of volumes I and II available online from the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek (<<https://haab-digital.klassik-stiftung.de/viewer/toc/263830985/1/-/>> [accessed 15 November 2021]), the *Gutenberg* offering is not a scholarly edition, lacks pagination, and is therefore not directly citable. In preparing this article, I have alternated between these two sources, citing from the facsimile of the first editions. A reprint of the *Reisenovellen* was published by the Athenäum Verlag in 1973: Heinrich Laube, *Reisenovellen*, 6 vols in 5 (Frankfurt/Main: Athenäum, 1973).

²⁷*Neuestes Conversationslexikon für alle Stände: Von einer Gesellschaft deutscher Gelehrten bearbeitet*, 8 vols (Leipzig: Brüggemann, 1832–35 [vols 1–4]; Leipzig: Wigand, 1836–38 [vols 5–8]). Laube's essays on Goethe and Heine appear in vol. III (1834): 'Goethe', pp. 305–12; 'Heine', pp. 471–74.

²⁸Inge Kießhauer, 'Otto Friedrich Wigand', *Leipziger Jahrbuch zur Buchgeschichte*, 1 (1991), 155–88.

in Hungary. But the young entrepreneur also took risks to help Polish refugees from the November Uprising, supplying them with forged identity documents, activity that led to his expulsion from the Austrian Empire. His relocation to Leipzig in 1833 was motivated by the favourable censorship regime in the Kingdom of Saxony. Wigand's European significance outlasted his association with Laube, which was terminated by the banning of the Young Germans in December 1835. After that, Wigand published the *Young Hegelians*, and, in 1845, Friedrich Engels's *Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*.

Such a 'Herr Verleger' must have been eager for a portrait of Goethe in keeping with the post-Hambach atmosphere of literary renewal, not to mention revolution. Laube did not disappoint. Like Heine before him, Laube faces a dilemma in portraying Goethe. How to do justice to the poet's greatness while breaking free of his influence? Laube essentially adopts Heine's stratagem of affirming the work while negating the life. Accordingly, Goethe is 'das größte historische Talent was wir besessen haben, seine Augen waren so unbefangen, wie das Sonnenlicht', and the acuity of this unembarrassed gaze is expressed in the 'Objektivität' of his writing.²⁹ Attentive readers of Heine would have known 'Objektivität' to be the signature trait of the 'Kunstperiode' deemed to have ended with the death of Goethe on 22 March 1832. What was called for in the new literature was 'Subjektivität' of a politically-committed kind.

Such commitment was lacking in the 'contemplative' Goethe. While acknowledging the paradox that Goethe had been assailed by 'die äußerste biblische Rechte' and 'die junge menschenrechtliche Linke,' (*Reisenovellen*, II, 289), Laube draws the following conclusion: 'Seine Worte haben nie gehandelt, sie sind nur wie schöne Sternbilder vorübergezogen, und der schöne Eindruck, den sie machten, das war allein ihre Handlung' (285). Noting that the 'didactic' Goethe had more in common with his Christian critics than appeared at first sight, Laube criticizes the attitude of renunciation cultivated by Goethe and used by him to justify political non-participation:

Seine Sachen gehen immer auf Beschränkung der Leidenschaften und Wünsche aus, er erweitert nie die Aussicht, sondern verengt, konzentriert sie — weil er durch und durch unspekulativ ist. Er erfindet nie neue Zustände, er rechtfertigt die alten, da er seine Versuche scheitern läßt. (291)

While Goethe's works are filled with renunciation, Goethe was himself unwilling to make the 'Opfer' in which 'die modern revolutionaire Tugend' (291) consists — the sacrifice entailed by a willingness to take up the cudgels for the interests of the people as these disclose themselves in a particular historical moment.

Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and Heine's *Reisebilder* overshadow the conception and execution of the first two volumes of the *Reisenovellen*. The

²⁹Heinrich Laube, *Reisenovellen: Zweiter Band* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1834), 246. Subsequent citations in the text are indicated as *Reisenovellen* followed by the volume and page number.

