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Between Herder and Luther: Carlyle's literary battles with the devil in his Jean Paul Richter Essays (1827, 1827, 1830) and in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34).

A thesis presented for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, November 2012 by **Joanna Aleksandra Malecka**.

If you want to see his monument, look at this dunghill.

Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*¹

¹ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* in *Sartor Resartus, Heroes and Hero Worship, Past and Present* (London: Ward, Lock & Bowden) undated c1900, p. 93: ‘*Si monumentum quaeris, fimetum adspice*’; subsequently referred to as SR.

Abstract

‘Between Herder and Luther: Carlyle’s literary battles with the devil in his Jean Paul Richter essays (1827, 1827, 1830) and in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34)’ examines the position allocated to the representation of the devil in Carlyle’s early religious thought. It reads the development of Carlyle’s devilish imagery as stemming from his aspiration to give a new symbolic form to the Lutheran creed. The essays on Jean Paul Richter are exemplary here of Carlyle’s imaginative depiction of Jean Paul between Herder’s and Luther’s thought thereby preparing the ground for the theological discussion in *Sartor*.

This thesis argues for a reading of *Sartor* which is rooted deeply within Carlyle’s religious concerns. The central position of the devil in the text transforms it into a cleverly designed joke at the expense of the readers. The failure to recognise the devil’s textual machinations in *Sartor* has resulted in a misled emphasis upon the mystical and philosophical themes which in my reading are demonstrated to be no more than alluring ‘clothes’ or masks camouflaging the text’s dramatic religious tensions. Chief among these is *Sartor*’s rejection of God’s grace and its substitution with Richter’s concept of humour. Jeanpaulian humour functions as a masking device which obfuscates a deep disapproval and ‘censure’ of life in Carlyle’s reformed Lutheran/Calvinist creed. This intensely negative perception of human life as irredeemably corrupted by devilish presence finds expression in the imagery of cutting, censoring, and castrating present in Richter’s texts, and echoed in Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* (‘Tailor Retailored’). This thesis reads the ‘German Canaan’ to which *Sartor* directs its readers as the demonic empire of the main hero of Carlyle’s text, Professor Teufelsdröckh, the ‘Devil’s Dung’.

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Introduction.

The following thesis traces the development of Thomas Carlyle's religious thought in the early articles on Jean Paul Richter (1827, 1827, 1830) and in his masterpiece, *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34). It is an essay in reading Carlyle's early, playful and highly imaginative, literary portrait of his theological quest from my chosen standpoint located on the one hand, outside Protestant discourse, which has been the predominant critical ground for the nineteenth-century Carlylean criticism, and on the other, distanced from the twentieth-century critical perception which has largely translated Carlyle's religious tenets into a cultural and philosophical idiom disregarding their theological roots. Recent close textual and deconstructive readings of Carlyle's *oeuvre* have revealed a legion of paradoxes and inconsistencies in his thought. Yet instead of investigating closely the deeper religious sources of these tensions, criticism has frequently obfuscated these in a comfortable appeal to the concept of Romantic irony. Exemplary here is the way in which Anne K. Mellor has read in postmodern fashion Carlyle embracing an ontologically unstable representation of the world as a flux of ever-changing energies (when originally Carlyle's was arguably a predominantly epistemological stance), which is beyond reasonable comprehension, or realist versions of the world. Twentieth-century criticism has also tended sweepingly to pass over Carlyle's literary engagement with Calvinism in well-rehearsed claims of Carlyle's rejection of Calvinist theology without his denying its spirit (a claim first voiced by Froude in his famous description of Carlyle as 'a Calvinist without the theology'²) and to hail him the (either willing or unwilling) harbinger of the paradoxical philosophy of Nietzsche proclaiming the death of God and the irrationality of man's existence.³

Taking a step back from such critical constructions, I will argue that in Carlyle's texts we witness in fact a much more complex and more humorous theological game than has so far been suspected in mainstream Carlyle criticism. Both in the artistic response to Jean Paul's writings and in *Sartor*, Protestant (Calvinist) tenets undergo a thorough textual and imaginative 're-tailoring'. I will situate my discussion of these texts within the framework of the dialogue between Johann Gottfried von Herder and Martin Luther. The contrast between

² John Clubbe (ed.), *Froude's Life of Carlyle* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press) 1979, pp. 219-226.

³ Cf. Paul Jay, *Being in the Text: Self-Representation from Wordsworth to Roland Barthes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) 1984.

the artistic ‘theology’ of Herder and the fiery imagery of Lutheran hellish landscapes which follow Luther’s reading of man’s Fall and the subsequent possession of the world by the devil, will be the main axis for my criticism. Such a critical framework to the debate stems from the assumption that Carlyle’s mystical and philosophical readings in German are of less import to the critical debate within his texts than the Herder-Luther dialogue (which for Carlyle becomes the question of the position of the devil in his own religious outlook). In this debate the essays on Jean Paul will be interpreted as a creative preparation for *Sartor*, a textual staging which allows Carlyle to test his theological systems before composing a book of his own in which he proposes to the reader his new ‘re-tailored’ Reformation creed.

The main argument of this thesis will be that Carlyle’s artistic engagement with Luther’s theological legacy in his essays on Jean Paul, leads him to the construction within *Sartor* of a cannily masked trap for the reader, clothed in a Herderian suit and embroidered with German mystical thought. The Lutheran fascination with the devil in Richter’s writings which guides his frequent humorous descents into the underworld and which impregnates his texts with cohorts of devilish characters, is taken creatively by Carlyle to its (theo)logical consequences. This terrain engages the incautious reader in a textual game in which both Richter’s Herderian claims and Carlyle’s new Evangel proclaiming man’s deification and the apocalyptic *palingenesis* (rebirth) of society are in fact shrewdly controlled by the devil, the true dramaturgist of Carlyle’s dramas.

Above all, Carlyle’s engagement with Jean Paul’s humour ignites him to structure his *Sartor* as a canny devilish joke towards his readers whose cultural ignorance and lack of imagination and humorous distance, in Carlyle’s cynical appreciation, leads them directly into the hands of his alluring devil. However, in all fairness, *Sartor* does provide for its reader hints of how to approach its true devilish predilections. As in the tale of the emperor’s new clothes, the act of facing Carlyle’s Gorgonian demons requires a child’s naive outlook. Only such an altogether more simple approach allows one to spell out the fact that Carlylean criticism in the last two centuries has been very seriously engaged in rummaging among the ‘mystical’ productions of a text which mockingly names itself ‘devil’s dung’. While in the fable the emperor and his subjects are cheated by the tailors into believing in the non-existent clothes, in *Sartor* the text tailors for its readers an impossible labyrinthine knot of linguistic-philosophical-social-mystical threads challenging them to proclaim its naked truth. Instead of this happening, the critics, in a kind of penitence for their initial and literal reactions to Carlyle’s hoax (Carlyle passed the work as a translation from a non-existent German

philosopher), have subsequently followed *Sartor*'s hints with all too much courtesy and taken the twisted Devil's-Dung's moralistic and socio-philosophical discourse as the text's ultimate truth. In 1836 Nathaniel L. Frothingham argued on *Sartor* that: 'Our author's work is indeed a moral one. It is never loose or indecent in its sportiveness; and if you now and then meet with what is less refined than you can desire, it will have at least a sober intent, and probably the coarseness will be somewhat wrapped up, as it is in the Latin of Count Zähdarm's epitaph.'⁴ In the early twenty-first century, Carlylean critics still 'politely' provide Count Zähdarm's Latin epitaph which directs the reader's attention to Count's dunghill, as an adequate 'fruit' of his life, in a polite translation, 'If you seek his monument, look at this *pile*'. Such courtesy to the devilish idiom in Carlyle's texts has resulted in the misappreciation of the true inventiveness and stylistic, textual, and linguistic originality of *Sartor*. It will be my argument in what follows that this inventiveness and humour emerge from the sparkling tension between Carlyle's Herderian and Lutheran theological longings artistically channelled through Jean Paul Richter's writings.

⁴ Jules Paul Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1971, p. 42.

List of Abbreviations.

SR: Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* in *Sartor Resartus, Heroes and Hero Worship, Past and Present* (London: Ward, Lock & Bowden) undated c1900.

JP1: Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' in 'Preface, and Introductions, to the Book called *German Romance*' (1827) in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. II (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, pp. 331-339.

JP2: 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' (1827) in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. II (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, pp. 1-19.

JP3: 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter Again' (1830) in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. III (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, pp. 119-167.

SHP: Johann Gottfried von Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, trans. James Marsh (Burlington: Edward Smith), vol. 1, 1833.

Chapter One. 'No Paradise': Carlyle's reading of Jean Paul Richter

[Carlyle] believed in the awful obligations and sovereign authority of the individual conscience. In this, Luther and he are entirely at one. It is the secret of his almost worship of Luther. (...) 'No Paradise for anybody. He that cannot do without Paradise, go his ways. Suppose we tried that for a while! I reckon that the safer version.' This was his stern invitation to the kind of men he longed to rally round him; and he knew only too well that such men were few and very far between.⁵

1) Healing German Monstrosity: in Richter's Mirror Gallery

Thomas Carlyle's series of reviews of the Romantic writer Jean Paul Friedrich Richter (1763-1825)⁶ have rightly been considered some of his most original and creative early engagements with German literature.⁷ The merit for instigating Carlyle's interest in Jean Paul has traditionally been given to Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859)⁸ who in 1821 published a critical review of his 'favourite German writer' in *London Magazine*⁹ thereby introducing Richter to the British public.¹⁰ De Quincey's baffling portrait of Richter which both promises to his readers a faithful description and simultaneously refuses to give one on the grounds of

⁵ Henry Larkin, *Carlyle and the Open Secret of his Life* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.) 1886, p. 223.

⁶ The discussed articles are: 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' in 'Preface, and Introductions, to the Book called *German Romance*' (1827) in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. II (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, pp. 331-339 (which will be subsequently referred to as 'JP1'); 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' (1827) in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. II (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, pp. 1-19 (subsequently referred to as 'JP2'); and 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter Again' (1830) in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. III (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, pp. 119-167 (subsequently referred to as 'JP3').