Reisenovellen recapitulate the gesture of anti-Goethean revolt used by Heine in the *Harzreise* (1826). Laube originally intended a portrait of Heine in the chapter 'Adria' to balance the Goethe essay, but ran out of space in the second volume.³⁰ The places visited in the *Reisenovellen* spark associations with the names of major and minor figures in the political and cultural history of the Europe of the Congresses: Ludwig Börne, Lord Byron, Edward Gibbon, Karl August von Hardenberg, Heinrich von Kleist, August von Kotzebue, Napoleon and the popular novelist, Goethe's brother-in-law, Christian August Vulpius.

For the most part, the association of places on the itinerary with resonant names assumes a reader steeped in knowledge of the contemporary scene. Sometimes the allusions are subtle, sometimes provocative, but the backdrop of Congress Europe is always present. Genoa triggers associations with the Prussian statesman Hardenberg, who died there in November 1822 shortly after the Congress of Verona. Laube creates a suggestive link between Hardenberg — who attempted unsuccessfully to hold Friedrich Wilhelm III to his promise of a Prussian bill of rights — and the censored Prussian author Kleist, via the sleepwalking protagonist of *Käthchen von Heilbronn*, a play that the narrator notes he has 'niemals gesehen' in Berlin (*Reisenovellen*, II, 304).

Of the Arena at Verona, the vast Roman amphitheatre that eclipses Germany's largest modern buildings, Laube jokes: 'Hier könnte sich die Repräsentantenkammer eines ganzen Erdtheils versammeln, und die Republiken könnten Weib und Kind mitbringen, und es würde noch Platz genug sein zu Intriguen' (*Reisenovellen*, II, 323). A Napoleonic greatness that shares in the grandeur of Rome is contrasted with the pettiness of Restoration Europe. The staging of the Congress of Verona in 1822 was a 'guter historischer Scherz' (*Reisenovellen*, II, 326), because the Congress had been convened to divide the spoils of victory over 'ein römischer Posthumus' — Napoleon.

Goethe is the pivot on which Laube's European moment turns, and the turn is towards the performative subjectivity, embeddedness in contemporary events, and political commitment of Heine. Performative subjectivity and an emphatic orientation towards the present are reflected in the Saint-Simonian hedonism exhibited by the travelling narrator. For the reader, actual and vicarious travel served to dispel the leaden atmosphere of the *Biedermeier*, and the 'Novellen', the interesting events of the narrative, have a decidedly erotic component. The intimacies of the post coach with its chance encounters affords opportunities for flirtation and erotic encounter. Laube's narrator avails himself of these, engaging in surreptitious foot play with an attractive young woman in the coach, and visiting her sleeping quarters at the inn. Occasionally, the amorous escapades end farcically, as in Franzensbrunn, where the 'Starost'

³⁰Houben, *Jungdeutscher Sturm und Drang*, p. 132.

(old man), the narrator's Polish travelling companion, falls foul of the anti-Semitic prejudice of which Laube himself is decidedly free.³¹

The erotic brightness of the *Reisenovellen* is heightened by the darker theme of cholera, and Laube exploits the European pandemic of 1831–32 to suggest the contagion of revolutionary ideas. The cholera was the sign of the times par excellence, a symptom of the crisis of the Metternichian order, and a herald of instability and change.³² When an elderly passenger asks anxiously if the cholera has yet reached Magdeburg, the next stop for the post coach, Laube's narrator retorts sarcastically that the disease would not dare to show itself in a royal Prussian fortress. In the chapter 'Innsbruck' surprise is expressed that the wandering Tyroleans, who peddle carpets and other wares throughout Europe, are not the smugglers of anticlerical ideas into Metternich's Austria. The narrator concludes of the Tyroleans: 'Sie sind für kein Kontagium empfänglich, auch die Cholera hat keiner mitgebracht' (*Reisenovellen*, II, 136).