⁷ Cf. René Wellek, *Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations between Germany, England, and the United States during the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 1965, p. 61. Wellek argues that, unlike Carlyle's presentation of other representatives of the German Romantic School, heavily indebted to contemporary criticism, his appreciation of Richter (possibly, among other causes, also due to the scarcity of critical material available) is genuinely fresh and original: 'In contrast to the usual ideas, we can confidently say that Carlyle's estimate of Jean Paul supposes a certain independence of judgment (...), a free and unrestricted intuition which sees – without regard for English tradition – greatness in a strange though kindred soul. Also in regard to the different works of Jean Paul, Carlyle conserved an independence from the then current German rating.' Cf. also G. B. Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 1965, pp. 107-125, where Tennyson argues that Carlyle's essays on Richter, more than any other of his early articles, approach his masterwork in their style, structure, and creative use of metaphor: "Jean Paul Friedrich Richter Again" is in many respects a miniature *Sartor Resartus*." Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, p. 114.

⁸ Cf. Mark Cumming (ed.), *The Carlyle Encyclopaedia* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press) 2004, p. 117.

⁹ 'John Paul Frederick Richter', *London Magazine*, 4.24 (Dec 1821), pp. 606-612.

¹⁰ De Quincey's translations of 'The Dream upon Universe' and a selection of 'Analects' from Jean Paul followed. Cf. 'Analects from John Paul Richter' in *London Magazine*, 9 (Feb 1824), pp. 117-121 and 'Dream upon the Universe', *London Magazine*, 9, (Mar 1824) pp. 242-244.

Richter's supposed 'indescribability', carries much of the contemporary uncertainty surrounding the yet badly known and frequently caricatured German Romantic school. De Quincey himself wrote a scathing review of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in Carlyle's translation (1824)¹¹, the 'monstrous' style and contents of which, he thought, went against every rule of good taste.¹² However, in his review of Richter De Quincey chooses to present 'the monster Jean Paul' in a clearly favourable light as the harbinger of 'German youth and vigour' which, he augurs, shall replace the senile and barren French cultural model. He also boldly promises to 'engraft' the German literary model onto the 'English trunk.'¹³ De Quincey leaves the reader rightly puzzled about such ambitious projects in face of the apparently unsurpassable difficulties he encounters in describing Jean Paul's writings. The depiction is more likely to set the reader's head spinning than to give him any clear idea about the German writer:

What is it that I claim? – Briefly, an activity of understanding, so restless and indefatigable that all attempts to illustrate, or express it adequately by images borrowed from the natural world, from the motions of beasts, birds, insects, &c. from the leaps of tigers or leopards, from the gambolling and tumbling of kittens, the antics of monkeys, or the running of antelopes and ostriches &c. are baffled, confounded, and made ridiculous, by the enormous and over-mastering superiority of impression left by the thing illustrated. (...) the wild, giddy, fantastic, capricious, incalculable, springing, vaulting, tumbling, dancing, waltzing, caprioling, *pirouetting*, sky-rocketing of the chamois, the harlequin, the Vestris, the storm-loving raven (...) the Proteus, the Ariel, the Mercury, the monster – Jean Paul, can be compared to nothing in heaven or earth, or the waters under the earth (...)¹⁴

Carlyle's essays on Richter to some extent follow the idea of a confused reviewer approaching the creative chaos of Jean Paul's texts. However, it is possible to look for the sources of Carlyle's engagement with the writings of Jean Paul much earlier.¹⁵ Already in 1817 Carlyle had read extracts from Richter in a translation of Mme de Staël's highly influential vast review of German culture, *De l'Allemagne* (1810/1813).¹⁶ Staël's crucial role

¹¹ 'Goethe', *London Magazine*, 10 (Sep 1824), pp. 291-307. De Quincey was very penitent for his review and apologised to Carlyle during his visit to Comely Bank in 1827. Cf. James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of his Life* (London: Longmans, Green) 1882, vol. I, pp. 375-376.

¹² De Quincey, 'Goethe', p. 293.

¹³ De Quincey, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter', p.606.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 609.

¹⁵ Given Carlyle's low opinion of De Quincey (to whom he referred as the 'dwarf Opium-eater') it hardly seems viable that he should have had a great influence over Carlyle's opinion on Richter. Cf. for example J. A. Froude, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

¹⁶ Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, (Paris: Librairie de Fermin Didot Frères, Imprimeurs de l'Institut) 1852, p. 147. Compare also Jacob Peter Vijn, *Carlyle and Jean Paul: Their Spiritual Optics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company) 1982. Vijn traces Carlyle's reading of Jean Paul and Mme de Staël.

in popularising the new perception of German literature can hardly be overestimated. Baroness Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein (1766-1817) known as Mme de Staël was a French born writer, salon leader and woman of letters who, exiled from France, spent her life travelling across Europe. A fierce opponent of Napoleon, she defended the ideals of the French Revolution and all nations' right to both political and cultural independence. While in Germany, mainly thanks to her friendship with August Wilhelm Schlegel, she was introduced to the intellectual elite including Goethe and Schiller (somewhat unwillingly on their part, as Carlyle's bemused translation of their letters specifically concerning Staël's persistent visits demonstrates¹⁷), and she gradually formed her ideas about the vital role played by the cross-border literary dialogue in the balanced development of national identities. In *De l'Allemagne* Staël aligns the search for individual identity with her larger vision of the national identity construction. She applies her Rousseauian ideas of balanced development of human nature arguing that both in an individual and in a nation the three main faculties of man: reason, feeling, and imagination, need to develop proportionally. In order for that to happen, a free cross-border flow of thought must be maintained. In the writings of Jean Paul she finds what she believes to be the confirmation of her theory in which the exchange between England, France, and Germany is seen as the paradigm of a healthy cultural development of each. Staël also popularised what since became one of Jean Paul Richter's most often repeated statement: 'J. P. Richter, l'un de leurs écrivains les plus distingués, a dit que l'empire de la mer était aux Anglais, celui de la terre aux Français, et celui de l'air aux Allemands.'¹⁸

What interests us here is that Germany, in Staël's reading, becomes an imaginative capital, a source of cultural re-birth in face of what Staël sees as the political, cultural and moral decline of Western civilization. She uses the language of economics to describe German literature in terms of a commodity which should be freely passed and exchanged on the international market: the new gold which gains in value while being traded.¹⁹ The cultural, linguistic and political diversity is crucial for the existence of a multi-cultural dialogue. It is through such an on-going active discourse that nations redefine themselves, as though in each

¹⁷ Staël's attempts at promoting an 'inter-cultural dialogue' with Goethe and Schiller, were received very coldly on the German side. Goethe thought her impertinent and over-talkative. Carlyle translated the exchange of letters between Schiller and Goethe in 1832. Cf. Thomas Carlyle, 'Schiller, Goethe and Madame de Staël' in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, pp. 316-324.

¹⁸ Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, p. 18. 'Providence has given to the French the empire of the land, to the English that of the sea, to the Germans that of – the air!', quoted by Carlyle in JP2, p. 4.

¹⁹ Cf. Françoise Massardier-Kenney, 'Staël, Translation, and Race' in *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women's Writing, 1783-1823*, Doris Y. Kadish and Françoise Massardier-Kenney (eds.) (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press) 1994.

other's mirror. Staël criticises the Slavonic countries for their supposedly blind, passive imitation of French culture. Cultures, she thinks, should not be emulated uncritically, but rather examined imaginatively in order to contribute to, and revitalise each other. An altogether unsystematic writer, in her much sentimentalised depiction she aligns and mixes freely German idealist philosophy, mystical schools, and Romantic literature, praising each and all of them for their originality and inventiveness, which she sees as the necessary remedy or the much-needed shock that will wake the French from their spiritual stagnation and materialistic slumber.

Like Carlyle later, Staël sees in German culture above all the sources of religious revitalisation in face of the spreading relativism and atheism in France. Had French philosophy followed the lead of Descartes, she thinks, it would be much closer to the German metaphysics. As it is, the great Divine mystery of the universe has been neglected by the short-sighted French philosophers, leading to the development of a claustrophobic, unfeeling, and characterless culture. Staël's main argument with French philosophy and literature is that it has turned unimaginative and insensitive, overly empirical and, above all, too prosaic.

De l'Allemagne, which caused a stir in Britain (with thirteen reviews following in just two years), gained a mixed review (1815) in Germany from Jean Paul Richter. Richter (who in time immersed himself in the study of Staël's writings so profoundly that he jokingly came to call her his second wife²⁰) offers a resounding critique of Staël's depiction of the Romantic school. Piqued by her patronising stance on German literature in general and on his own works in particular, he pronounced that *De l'Allemagne* was likely to cause more harm than good to a genuine appreciation of German Romantics in France.²¹ Jean Paul's review translated by Carlyle (1830) has so far received little attention within Carlylean studies (even though it has been remarked that it constitutes an important step in the development of Carlyle's imagery).²² Unlike aristocratically born Mme de Staël, Jean Paul came from a poor family and struggled for most of his life to earn his bread. A fantastic writer with a grotesque, macabre sense of humour, and obscure manner of writing unclear even to his German readers (diametrically different from Staël's sentimental style); he was also a tireless cosmopolitan

²⁰ Cf. Timothy J. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, trans. Erika Casey (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press) 1992, p. 159.

²¹ Jean Paul Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review of Madame de Staël's *Allemagne*', trans. Thomas Carlyle, in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. III, pp. 341-362, p. 346.

²² Cf. Wellek, *Confrontations*, p. 74.

and a great supporter of the ideas of the French Revolution, an avid reader of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a multi-linguist and an admirer of foreign cultures, fond of disguising himself in foreign costumes. He mocked his compatriots for their un-French intellectual lethargy (apparently evidenced by the fact that they moved at sleep less than the volatile French²³) and changed his name from Johann Paul to Jean Paul in honour of Rousseau. Despite the apparent differences, in terms of their international visions of literature, Jean Paul shared more with de Staël than he cared to admit.

He begins his review by praising Staël's attempt at introducing German literature in France and adds sarcastically:

On this subject you can scarcely tell them [the French] other truths than new ones, whether pleasant or not. (...) Our invisibility among the French proceeds, it may be hoped, like that of Mercury, from our proximity to the Sun-god; but with other countries, we should consider, that the constellation of our New Literature having risen only half a century ago, the rays of it are still on the road thither.²⁴

Richter mockingly dismisses what he sees as Staël's patronising critique of German authors from the superior position of French culture. He quotes her admonishing German authors about their apparent immature and disordered manner of writing, which, she believes, calls for the exercise of patience and good will from the classical French taste of her readers.²⁵ In Staël's flawed programme of cultural exchange, according to Richter, Germany has been assigned the submissive role of 'rejuvenating' French culture. It has been required to function as a golden mine suited to enrich the empty French literary treasury (and yet, despite being empty, remaining 'the most cultivated' and 'classical' in Europe, according to Staël). For all her description of German literature as the new gold, Staël seems to denigrate its value by making it stand the test of the more refined French taste. Richter knows better than to accept such an unprofitable deal. He pretends to take at a face value Staël's alignment of French and classical literatures, but then cleverly reverses the order, conceding to the French writers 'the best age of Greek and Latin literature', not the golden one but instead – the *iron*:

For as the figurative names, 'golden,' 'iron age,' of themselves signify, considering that gold, a very ductile rather than a useful metal, is found everywhere, and on the surface, even in rivers, and without labour; whereas the firm iron, serviceable not as a symbol and for its splendour, is rare in gold-

²³ Cf. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 32.

²⁴ Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', pp. 341-342.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

countries, and gained only in depths and with toil, and seldom in a metallic state: so likewise, among literary ages, an iron one designates the practical utility and laborious nature of the work done (...) whereby it is clear, that not till the golden and silver ages are done, can the iron one come to maturity. (345)

Through this canny trick Jean Paul rewrites de Staël's cultural programme by claiming for Germany the (new) golden epoch of literary development. Measured by the German golden standard, Staël's glimmering reflections of German writing are rendered highly suspicious and possibly even fake. Richter imagines the long passage of the German writings through the alchemical distillations of Staël's sentimental translation and then through the lenses of her French readers' understanding in order to finally dissolve into utter darkness: 'Through such a series of intermediate glasses the light in the last may readily refract itself into darkness.'²⁶ Yet Staël's sentimental mirroring is potentially even more fatal to the Romantic (and especially to Richter's own) writing. Through her overflow of sentiment she threatens not only to quell the German fire, leaving for her reader no more than a 'little flame' to warm up by, but also, through omitting crucial passages in her translations, she has practically castrated the German Hercules.²⁷ Jean Paul, whose writings did not escape Staël's fatal attentions, rages against his 'Speech of the Dead Christ from the Universe that there Is no God' (1796)²⁸ being cut out from its original context and rendered quite simply as – 'Un Songe'. At the time of its composition, Richter had felt his nihilistic nightmare vision of the universe devoid of Godly presence to be so shocking that he accompanied it with one of his trademarks – a delaying preface.²⁹ Staël not only omits it, but she also smoothes over Jean Paul's terrible 'barbaresque' (in his own words) sentences with her cultivated diction. Carlyle gives his master-translation (still the best up to date) of the most famous passage next to Staël's polished version:

I travelled through the worlds, I mounted into the suns, and flew with the galaxies through wastes of heaven; but there is no God. I descended as far as being casts its shadow, and looked into the Abyss, and cried: Father, where art thou? but I heard only the eternal storm, which no one guides; and the gleaming Rainbow from the west, without a Sun that made it, stood over the Abyss, and trickled down. And when I looked up towards the immeasurable world for the Divine eye, it glared down on me with an empty, black,

²⁶ Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', p. 360.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

²⁸ Originally published in Jean Paul Richter's *Flower-, Fruit-, and Thornpieces; or, the Married Life, Death, and Wedding of Advocate of the Poor F. St. Siebenkäs* (1796).

²⁹ Ironically, by omitting the introduction, as well as the final passage in which the poet re-awakens from the nightmare, Staël's version proved much more powerful and popular.

bottomless *eye-socket*; and Eternity lay upon Chaos, eating it, and re-eating it. Cry on, ye discords! cry away the shadows, for He is not! (348)

Staël's effeminate, un-dramatic rendition of his nihilistic dream vision, according to wounded Jean Paul, hides under thick cover of rouge 'not only our fungus excrescences, but our whole adiposity in wide Gaellic court-clothes'.³⁰ One of the characteristic traits of Staël's translation is that it fails to convey the dramatically visual aspect of Jean Paul's dream. In the dead of night the (blind) corpses of the deceased awaken in the cemetery in order to listen to the morbid speech of Christ revealing to the gathered the terrible truth of the death of God. Richter's imagery establishes a direct parallel between the missing sun (the heavenly eye) and the absence of God in the world. Staël leaves out Richter's references to the dead's empty eye-sockets (*die Augenhöhle*), and substitutes the 'Divine eye' (*das göttliche Auge*) with 'the heavenly vault' (*la voûte des cieux*). Richter is doubly hurt, because both levels of his nightmare are thus lost in Staël's rendition. On the one hand, the explicitly stated loss of reflection in the 'mirror of the Heaven', i.e. God's eye; on the other, the loss of sight as such, and thus of *all* reflection – even the narcissistic reflection in the eyes of his own alter-egos (Jean Paul famously invented the term 'Doppelgänger') are absent in the French translation. She also pronounces his bizarre style an unnecessary complication and a sign of his vain striving after originality, advising Jean Paul to assume a more natural manner of writing.³¹ Most offensively to Richter, she finishes by declaring his writings 'too innocent' for present times.³² Failing completely to understand his grotesque humour (the crux of his aesthetic theory), she goes even as far as to politely lecture him on what the true German humour consists in. Terrified by such 'medical' procedures applied to his works, Richter pretends to succumb voluntarily to his doctress: 'Let the healing doctress come, and not the sick poem, till she have healed it.'³³ Yet at the same time, he eagerly reverses the mirror and directs it instead at Staël herself. The effeminate Hercules covered in a thick layer of rouge, Richter insists, by no means mirrors his own writings, but rather presents to the reader Staël's self-portrait: 'You have quite allured us with it. All that offended your taste, you have softened or suppressed, and given us yourself instead of the poem: *tant mieux!*'³⁴ Having thus escaped his

³⁰ Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', p. 334.

³¹ 'On pourrait prier J. Paul de n'être bizarre que malgré lui : tout ce qu'on dit involontairement répond toujours à la nature de quelqu'un; mais quand l'originalité naturelle est gâtée par la prétention à l'originalité, le lecteur ne jouit pas complètement même de ce qui est vrai, par le souvenir et la crainte de ce qui ne l'est pas.' Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, p. 348.

³² Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', p. 358.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 348.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

predicament, Jean Paul is much more generous in praising Staël for her profound sensitivity through which, even if she fails to apprehend the ‘Germanism of head’, she nonetheless catches perfectly the ‘Germanism of heart.’ She quite rightly ‘heals’ the German monstrosity not fit for the French eye. The flagrant dressing of her ‘higher emotions’ added to the German adiposity produces a fantastic mixture, not unpleasant to Richter’s grotesque taste: ‘the thick ham by its tender flowers, or the boar’s head by the citrons in the snout, rather gains than loses.’³⁵ She rightly challenges the barren crust of French court-culture and ‘breathes the aether of higher sentiments than the marsh-miasma of *Salons* and French Materialism could support.’³⁶ He even bestows upon her the highest possible compliment by comparing her to one of his greatest spiritual teachers, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803).³⁷ Overall, Richter thinks, Staël does well to dress her *Allemagne* in perfumed wigs and sentimental costumes trimmed to the taste of the French reader to whom the sight of the naked German muse might provoke a mortal shock:

And now, the Reviewer begs to know of any important man, What joy shall a Frenchman have in literatures and arts of poetry which advance on him as naked as unfallen Eves and Graces, – he, who is just come from a poet-*assemblée*, where every one has his communion-coat, his mourning-coat, nay, his winding-sheet, trimmed with tassels and tags, and properly perfumed?³⁸

Seeing his own writings thus fantastically dressed up in *De l’Allemagne*, Richter rejoices in a dream vision in which his native land is endlessly mirrored and masqueraded in foreign cultures. If *De l’Allemagne* does little to mediate between Germany and France or to further the knowledge of German authors abroad, it is (ironically) vital for the broadening of Germans’ self-perception. In the final reversal of the mirror Richter casts a glance at the landscape of his own fantastically altered homeland. Re-appropriated by German culture, and hung in Jean Paul’s carnivalesque mirror gallery, *De l’Allemagne* effects a true ‘healing’ miracle in returning to Germans (in the *eye* of the French) their own transformed image:

We cannot wholly see ourselves, except in the eye of a foreign seer. The Reviewer would be happy to see and enter a mirror gallery, or rather picture-gallery, in which our faces, limned by quite different nations, by Portuguese,

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 344.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 342.

³⁷ Jean Paul stayed with Herder between 1798-1800, and both maintained a life-long correspondence. Richter often contrasted the coldness of the classicism of Goethe and Schiller, and of the Romantic irony of Schlegel’s school with the warm-heartedness of Herder. Cf. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, pp. 18, 195.