Spas and hotels play a significant part in the pleasure-seeking itinerary of the *Reisenovellen*. An establishment like the Hôtel de Bavière in Leipzig offers the experiences of encounter and excitement otherwise lacking in the heavily curtailed public sphere of Restoration Germany: 'Das Hotel mit wechselnden Fremden ist ein erfrischendes Bad in trägen Städten, welche nur mit Waaren, nicht aber mit Thaten handeln, welche in der Weltgeschichte bloß zusehen' (*Reisenovellen*, I, 266). But the hotel and the spa at Karlsbad also serve the purpose of 'europäischer Comment suspendu' (399), of the 'neutralen Boden' where former enemies rub shoulders without animosity. Such thoughts reveal the political potential latent in the Saint-Simonian hedonism of the *Reisenovellen*, as when the narrator imagines a 'Neu-Griechenland' of Europeans at play:

Ich sah mit jenem jungen Morgenbegehnen in die wogenden Gruppen, was so viel Lust zum Leben in sich trägt. Groß und Klein, Hoch und Niedrig strich nebeneinander hin, als sei die gestrige Welt zu Ende, als hätten Staaten und Gesetze, die Krücken der Menschen, aufgehört, nöthig zu sein. Neu-Griechenland sah ich vor mir, und unter den Säulengängen Athens das alte Geschlecht, was all seine Sünden vergessen hatte, und wiedergeboren war. (373)

Laube's arrest in July 1834, and his subsequent persecution at the hands of the Prussian authorities, mark a caesura but not the end of his European moment. By early 1833 he was known in Berlin as the author of a banned book on the

³¹Laube was accompanied on his two-month journey from Leipzig through Austria and Northern Italy in the autumn of 1833 by 'der jüdische Kaufmann Axenfeld' (Houben, *Jungdeutscher Sturm und Drang*, p. 358), who was interested 'an den Erzeugnissen der modernen Literatur' (Houben, *Heinrich Laubes Leben und Schaffen*, p. 101). Gutzkow joined the pair in Munich. Dirk Götttsche names this travelling companion as Lion Alexander Axenfeld; see his essay, 'Gutzkow und Laube: Poetologische Aspekte einer Zeitgenossenschaft zwischen Vormärz und Realismus', in *Karl Gutzkow and his Contemporaries/Karl Gutzkow und seine Zeitgenossen*, ed. by Gert Vonhoff (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2011), pp. 79–106 (p. 84).

³²See Olaf Briese, 'Cholera', *Karl Gutzkow Editionsprojekt* <<https://gutzkow.de/pages/anhang/lexikon/cholera.html>> [accessed 27 December 2021].

Polish uprising and as the editor who was giving Leipzig's formerly sedate *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* a new political and pro-European direction. From that moment on efforts were made to bring about the expulsion of the troublesome young Prussian subject from the shelter of Saxony. These efforts succeeded in May 1834, but Laube — ignoring advice to go abroad — travelled to Berlin, apparently with the idea of confronting his accusers. There he sought out his patron Karl Varnhagen von Ense, the leading interpreter of Goethe's intellectual legacy, later known for his defence of the Young Germans. Laube was arrested on 26 July. Although the interrogations focused largely on Laube's involvement with the *Burschenschaft*, the banned nationalist student movement, it would have been evident to observers that the authorities were making an example of the author, not the ex-student. Laube was detained for eight months, much of it in solitary confinement, and mostly without access to books or writing materials, in the Berlin Hausvogtei and Stadtvogtei prisons from July 1834 to March 1835. He did not learn of his sentence — seven years fortress imprisonment — until January 1837. Though this sentence was reduced to eighteen months on an appeal for clemency, and Laube was allowed to serve his time on the Lausitz estate of Hermann Pückler-Muskau, the threat of renewed imprisonment overshadowed the author's existence until the death of Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia in June 1840.

In the meantime, Laube had been declared a banned author by the 10 December 1835 decree of the German Confederation Diet proscribing the works of five 'Young German' writers. This ban was less final and comprehensive than it might seem. The interpretation of the ambiguously worded *Bundestagsbeschluss* was a matter for the governments of the constituent states of the German Confederation, acting within the existing legal framework. Prussia had taken a particularly hard line, banning all past and future works by the Young German authors on 14 November 1835.³³ But on 16 February 1836 the Prussian minister Gustav von Rochow, recognizing the affected authors' right to earn a living, decreed that they would be allowed to publish and market their works, provided that those works were cleared by the Prussian censor. In some respects, Laube's treatment was harsher than that meted out to the other Young German authors, but from that moment onwards he could again write and publish — subject to strict censorship and police controls — and he was permitted limited freedom of movement within the German Confederation. Laube had to purchase these concessions — permission to travel and publish — at the price of avowals of loyalty to Friedrich Wilhelm III and a recantation of his former liberal views.