³⁸ Richter, ‘Jean Paul Friedrich Richter’s Review’, p. 349.

by Scotchmen, by Russians, by Corsicans, were hanging up, and where we might learn how differently we looked to eyes that were different.³⁹

2) Courting the Devil: Richter before Carlyle's Court

Richter might have been (purposefully) incautious to invite reflections from the land where, according to his calculations, the gates to hell were located⁴⁰ (Richter half-jokingly mapped the British Isles, locating the gate to the purgatory in Ireland, and – to the hell – in the north of Scotland).⁴¹ Carlyle (who perchance might well have liked the idea) was keen to oblige. When in 1825 he was commissioned to produce a translation of German Romantic authors, despite the difficulties in procuring Richter's texts, in an 1825 letter to the publisher, William Tait, he repeatedly insisted on including Jean Paul in the collection:

For the Second Volume I must have *Richter* and *Lafontaine* and *Hoffmann*; and *La Motte Fouqué* (...). *Richter* is an indispensable person; by a good many degrees the strangest and most gifted novelist, or indeed writer of his country, except Goethe, and quite unknown here. (...) The *Schmelzle's Reise* you must buy for me, if no better may be; for Richter is a man we absolutely cannot do without.⁴²

Having obtained the texts, like earlier De Quincey, Carlyle found himself pondering on the question how to introduce this 'best man in Germany'⁴³ (next to Goethe) to the British public. He confessed in a letter to the Germanist Henry Crabb Robinson, whose advice he sought, that he was both perplexed and fascinated by Richter's 'extravagance and barbarism'.⁴⁴ Carlyle was not just referring to Jean Paul's bizarre style and fantastic narratives. As René Wellek correctly pointed out, Carlyle was drawn to Richter through his own religious search and it was ultimately the religious ideas cloaked in the fabulous narratives that held for him the main appeal in Richter's writings.⁴⁵ Richter, who came from a strict Protestant family,

³⁹ Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', pp. 350-351.

⁴⁰ Richter claimed that the road to heaven led necessarily through hell: 'I do not in the least implore that we move toward heaven instead of toward the devil. He entered us first and I believe we owe him a return visit.' Paul Fleming, *Pleasures of Abandonment: Jean Paul and the Life of Humour* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann) 2006, p. 29.

⁴¹ Cf. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 302.

⁴² Thomas Carlyle to William Tait, 3 November 1825; *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO] 2007*. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 02.07.2012.

⁴³ Thomas Carlyle to Henry Crabb Robinson, 29 April 1825, *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO] 2007*. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 10.06.2012.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Cf. Wellek, *Confrontations*.

and who left theological studies in order to pursue a literary career, also had a special interest for Carlyle because he saw his own life reflected in Jean Paul's biography. 'Like his father,' Carlyle writes in 'Jean Paul Richter' (1827), '[Richter] was destined for Theology; from which, however, his vagrant genius soon diverged into Poetry and Philosophy, to the neglect, and, ere long, to the final abandonment of his appointed profession.' (JP2, 5) Carlyle could well see his own experience of going through a religious crisis mirrored in Richter's life, the fact which 'The Speech of the Dead Christ' in Carlyle's reading seemed to confirm.⁴⁶ René Wellek fittingly expresses the character of Carlyle's mirroring portrayal of Jean Paul: 'If we read Carlyle on Jean Paul we feel as if he were speaking of himself.'⁴⁷ For Carlyle Richter was a man who had been assailed by doubts concerning traditional faith and yet was able to find a new form for his creed: 'He has doubted, he denies, yet he believes.' (JP2, 17) Desperately looking for new sources of religious inspiration himself after his gradual break with the dogmas of Calvinism (although not with its spirit), Carlyle was at the time of writing the Richter essays attempting as much to convince himself as his readers that despite the eccentricity of his beliefs, Richter was in fact 'in the highest sense of the word, religious.' (JP2, 17) Notwithstanding such protestations, Carlyle harboured clearly mixed feelings towards the 'barbarian' Richter, considering his faith as almost pagan and hardly suited to the nineteenth century. This is nowhere better expressed than in the later qualification of Richter's faith in *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841) alongside primitive beliefs of pagan tribes (as though Richter metaphorically inhabited the world of the long-gone mythological past): 'The world, which is now divine only to [the] gifted, was then divine to whosoever would turn his eye upon it. He stood bare before it face to face. 'All was Godlike or God:' Jean Paul still finds it so; the giant Jean Paul, who has power to escape out of hearsays: but then there were no hearsays.'⁴⁸ Carlyle's conflicting appreciation of Richter's theological stance finds its way, as we will see, into his discussion of Richter. Above all however, as in

⁴⁶ Although Vijn, for example, has argued that Carlyle misinterpreted 'The Speech', which should not be seen as an expression of Richter's religious doubts, but rather as 'a metaphysical experiment' written mockingly against atheism. Vijn writes: 'Far from pointing to any doubt about the existence of God, the method of demonstration used in the 'Rede' is analogous to that of the mercury experiment and serves to illustrate the value of the idea of God within the system of religious belief.' Cf. Vijn, *Carlyle and Jean Paul*, p. 50. Overall, however, critics tend to agree with Carlyle on the description of 'The Speech' as a 'Dream of Atheism' and 'probably the first poetic expression of nihilism in European literature.' Cf. Vijn, p. 50. Both the biographical circumstances surrounding Jean Paul's writing of 'The Speech', the suicide of his brother, and deaths of three of his close friends, and the returning images of death in his writings seem to corroborate the latter reading. Cf. also Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, pp. 158-161.

⁴⁷ Wellek, *Confrontation.*, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship* in *Sartor Resartus, Heroes and Hero Worship, Past and Present* (London: Ward, Lock & Bowden) undated c1900, p. 8.

De Quincey's description, Richter's work, as new-found gold, was for Carlyle an infinitely malleable and ductile material, offering infinite possibilities but also in pressing need to be shaped according to the Scottish standard: 'Richter stands before us in brilliant cloudy vagueness, a giant mass of intellect, but without form, beauty or intelligible purpose.' (JP1, 333) Richter's Carnavalesque Gallery, apparently open to all curiosities and, in Jean Paul's own words, all 'spiritual hybrids, first of *periods*, then of *countries*'⁴⁹, and exhibiting proudly even the misbegotten trans-national breeds, was a fitting place for all such literary and theological experimentation.

Carlyle begins his essay 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' (1827) (structured, like Richter's review of Staël, in polemics with other critics) by ridiculing the recently published Heinrich Döring's *Gallery of Weimar Authors* (1826) which he mocks for attempting to reflect the giant Jean Paul in a mirror altogether too minuscule and badly 'twisted with convexities and concavities' to render a true image. By carrying his task too mechanically and paying excessive attention to the factual details, Döring's depiction renders a dead picture instead of a poetically transformed living portrait of the masquerader Jean Paul. Döring presents the facts literally instead of weaving them into a new artistic tapestry to be hung in Richter's Romantic Gallery. Similarly to the biography of C. Otto (1826-1833)⁵⁰ (partly reviewed by Carlyle in the 1830 'Jean Paul Richter Again' article), he commits the fatal error of paying too close attention to the factual material and too little to its poetic/artistic representation to the reader. Both reviewers metaphorically kill Richter by writing 'rather with the scissors than with the pen' (JP2, 24) (an ominously resounding echo in *Sartor Resartus*: Germ. 'der Schneider' means literally 'a cutter').

Carlyle cuts himself off from such a 'dry' factual method of biographical writing, proposing to weave for Richter new clothes better suited to his 'Herculean' figure. In the introduction to the *German Romance* (1827) in which Carlyle's translation of two of Richter's stories appeared, he stages a Literary Court of Justice (suspiciously punning on Staël's French 'court-clothes') in which Richter is to be given a 'fair trial' and a right measurement for a new literary attire:

⁴⁹ Jean Paul Richter, *School for Aesthetics in German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: The Romantic Ironists and Goethe*, ed. Kathleen M. Wheeler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1984, p. 166.

⁵⁰ The published biography was in fact an elaboration of Richter's Autobiography by C. Otto and E. Forster (1826-33).

For this, and many other offences of my Author, apologies might be attempted; but much as I wish for a favourable sentence, it is not meet that Richter, in the Literary Judgment-hall, should appear as a culprit; or solicit suffrages, which, if he cannot claim them, are unavailing. With the hundred real, and the ten thousand seeming weaknesses of his cause, a fair trial is a thing he will court rather than dread. (JP1, 33)

Having witnessed Richter's narrow escape from Staël's alluring but deadly court halls, Carlyle is apprehensive that his Judgment-hall may take a similar course. After opening the trial, he hesitates whether to proceed, fearing that the verdict may well turn out to be unfavourable to Richter. And yet, 'the accused' himself seems both to dread and simultaneously to court all lawsuits as long as they are ultimately sanctioned by his own private tribunal. Although Carlyle is apprehensive that Richter's case should receive no support, he is at the same time well aware that Jean Paul would simultaneously mock and relish the judiciary proceedings over his person by converting them into his 'infinite masquerade.' In Jean Paul's private court, none but Richter himself would be allowed to plea, prosecute, testify, and to pass the final sentence. Carlyle elsewhere reminds the reader of the literal meaning of 'Richter' ('judge'), on which Jean Paul was wont to pun in his writings. (JP3, 125) In his *Biographical Entertainments* (1796) Richter stages a process in which he himself is the main accused. His readers demanded that he cut out the lengthy prefaces and digressions which unnecessarily obscure and complicate the flow of his narrative. However, he is ultimately acquitted, unsurprisingly, as the judge turns out to be none other but Richter *in propria persona*. Jean Paul justifies himself (in front of his judging *alter-ego*) by explaining that the digressions represent the true movement of life which, like the Koran, 'because the angel was dictating too quickly, is acknowledged to be interspersed with passages inspired by the devil'.⁵¹ Here then we have Richter the judge in Sterne's mocking tradition poking fun at the voice of his critics by answering their censorship of his texts in what, ironically, turns out to be yet another lengthy digression.

But the joking allusion to the devil given supposedly as the justification for the worse handled passages, is less incidental than it appears. Richter's polemics with his critics is clearly not only centred around his 'superfluous' digressions but rather it is the digressions themselves that frequently smuggle the devilish presence into his writings. Carlyle well senses the 'snaky' turns of Richter's devious style: 'No story proceeds without the most erratic digressions, and voluminous tagrags rolling after it in many a snaky twine.' (JP2, 10)

⁵¹ Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 50.

If in Richter's court the devil is jokingly mentioned supposedly in order to curtail the too eager censorship of his readers and reviewers, this covers an altogether greater role that Richter allows his devil to play. All in all, Richter is so keen to keep the devil's presence because it is the devil that ultimately allows for his literary masquerade to continue. By every now and then revealing his ugly presence, the devil confirms the need for maintaining the reality gaudily disguised and masked. The Biblical Cain who, according to Richter, never died, since his death is not recorded on the pages of the Bible, is one devilish character who keeps snaking his way through Richter's narratives and haunting his masked balls. He is the one who is given the final word in Richter's last novel, *The Comet* (1820-1822). Having been briefly put to sleep under the spell of the Catholic mesmeriser Warble, Cain dreams a dream of eternal love and sympathy for his celestial Father and for his fellow men. But, as soon as the spell breaks, he wakes up exclaiming to the utter and absolute horror of the gathered public: 'Oh Father Beelzebub, here I am with thee again; why hadst thou forsaken me?'⁵²

Richter's anxiety over his digressions (which, despite his direct wish, have commonly been omitted in the translations of his works, *including* Carlyle's ones⁵³) has yet perhaps another motivation not disclosed by Jean Paul in his literary trial. What he does not mention is that they often allow for the author's own momentarily escape from his ever-watchful tribunal of spies and judges whom, as he claims, he has dispersed all over Germany in order to collect material for his stories.⁵⁴ Whereas in his notebooks Richter insists that his rich metaphorical style and abundant digressions are intended to confuse his critics,⁵⁵ he clearly also means to put to sleep the censorship of his own ever-watchful (diabolical) self. In the preface to *Siebenkäs* (1871) (*omitted* in the English translation⁵⁶) in order to narcissistically enjoy the company of his attractive namesake, Johanne Pauline, Jean Paul (in the *Arabian Tales* style) has to talk into sleep her stern vigilant father. If such short escapes from his omnipresent judiciary court in order to court Johanne is all Jean Paul's digressions can afford him, he revels all the more in thus obtained moments of freedom (doomed to end upon the awaking of

⁵² Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 321.

⁵³ Carlyle, although he pledges to spare 'scissors' when approaching Jean Paul's works, is guilty of cutting out most of the Preface to the *Life of Quintus Fixlein* published in *German Romance*.

⁵⁴ Cf. Timothy J. Casey, 'Digressions for Future Instalments: Some Reflections on Jean Paul's Epic Outlook', *Modern Language Review*, 85:4 (1990:Oct.) 866- 878, p. 868.

⁵⁵ Jean Paul notes that he 'must express many false conjectures in order to confuse the reader.' Cf. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 44.

⁵⁶ Jean Paul Richter, *Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces: or the Married Life, Death, and Wedding of the Advocate of the Poor, Firmian Stanislaus Siebenkäs*, trans. Edward Henry Noel (London: William Smith) 1845.

the strict father⁵⁷). We may just note here that Timothy J. Casey has interestingly read the development of Richter's religious thought as a rebellion against his father's strict Lutheran ideas⁵⁸ (another common biographical fact, as will become apparent in Carlyle's depiction of Richter).

Both Richter's obsession with watching/being watched/self-watching as well as with the devilish machinations (so well tuned in with the Calvinist spirit, as Susan Manning has comprehensively demonstrated⁵⁹) is duly noted in Carlyle's Judgment-hall. In his review (which also aims to be a concave mirror view) Carlyle rehearses the voice of the French critique which accuses Richter of bad style and depraved taste, and which finally proclaims him '*monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens (...) cui lumen ademptum*' ('a monster horrendous, hideous, immense, deprived of sight', the words with which Virgil described the blinded Cyclops, Polyphemus⁶⁰). Carlyle's own verdict mercifully returns to Richter his visionary 'piercing eye', but he half-jokingly leaves him the cyclopean form under which Jean Paul is presented to the reader. An intrusive and often unwanted spy in his narratives (as in the translated by Carlyle *Army-Chaplain Schmeltze's Journey to Flaetz* (1807)) following his characters against their will, Jean Paul, in the caricature-logic of his own make, is thus fittingly transformed into an ugly one-eyed giant. Carlyle also indicates that he is perhaps not so much inventing Richter's fantastic form, but rather presenting to the reader what could well pass for one of Richter's own literary creations. By 1827, Carlyle had probably read only *Titan* (1800-1803) from the books he quotes but he is, nonetheless, fascinated by their bizarre titles and envisions Richter reflected in each of them: *Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess*, *Selections from the Papers of a Devil*, *Golden Rules for the Weather-Prophet* and *Titan*.⁶¹ Through Carlyle's creative disguising, Richter becomes a mythological giant, an Old Testament Prophet Ezekiel, a Titan, an 'intellectual Colossus' and a dweller of his own fabulous worlds. The addition of a Cyclops to the list is revealing because it specifically alludes to the visual imagery in Richter's 'prophetic', as Carlyle termed it, 'Speech of the Dead Christ' (disregarded, as we have seen, in Staël's translation). Carlyle may therefore be said to be acting, unlike the French critique, *in normam iuris* of Richter's court. Richter the one-eyed monster exhibited by Carlyle to his awed public, may

⁵⁷ Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 47.

⁵⁸ Cf. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Susan Manning, *The Puritan-Provincial Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1990.

⁶⁰ Virgil, *The Aeneid* (III, 658) in *Publii Virgilii Maronis Opera* (New York: Sheldon and Company) 1866, p. 279.

⁶¹ Carlyle also presented Richter as a Comet or meteor – an allusion to Richter's novel *Comet* (1820-1822).

be read, in the context of *The Speech*, as a nightmarish (and also devilish) replacement, a ‘fungus excrescence’ or mocking caricature in lieu of the – missing from Richter’s dream – Divine eye.

But perhaps more than anything else, Carlyle presents Richter as a mythical creature coming from the times long gone. Unaccustomed to the present, when exposed to the eyes of the contemporary reader, he moves slowly and clumsily, treading objects on his way. Carlyle warns the gathered spectators that, since Richter must be seen ‘face to face’ rather than through any protective glasses, should they be possessed of ‘weak nerves, and a taste in any degree sickly, [they] will not fail to recoil, perhaps with a sentiment approaching to horror’ (JP3, 121) from a creature so hideous. Indeed, to all those of weak hearts, Richter ‘will justly appear a monster, from without the verge of warm three-ell Creation; and their duty, with regard to him, will limit itself to chasing him forth of the habitable World, back again into his native Chaos’ (JP1, 338). Having bestowed such a necessary guidance upon the feeble, and upon adding further minor excuses for his subject (for all his unsightly appearance, Richter is a natural curiosity and a ‘genuine, vigorous’ (JP2, 15) product of Germany inspired by its native muse: herself a ‘*belle sauvage* at best’ and only ‘half-civilized’ at best⁶²) Carlyle raises the curtain and exposes Richter to the reader. Let us have a closer look:

His face was long hid from us: but we see him at length (...) a vast and most singular nature (...) In fine, we joyfully accept him for what he is, and was meant to be. The graces, the polish, the sprightly elegancies (...) we cannot look for or demand from him. His movement is essentially slow and cumbrous, for he advances not with one faculty, but with a whole mind; with intellect, and pathos, and wit, and humour, and imagination, moving onward like a mighty host, motley, ponderous, irregular and irresistible. He is not airy, sparkling and precise; but deep, billowy and vast. The melody of his nature is (...) wild and manifold; its voice is like the voice of cataracts and the sounding of primeval forests. To feeble ears it is discord, but to ears that understand it deep majestic music (JP1, 337).

Removed from his ‘natural habitat’ of ‘primeval forests’ and vast open landscapes and proudly exhibited in Carlyle’s literary court, the monster Richter may indeed seem out of place: ‘His faculties are all of gigantic mould; cumbrous, awkward in their movements (...) yet joined in living union; and of force and compass altogether extraordinary’ (JP2, 11). There is, Carlyle says, ‘something gigantic’ about all Jeanpaulian powers, ‘for all the elements of his structure are vast, and combined together in a living and life-giving, rather

⁶² Thomas Carlyle, ‘State of German Literature’ in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (London: Chapman and Hall), vol. I, pp. 20-65, p. 29.

than in beautiful or symmetrical order' (JP1, 334). But the vast sonorous landscapes inhabited by Richter's prose are starkly contrasted with what in a sudden close-up turn out to be rather dubious alchemical practices by means of which he brings his characters to the world: 'From his Cyclopean workshop, and its fuliginous limbecs, and huge unwieldy machinery, the little shrivelled twisted Figure comes forth at last, so perfect and so living, to be forever laughed at and forever loved!' (JP2, 11/12). Richter's loveable cyclopean offspring adds a new note to Carlyle's portrait. Uncivilised monster as he might appear to be, Richter, it seems, is not devoid of deeper sentiment and sympathy for humankind. He is indeed 'a man of feeling, in the noblest sense of that word' and 'in his smile itself a touching pathos may lie hidden, a pity too deep for tears' (JP2, 12). Under this rather unexpected metamorphosis, Richter turns out to be, in spite of his unsightly looks, of Romantic and even sentimental cast, a brother to all mankind, empathising with the whole creation: 'He loves all living with the heart of a brother, his soul rushes forth, in sympathy with gladness and sorrow, with goodness and grandeur, over all Creation' (JP2, 12). More wonders are to be expected from Carlyle's masked portrait.