Where did that leave Laube's European moment, and the signature work of that moment, the trilogy, *Das junge Europa*? In the autobiographical note written in prison, Laube characterized the first part of the trilogy as 'ein

³³Houben, *Jungdeutscher Sturm und Drang*, p. 377.

Roman oder eine speculative Novelle', emphatically marking a distinction between authorial intention or the *Tendenz* of the novel and the world-views embodied in the fictional figures:

Ich lasse darin die Matadore bestimmter gesellschaftlicher Ansichten auftreten und wegen einseitigen Verfolgens ihrer Bestrebungen und Disharmonie mit dem Herkömmlichen untergehen. Dieser Theil schließt, ohne die Tendenz des Buches zweifellos auszusprechen. In dem zweiten Theile beabsichtige ich die Leute durch allerlei Inconvenienzen zu führen und zu erläutern, daß die Bildung nach allgemeinen Prinzipien selten zu einer ruhigen körperlichen Existenz leite, und daß es richtiger sei, aus dem Einzelnen herauszubilden, das Nächste zu beachten, und statt der Allgemeinheit das Individuum ins Auge zu fassen. Der Zweck des Ganzen ist eine Darstellung der inneren Zerrissenheit des jetzigen Europa. Das Ganze sollte ein Entwicklungsroman nach Art des Wilhelm Meister werden.³⁴

With the appeal to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, understood by contemporaries to be a conservative *Bildungsroman* in which the youthful protagonist comes painfully to terms with the existing social order, Laube sought to legitimize the continuation of the *Das junge Europa* trilogy. But the justification also reflects a shift of mood and outlook towards pessimism and conservatism reflected in the *Tendenz* of the second and third parts of the trilogy.

If we were to reduce *Die Krieger* to its pessimistic ending, then we could see in it a disavowal of the Polish struggle for national independence and with it the principle of the sovereignty of peoples. In the closing dialogue with his Jewish comrade, Joel, Valerius rehearses an argument frequently heard in the nineteenth century, namely that concerning the lifespan and vitality of a people. This argument was often used to assert that a particular people — the Jews, or Native Americans — had outlived their historical moment and that their future lay in the abandonment of cultural or religious difference and assimilation to the people whose moment had arrived. 'Wie glücklich sind die Schotten in Engländer aufgegangen, wie schwer wird den Irländern der Tod, die schon lange Engländer sind' (GW, II, 295), pronounces Valerius. Joel, for his part, demurs from his friend's analysis, and embraces the identity of the 'Schacherjude' with bitter resignation.

It must have been in the conviction that his new, conspicuously conservative tendency would be acceptable to the Prussians that Laube prepared to publish the second and third parts of *Das junge Europa* and arranged for extracts of *Die Krieger* to appear in August Lewald's journal *Europa*.³⁵ Volumes III and IV of the *Reisenovellen* had cleared this hurdle in 1836. As it transpired, the second and third parts of *Das junge Europa* failed to find favour with the Prussian censor. But Prussian writ ran neither in Mannheim, Baden, where the publisher Heinrich Hoff was based, nor in Stuttgart, Württemberg, the home of Lewald's

³⁴Laube, 'Laubes Selbstbiographie aus den Akten', pp. 86–87.

³⁵Heinrich Laube, *Die Krieger* (Mannheim: Hoff, 1837); Heinrich Laube, *Die Bürger* (Mannheim: Hoff, 1837). Extracts from *Die Krieger* appeared in the first of the three yearly volumes of *Europa* (1, 1837), 193–208 and 241–252.

widely circulating literary journal.³⁶ Distribution of Lewald's *Europa*, which was sympathetic to the Young Germans, had already been stopped once in Prussia, but the journal was later allowed to be sold there under the less provocative title of *Echo der gebildeten Welt*.³⁷ When it came to the Prussian censor's attention that the *Echo* had named Heine and Laube as contributors and had published extracts from Laube's *Die Krieger*, Lewald's journal became subject to preclearance by the Berlin censor. 'Europa', that troublesome word expunged from the title of Lewald's journal in Prussia had made a disquieting reappearance, in the form of Laube's fictionalized account of the Polish November Uprising.