3) Oriental Paradise: 'His imagination opens o us the land of dreams'

The change in the imagery seems triggered by the reference to alchemical distillations which brings Carlyle back to Staël's definition of German gold as the imaginative capital for modern Europe, but also a source of its religious re-birth. Richter's cyclopean writing, as it turns out, similarly to the rugged landscape of primeval forests and antediluvian caves which he inhabits, although rough and full of chasms, abounds in 'costliest materials': 'its cyclopean walls are resplendent with jewels and beaten gold' (JP1, 335). With much more precision than Staël, Carlyle proposes to define the theological gold which Richter smuggles into his texts. The clue is given in the description of Richter's vivid imagination, which sumptuously adorns the world with *oriental pearls*: 'His [Richter's] is a fancy of exuberance literally unexampled; for it pours its treasures with a lavishness which knows no limit, hanging, like the sun, a jewel on every glass-blade, and sowing the earth at large with orient pearl' (JP2, 11). The substitution of gold with Orients shifts the imagery and transforms Richter from an ugly Cyclops into a mild Bramin wandering in the exuberant Oriental landscapes and indulging in Oriental sensibility: 'Richter has been named a Western Oriental (...) The mildness, the warm all-comprehending love attributed to Oriental poets, may in fact be discovered in Richter; nor less their fantastic exaggeration, their brilliant extravagance, above all, their overflowing abundance, their lyrical diffuseness, as if writing for readers who

were altogether passive, to whom no sentiment could be intelligible unless it were expounded and dissected, and presented under all its thousand aspects' (JP1, 335-336). 'His Imagination', Carlyle says, 'opens to us the land of dreams' (JP2, 27). Carlyle is rehearsing here Staël's appreciation of German writing as the imaginative (oneiric) fund. The fact that the Oriental dream is the opposite of Richter's nihilistic 'Speech of Dead Christ' is marked by the return of the sun that adorns the earth with Orients, implying the Divine working in the world. And yet, we might note here, that even as a mild Oriental, Richter preserves his cyclopean 'piercing eye' (a sign that Richter's nightmare is not altogether forgotten) with which he sternly *judges* the contemporary world despising it (justly), though (apparently) with 'a sort of love' (JP2, 12). The clash of the two depictions, as we shall see, is something that will continue to re-emerge Richter's lawsuit, threatening to overrule the apparently reached verdict.

A prospect to bridge the gap between Richter's cyclopean and Oriental selves appears when Carlyle specifically links the Oriental imagery to one of the fathers of higher criticism, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), whom Carlyle had been studying from 1823 and to whose works he returned frequently within the following decade (a fact documented in his personal *Note Books*⁶³ written between 1822 and 1832):

We might call him [Richter], as he once called Herder, 'a Priest of Nature, a mild Bramin,' wandering amid spicy groves, and under benignant skies. The infinite Night with her solemn aspects, Day, and the sweet approach of Even and Morn, are full of meaning for him. He loves the green Earth with her streams and forests, her flowery leas and eternal skies; loves her with a sort of passion, in all her vicissitudes of light and shade; his spirit revels in her grandeur and charms; expands like the breeze over wood and lawn, over glade and dingle, stealing and giving odours (JP2, 12).

We can see here De Quincey's vague account of 'German youth and vigour' inscribed by Carlyle very precisely into Herder's intellectual legacy in which 'vigour and freshness of youth, the morning and dawn' refer directly to the poetic creations of the Biblical authors. (Significantly, in his *Note Books* Carlyle also places Staël's ideas under direct influence of Herder.⁶⁴) The pearl buried in Richter's texts is ultimately of Hebrew origin channelled as it

⁶³ Charles Eliot Norton (ed.), *Two Note Books of Thomas Carlyle* (New York: The Grolier Club) 1898, pp. 33-36, 45-46, 72-75.

⁶⁴ Carlyle notes that Herder's opinion on the present degeneration of taste must have influenced Mme de Staël's views. Cf. *Two Note Books*, p. 34.

is by Herder's description of Hebrew poems as 'pearls from the depths of the ocean loosely arranged, but precious: treasures of knowledge and wisdom in sayings of the olden times.'⁶⁵

On the most fundamental level, what the introduction of the Oriental pearl does to Carlyle's portrayal of Richter, is that it metaphorically re-directs Jeanpaulian mirror back to heaven, as though reverting the nightmarish *Speech* back to its point of departure: Jean Paul's initial description of his childhood when 'the stream of life' was *yet* reflected in the 'mirror of the Heaven' (JP3, 164). This is fittingly summarised by Carlyle's already quoted appreciation of Richter as a man coming from the epoch when 'all was Godlike or God'. Herder went further than his predecessors in promoting a secular reading of Biblical texts as specimens of Oriental literature representing man's early, childhood-like intuition of God's revelation in the world. Although in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772) (which will be analysed more in depth in relation to *Sartor Resartus* (1833-1834)) he postulated an equal respect for all historical epochs, which should be judged within their past contexts, and not according to the reader's contemporary standards, Herder's private predilection for Hebrew history is evident. Poetically rendered on the pages of the Bible, it represents the true golden epoch of humanity, while the Biblical narrative sets the golden standard from which contemporary poets are to draw inspiration. The structure of Herder's masterwork, *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784-1791), with the Biblical account at its centre, emphasises the role of the Orient as both a geographical and historical basis of man's history. In brief we could say that the Hebrews' special position comes from their creative use of language through which they gain a privileged access to Divine revelation. Herder is exuberant in his praises of Hebrew: it is 'more poetical, than any other language on earth' (SHP, 33), as well as being infinitely rich, abundant in bold, 'outlandish metaphors', synonyms, hyperboles, and new word-formations⁶⁶, of which to compose a full dictionary would be near to impossible. This is due to its 'savage', pre-codified state 'in the realm of great, broad creation', which seems to mock all formal rules.⁶⁷ In Herder's enthusiastic sensual depiction all nature seems to contribute to the perfection of Hebrew which was 'moulded and uttered with a fuller expiration from the lungs, with organs yet pliable and

⁶⁵ Johann Gottfried von Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, vol. I, trans. James Marsh (Burlington: Edward Smith) 1833, p. 81 (subsequently referred to as SHP).

⁶⁶ Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, in Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2002, p. 114.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

vigorous, but at the same time under a clear and luminous heaven, with powers of vision acute, and seizing as it were upon the very objects themselves, and almost always with some mark of emotion or passion' (SHP, 33). This direct connection to the objects establishes Hebrew, more than anything, as a 'living' language full of freshly created and yet carrying the creative potential metaphors, and supposedly abounding in verbs. It 'makes the objects of nature to become things of life, and exhibits them in a state of living action' (SHP, 93). Everything in it 'lives and acts. The nouns are created from verbs, and in a certain sense are still verbs. They are as it were living beings, extracted and moulded, while their radial source itself was in a state of living energy. (...) The language of which we are speaking, is an abyss of verbs, a sea of billows, where motion, action, rolls on without end' (SHP, 29).

Man's language mirrors the nature which is not static but rather in a state of constant development and metamorphosis ever struggling to reach the pinnacle of Creation: man. In Herder's (Spinozan) view, 'nothing in the creation is without life' (SHP, 93). Everything in nature participates in God's life-giving energy. This is aptly depicted in the Oriental myths where at God's command all created objects instantly transform into angels and living beings, conversing with God and fulfilling His orders. Divinely inspired, man's poetical language duly personifies all nature acknowledging God's intimate relationship with his Creation. God not only takes close interest in the world as a caring Father who daily arranges its seas and clouds according to His predilection, He also sees and feels with all His creatures, and unifies the whole world in one living harmony: 'He is the eye of the universe, giving expression to its otherwise boundless void, and combining in a harmonious union the expression of all its multiple and multiform features' (SHP, 98). Through his poetry man converses with God and bridges the gap between heaven and earth by bringing His 'order in the world.' The Biblical account may therefore equally be termed 'the poetry of heaven and earth' (SHP, 58). It transforms all earth into the image of God's greatness, which is why it abounds in strange and exaggerated, giant-like forms, aiming to represent even in the smallest and apparently insignificant creatures God's infinite wisdom and power.⁶⁸ What to man appears silliness or ugliness is transformed by Oriental human-Divine language into splendid and awesome forms echoing God's personal delight in each and every of His creatures.

⁶⁸ Cf. Herder's reading of The Book of Job in *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, vol. I, p. 102. Herder comments on Job 39:13-19 in which the ostrich is presented as a mythical giant creature, 'as a winged giant, exulting in the race and shouting for joy. What is stupid forgetfulness in the bird, appears as the wisdom of the Creator, by which he has kindly adapted it to its shy and timid life in the desert.'

More than any other of the Biblical myths, the Paradise narration properly constitutes the heart of Herder's reading of the Bible, which radiates upon all other texts and suffuses them with Edenic freshness and joy. Henning Graf Reventlow notes that, unlike in the Lutheran heritage, Herder's 'enthusiastic equation of Adam in the creation narrative as the image of God with the present human being shows no familiarity with the fracturing of human existence through sin.'⁶⁹ Through their poetic artistry the Hebrews gain a special access to the creative landscape of the Paradise so much so that their history appears to have been composed in the Paradise: 'All Oriental poets take their source of inspiration from the vision of the Paradise, the state of simplicity and innocence: 'The Song of Solomon', for example, might seem to have been written in Paradise' (SHP, 30). The Edenic closeness to God enables man to participate in the Divine creation through the use of language, which can therefore properly be termed

alike human and Divine, for it is both. It was God who created the fountain of feeling in man, who placed the universe with all its numberless currents setting in upon him, and mingled them with the feelings of his own breast. He gave him also language and the powers of poetical invention, and thus far is the origin of poetry Divine.⁷⁰

Man's poetical use of language imitates God's creative work. All man's inventive powers spring from God's creative thoughts which only have objective reality. Beyond naming God's creation, man's thoughts remain but lifeless forms.

All Herder's writings in the end point to the Biblical landscape, as the one fully engaging all man's spiritual, imaginative and emotional powers. Biblical narrative itself, suffused with Edenic creative sensual affluence, demands an equally imaginative answer from the reader. Herder believes that it should be read (always aloud) at dawn because it was written at the spiritual dawn of human history, dawn being also metaphorically the 'vicegerent of the Deity, behind which Jehovah himself is concealed' (SHP, 48). In his *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* (1782–83), written in the form of a dialogue between Alciphron and Euthyphron (whose initials, by allusion to the first fathers, imaginatively place them in a Paradise-like landscape), is thus conducted fittingly at the break of the day and no less appropriately in the form of a lively conversation rather than a dry exposition.

⁶⁹ Henning Graf Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature) 2010, p. 200.

⁷⁰ Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, vol. 2, p. 7.

Herderian heritage sets an altogether new and ambitious model on Carlyle's creative dialogue with Richter's texts. Before we see if Jean Paul's portrait can bear its weight, let us note that Carlyle is by no means mistaken in weaving Herder's image into Jeanpaulian narrative. He calls Herder rightly Richter's 'spiritual father' whom, next to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743 – 1819), Richter esteemed most among religious thinkers (the ultimate proof of which is that at the time of his son's prolonged depression leading to his suicide, which Richter believed to have had religious grounds, he was desperately recommending to him the study of Herder and Jacobi among other moderate, 'enlightenment' litterateurs). Already in the 1827 essay Carlyle tentatively introduces Herder's name (in a footnote) by noting that it was from him that Richter 'learned much, both morally and intellectually, and whom he seems to have loved and revered beyond any other' (JP1, 336).⁷¹ Carlyle mentions Herder when discussing Richter's bizarre religious creed which at the time Carlyle himself was much perplexed to define: 'The wild freedom with which he treats the dogmas of religion must not mislead us to suppose that he himself is irreligious or unbelieving. It is Religion, it is Belief, in whatever dogmas expressed, or whether expressed in any, that has reconciled for him the contradictions of existence, that has overspread his path with light, and chastened the fiery elements of his spirit by mingling with them Mercy and Humility (JP1, 336). We may just note here a beginning of what will become the recurring pattern in Richter's portrayal, whereby Richter's 'fiery' nature is mitigated and made more humane through his embracing of a 'milder' creed. At the time of the writing of the Preface to *The German Romance*, Carlyle himself was struggling to make sense of Herder's works and to reconcile them with his Calvinist heritage. He was equally puzzled and fascinated by Herder's theory of Biblical criticism. In 1826, a year before the publication of the Richter essay, he notes on Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*: 'Strange ideas about the Bible and Religion; passing strange we think them for a clergyman.'⁷² He gradually comes to see Herder as the prophet of a new school of Biblical criticism, whose ideas verge on heresy: 'If Herder were not known as a devout man and clerk, his book would be reckoned atheistical. Herder's Ideen zur Phil.—there it lay! — and the new philosophy was driving fiercely butting like a wild Bull against the orthodox creed of Germany.'⁷³ In spite of his strong reservations about Herder's theological theories, Carlyle was charmed by his poetical style, the sensuous depictions of nature, his generous humanity and empathy emanating from his works: 'indeed

⁷¹ In the footnote.

⁷² Thomas Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 73.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

he loves all men and all things: his very descriptions of animals and inanimate agencies are animated, cordial, affectionate; much more so those of men.⁷⁴ By comparison, Carlyle thus comments on Richter's deep connection to Nature:

His affection is warm, tender, comprehensive, not dwelling among the high places of the world, not blind to its objects when found among the poor and lowly. Nature in all her scenes and manifestations he loves with a deep, almost passionate love; from the solemn phases of the starry heaven to the simple floweret of the meadow, his eye and his heart are open for her charms and her mystic meanings (JP1, 336).

Yet, similarly to Herder, Richter is above all a humanist, whose chief interest is human nature manifested in all its hues in the history:

His thoughts, his feelings, the creations of his spirit, walk before us embodied under wondrous shapes, in motley and ever-fluctuating groups; but his essential character, however he disguise it, is that of a Philosopher and moral Poet, whose study has been human nature, whose delight and best endeavour are with all that is beautiful, and tender, and mysteriously sublime, in the fate or history of man (JP2, 7).

As a Western Oriental, Richter is truly the image of Herder, sharing his warm, open nature and 'a deep loving sympathy with all created things' (JP3, 139). By the time of the writing of 'Jean Paul Richter Again' (1830) Carlyle had a much firmer conviction about Richter's indebtedness to Herder, which he confirms accordingly:

It was to Herder that Paul chiefly attached himself here; esteeming the others as high-gifted, friendly men, but only Herder as a teacher and spiritual father; of which later relation, and the warm love and gratitude accompanying it on Paul's side, his writings give frequent proof. If Herder was not a Poet,' says he once, 'he was something more,— a Poem! (JP3, 150-151).

Following Herder's passionate reading of the Biblical narrative, Richter *the Poet* (as Carlyle always referred to him) becomes now not only the author of Oriental poetry: his life properly speaking itself 'is a Bible' (JP3, 122). Carlyle devotes much attention to Richter's linguistic innovations:

[H]is language itself is a stone of stumbling to the critic; to critics of the grammarian species, an unpardonable, often an insuperable, rock of offence. Not that he is ignorant of grammar, or disdains the sciences of spelling and parsing; but he exercises both in a certain latitudinarian spirit; deals with astonishing liberality in parentheses, dashes, and subsidiary clauses; invents hundreds of new words, alters old ones, or, by hyphen, chains and pairs and

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

packs them together into most jarring combination; in short, produces sentences of the most heterogeneous, lumbering, interminable kind. Figures without limit; indeed the whole is one tissue of metaphors, and similes, and allusions to all the provinces of Earth, Sea and Air (JP2, 9).

Similarly to Herder's description of Hebrew, Richter's 'rugged, heterogeneous, perplexed' (JP1, 338) language seems to follow no pre-established rules. It is fresh, lively, and 'most ductile' (JP1, 334) abounding in 'effusions full of wit, knowledge and imagination', it 'groans with indescribable metaphors and allusions to all things human and divine; flowing onward, not like a river, but like an inundation' (JP1, 333). It ascribes to all objects giant-like qualities, it is 'Titanian; deep, strong, tumulus, shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes.' Carlyle is fascinated by the fact that a *Lexicon for Jean Paul's Works* composed by K. Reinhold listing for the German public Richter's neologisms and foreign words is required in order to study his works: 'a necessary assistance for all who would read those works with profit!' (JP3, 120-121) In direct challenge to De Quincey's chaotic depiction of Jeanpaulian universe, Richter's Biblical enlivening of German language seems to transform his writings into a true Edenic landscape. What at first appeared a chaotic confusion of gruesome and monstrous elements heaped one on top of another in no apparent order, is now under the direct light of the sun metamorphosed into a lively, heterogeneous, yet well-maintained and thriving garden:

[T]he farther we advance into it, we see confusion more and more unfold itself into order, till at last, viewed from its proper centre, his intellectual universe, no longer a distorted incoherent series of air-landscapes, coalesces into compact expansion; a vast, magnificent, and variegated scene; full of wondrous products; rude, it may be, and irregular; but gorgeous, benignant, great; gay with the richest verdure and foliage, glittering in the brightest and kindest sun (JP2, 11).

At the same time, the introduction of Herder to Richter's portrayal apparently bridges the gap between Richter's cyclopean, gigantic form and his milder, loving self, since the Oriental all-embracing Paradise offers to accommodate even the monster Richter by weaving him into the mythical narrative of the Bible, which rejoices in its fantastic multiform creatures. Reflected now again in the Divine 'eye of the universe' (in Herder's words), Richter's monstrous productions appear suffused with God-like playfulness and creativity. It is only expected that Jeanpaulian language should 'naturally' replenish its textual Garden with ever new giant-like fabulous creatures however incredible and unheard-of to his public. In this way Richter's Portrait Gallery is transformed into the demesne of free humorous inventiveness. Repeating Richter's appraisal of the best 'Herderian' traits in Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, Carlyle defines

Richter's humour as coming 'from the heart' and not 'from the head' (JP2, 12-13). Indeed, Richter's acknowledgement of the 'Herderian' emotional traits in Staël's review as well as his generous invitation issued to all reviewers to enter his Romantic Gallery displays chief characteristics of his broad all-encompassing Oriental humour which Carlyle describes as pure sensibility 'in the most catholic and deepest sense; (...) as it were, the playful teasing fondness of a mother to her child' (JP2, 13). Even Richter's apparent rage against Staël's stylistic caricature – which Carlyle describes in his Introduction as Richter showing his fearsome 'lion's claw'⁷⁵ to his readers is re-embraced by the Edenic narration in which God's fantasy seems to have no limits. In Herder's words:

To him nothing is wild, nothing dumb and despised. He roars with the lion after his prey, and looks down from his mountain eyry [sic] with the glance of the eagle. The wild ass lives upon his pastures, and the hawk flies by his wisdom. His too is the great deep, the realm of monsters. The hated crocodile is the object of his paternal love, and behemoth is the beginning of the ways of God, the most magnificent of his works on earth.⁷⁶

As in Hebrew poetry, where God is depicted joyfully participating in this world, through his emotive language man also can empathise with the whole creation: 'like an image of the all-sentient deity, he can put himself almost in the place of every creature, and can share it's [sic] feelings in the degree necessary to the creature.'⁷⁷ No fearsome or ugly aspect of Nature is so dismal to him as to lack genuine beauty. Let us compare Carlyle's depiction of Richter's Oriental revelry, which not only sympathises with Nature but almost ecstatically 'plunges' into all its fierce aspects:

In his passion (...), there is the same wild vehemence: it is the voice of softest pity, of endless boundless wailing (...) the fierce bellowing of lions amid savage forests. Thus too, he not only loves Nature, but he revels in her; plunges into her infinite bosom, and fills his whole heart to intoxication with her charms (...) no skyey [sic] aspect was so dismal that it altogether wanted beauty for him. We know of no Poet with so deep and passionate and universal a feeling towards Nature (JP3, 154).

Thus Richter's many transformations into fearsome lions, and giant mythological creatures of the past in Carlyle's presentation appear no longer (in Richter's words) as 'fungus excrescences' of his texts, but, instead, as legitimate offspring of his manifold metaphorical language which enlivens, personifies, and emotionally inhabits everything it names.

⁷⁵ Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', p. 341.

⁷⁶ Herder, *The Spirit*, vol. I, p. 77.

⁷⁷ Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T Churchill, vol. I (London: J. Johnson) 1803, p. 99.