At the heart of that account lies a differentiated treatment of the aporias of European solidarity. The treatment of solidarity in *Die Krieger* invites two possible readings. By regularly returning to the theme of disillusionment and learning in the context of the Polish revolution, the narrator encourages the reader to view the narrative in terms of 'ein Entwicklungsroman nach Art des Wilhelm Meister', in which the protagonist comes gradually to realize the intractability of the problem of 'Zerrissenheit' as well as the need to accept the divisions within and between European nations. In the Polish context 'Zerrissenheit' manifests itself in aristocratic hauteur, in national chauvinism, and anti-Semitic prejudice. An alternative reading might focus not on this background, but on the practical relations of exclusion and solidarity between Germans, Poles, and Jews, problematized in the foreground story of the friendship between Valerius, the German volunteer in the Polish revolutionary army who is wounded at Ostrołęka, and Joel, the Polish Jew who had earlier saved Valerius's life on the battlefield. To read the novel in this way is to see 'Zerrissenheit' in a rather different light. It changes from an ineluctable and ahistorical feature of European reality to a painful and scandalous feature of Europe after the Congress of Vienna, a historical problem that cries out for solutions. The lesson to be drawn from the failure of the Polish cause is not that 'Zerrissenheit' is inevitable, but that adequate forms of solidarity have yet to be found, and that these need to be imagined before they can be acted upon.

Die Krieger is marked by an ambivalent structure that corresponds to Laube's hesitation between cosmopolitan solidarity and national self-interest, between revolutionary commitment and conservatism. That structure holds Valerius's remarks on the passing of subaltern nations, cited above. But it also offers utterances of a rather different tenor, as when Valerius upbraids a Polish commander for the aristocratic prejudice and the lack of solidarity towards Jews that hampers the revolutionary army:

Nimmermehr hätte ich diese Art über Soldaten zu urteilen, bei einem Heere erwartet, dessen alter Kern noch unter Napoleon gefochten. Bonaparte, Herr Graf, war ein

³⁶Veronica Butler, 'Lewald's "Europa": "Das erste deutsche belletristische Journal"', *Immermann-Jahrbuch*, 14–16 (2013–15), 85–106.

³⁷Houben, *Verbotene Literatur*, 1, 177.

armer korsikanischer Junker, Bonaparte hat nie danach gefragt, was Junot, Bernadotte, Rey gewesen, bevor sie Soldaten wurden; die Säbel, Herr Graf, und die Fähigkeit haben seine Marschälle geschaffen, in Ägypten war er Muselman, und hätte er Juden zu unterwerfen gehabt, er wäre in die Synagoge gegangen, er hat nie danach gefragt, auf welche Weise seine Soldaten zu ihrem Gott beteten. (GW, II, 134)

Both kinds of utterances are ‘deniable’, in the sense that they remain on the level of the characters’ speech, from which the narrator remains aloof. The reader’s decision regarding which of the two kinds of utterances to opt for thus becomes a matter of outlook, temperament, or aesthetic preference. One can valorize sobriety and realism; or one can favour enthusiasm and idealism. This ambivalence was not lost on the one sophisticated reader who was in a position to give a candid appraisal of Laube’s *Die Krieger*, the Prussian censor. Nor was Karl Ernst John in any doubt in his report of 22 December 1837 about which of the two kinds of utterances was aesthetically preferable and more attuned to the mood of the day:

Laube’s lebendige Darstellungsgabe und ausgezeichnetes Talent [sind] geeignet, in jugendlichen Gemütern eine düstere Stimmung zu erregen, und die ohnedem verbreitete Ansicht zu ernähren, daß die sozialen Verhältnisse, so wie sie dermalen sind, mit allen höheren Geistesrichtungen und Bestrebungen, ja mit allem Edlen und Schönen im Widerspruche stehen.³⁸

In its final phase of 1837, Laube’s European moment was no longer marked an emphatic turn to a cosmopolitan and socially-inflected pan-European liberalism. Instead, there was an oscillation between the earlier cosmopolitanism and a more moderate liberalism of a decidedly nationalist hue. The moment had lost direction and purpose. Later, Laube’s Europeanism would be effaced, first by the editorial choices of an author curating his legacy for Wilhelmine Germany, and subsequently by scholarly indifference and neglect.

Notes on the Contributor

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³⁸Houben, *Verbotene Literatur*, I, 485.