Similarly, Carlyle's imaginative (and fittingly also carried through lively images) portrayal represents an adequate emotive answer (rather than a purely intellectual appreciation) to Richter's constantly altering in creative frenzy and 'shining with a thousand hues' writing.

Without diminishing the giant-like strength of Richter's writings, the two contrasting sides of his personality seem thus momentarily united in this new all-embracing physiognomical study:

A huge, irregular man, both in mind and person (for his Portrait is quite a physiognomical study), full of fire, strength and impetuosity, Richter seems, at the same time, to have been, in the highest degree, mild, simple-hearted, humane (JP2, 6).

However, the fiery elements in Richter's character (the quelling of which was in Richter's court judged to have been Staël's criminal offence) are hard to keep within Edenic bounds. (We should also be reminded that for all Richter's dramatic cries in *The Speech* for a 'soft healing hand' to free him from his theological nightmare, he was far from accepting Staël's 'Herderian' assistance).⁷⁸ Richter as a man of striking contrasts, fiery and impetuous yet mild, simple-hearted and humane, bears some unmistakable resemblance to the depiction of one of Carlyle's most admired idols thus represented in *Heroes and Hero Worship*:

Luther's face is to me expressive of him; in Kranach's [sic] best portraits I find the true Luther. A rude plebeian face; with its huge crag-like brows and bones, the emblem of rugged energy; at first, almost a repulsive face. Yet in the eyes especially there is a wild silent sorrow; an unnameable melancholy, the element of all gentle and fine affections; giving to the rest the true stamp of nobleness.⁷⁹

In Luther's face also there are signs of wild, rugged energy on the one hand, and (apparently) of gentleness and mildness on the other. Yet on the first plane, there are Luther's inspecting eyes – and there is no joy in them.

Carlyle intentionally juxtaposes the picture of Herder with that of Luther by quoting from Richter's *School for Aesthetics* (1804): 'Visit Herder's creations, where Greek life-freshness, and Hindoo life-weariness are wonderfully blended: you walk, as it were, amid moonshine, into which the red dawn is already falling; but one hidden sun is the painter of both' (JP3, 156). Next to it, Carlyle places Richter's comment (which was to become one of Carlyle's

⁷⁸ Richter, 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review', p. 166

⁷⁹ Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 104.

life-long oft-quoted aphorisms): ‘Luther’s prose is a half-battle; few deeds are equal to his words’ (JP3, 156). Thus is Luther introduced into the Oriental landscape.

4) Luther Enters the Paradise

Luther sneaks into Richter’s Oriental garden bearing a comic mask, humour playing the key role in Richter’s aesthetic theory, as Carlyle was well aware, having studied Richter’s *School for Aesthetics*. Overall, we can say that Carlyle rightly interpreted Richter’s humour as more gentle, humane and ‘Oriental’ in character than Romantic irony: ‘The faculty of irony, of caricature, which often passes by the name of humour, but consists chiefly in a certain superficial distortion or reversal of objects, and ends at best in laughter, bears no resemblance to the humour of Richter’ (JP2, 13). In his aesthetic theory, Richter himself juxtaposes irony to humour by describing the former as harmful to the individual and minor follies, whereas the latter – as positing all things great and small on equal grounds (equally laughable) before the idea of the Infinite. Jean Paul’s chief objection to German Romantic school, as Margaret. R. Hale pointed out, was its pessimism, its lack of joy and ‘warmth’⁸⁰ (the last being one of his repeatedly used objections). Much as he despised the ‘ugly realism’, he could not come to terms with the Romantic coldness and disconnectedness for ‘we desire a happier, more colourful play’.⁸¹ Richter’s gay masquerade comes at a cost though. It explicitly rejects Herder’s poetic bridge between heaven and earth and, instead, posits all poetic expression in eternal anticipation of heaven, hovering, as it were, between the finite and infinite in an anxious and uneasy (even if this uneasiness is gaudily masked) expectation.⁸² Notwithstanding Richter’s horror of orthodox Protestantism, and his warm praises of the ‘cheerful Christianity of (...) Herder’, he was all too incredulous and even suspicious of the Oriental Paradise to accept it unconditionally.⁸³ It is Herder’s enthusiastic trust in man’s creative potential to poetically converse with God which ultimately, Richter thinks, precludes his reaching the heights of poetry, properly funded on eternal (and, as such, eternally unfulfilled) longing. Herder lacks what for Richter is the essence of humour, the

⁸⁰ Margaret. R. Hale, ‘Introduction’ in *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret. R. Hale. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press) 1973, p. XXI.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Cf. Paul Fleming, *The Pleasures of Abandonment: Jean Paul and the Life of Humor* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann) 2006, p. 19. Fleming quotes Richter defining his humour: ‘But to find reluctantly the ordinary smallness of human nature one sublimely hovers midway between pain and elevation above such smallness – to express this is called humour, which offers the appearance of the sublime of the comic next to one another.’

⁸³ Cf. Casey (ed.), *Jean Paul: A Reader*, pp. 58, 72 and 195.

indispensable dose of uncertainty and even anxiety, a ‘psychic vertigo’⁸⁴, as Richter calls it, ‘the so-called ‘unrest’ or balance wheel in a watch, which works only to *moderate*, and hence to maintain the motion.’⁸⁵ The necessary buffer to Herder’s excessive enthusiasm comes from another quarters:

Whereas Luther calls our will a *lex inversa* [law of inverting] in an unfavourable sense, humour is a *lex inversa* in a good sense, and its descent to hell paves its way for an ascent to heaven. It is like a bird Merops, which indeed turns its tail towards heaven but still flies in this position up to heaven. This juggler, while dancing on his head, drinks his nectar *upwards*.⁸⁶

Metamorphosed into the exotic Merops gracefully exposing its tail to heaven, Luther thus becomes the paradigm of Jeanpaulian humour’s backward ascent to the ‘heavenly’ joys (while yet ‘forwardly’ contemplating hell). As in the case of Richter’s *Speech*, such ‘joys’ are gained only through the nihilistic descent to the hellish worlds devoid of Godly presence. And yet, the ordeal, Richter seems to be suggesting, is worth going through for the sake of the pleasures one experiences upon departure. When he wakes up, Jean Paul announces his feeling of delightful relief: ‘My soul wept for joy that I could still pray to God’ (JP3, 166). *The Speech* finishes with Richter’s markedly ambiguous advice to his reader to pray to God while he still can ‘else thou lost him forever.’⁸⁷

Yet Richter’s descents into hell are much more dangerous than he is trying to make them appear. Luther’s transformation into a humoristic Merops hides a rather unexpected surprise. Richter in fact appears to be referring not to Merops but to a humming bird which by its small size and nectar-drinking resembles a bee. Merops, on the other hand, is a larger bird which eats bees. Richter’s self-devouring humour, it appears, despite Jean Paul’s light language, is a dangerous tool. Carlyle aptly recognises the true epicentre of Richter’s poetical doctrine when he immediately corrects himself after praising the Oriental sun in Richter’s writings which decorates ‘the earth at large with orient pearl. But deeper than all these lies Humour,

⁸⁴ Jean Paul Richter, *School for Aesthetics*, p. 178.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁸⁷ Since Richter seems to be suggesting that there possibly is no one to pray to, this has led to a long discussion among critics about whether ‘The Speech’ reflects Richter’s religious doubts. Compare Vijn, *Carlyle and Jean Paul*, pp. 47-49. Vijn argues that: ‘It may be objected that, though Christ’s man’s belief in God before death are genuine, this belief is in fact an illusion, and that, in the final sentence (...), Christ appears to recommend belief in God even as an illusion;’ however Vijn claims that for Jean Paul this is not the final statement. The proper conclusion is that ‘God is of direct importance to existence, also to existence here and now.’ Vijn notes that upon awakening the dreamer finds the world of order and cohesion again, thus the dream should be called a ‘dream of disjunction’ rather than of annihilation.

the ruling quality with Richter; as it were the central fire that pervades and vivifies his whole being' (JP3, 120). Given the hellish connotations of Richter's humour, this imagery of fire pervading and kindling Jean Paul's works is not altogether out of place, although it also points to Carlyle's forging of Richter's humour to his personal Calvinist taste.⁸⁸ The central position of humour as the true 'essence' and 'soul' of Richter's writing, as well as of his character, is repeatedly emphasised by Carlyle in all his essays: 'He is a Humourist heartily and throughout; not only in low provinces of thought, where this is more common, but in the loftiest provinces, where it is well nigh unexampled' (JP3, p. 120). Richter's proposed descent to hell in order to pave the way to the 'loftiest provinces' seems to make the devil the exemplary humorist per se, except, Richter says, that 'he [the devil] would be far too unaesthetic; his laugh would have too much pain; it would be like the colourful flowery garment of the – guillotined.'⁸⁹ Carlyle, apparently, had no such reservations. Indeed, in his imagery, laughter and humour are intricately connected with pain and tears. Humour is always 'serio-ridiculous'⁹⁰ at best, just as a smile is only an outer expression of inner seriousness and of the conviction about the sternness of life (Carlyle's much telling life-motto was: 'Ernst ist das Leben'⁹¹):

But what most of all shadows forth the inborn, essential temper of Paul's mind, is the sportfulness, the wild heartfelt Humour, which, in his heights and in his lowest moods, ever exhibits itself as a quite inseparable ingredient. His Humour, with all its wildness, is of the gravest and kindest, a genuine Humour; 'consistent with utmost earnestness, or rather, inconsistent with the want of it' (JP3, 154).

Richter's 'wild humour' carries with it a deeper conviction about the gravity and despicability of the earthly life. Properly speaking, it is wild because it recognises that this

⁸⁸ Theodore Geissendoerfer argues convincingly that the humour of Richter and Carlyle in fact differed crucially: 'Carlyle not only knew Richter's humor as it manifested itself in his works, he also knew his theory of it. (...) It is, however, largely confined to the theoretical side. There is little resemblance between the humor of the two men. Carlyle was too stern, too deeply in earnest to be heartily humorous.' Cf. Theodore Geissendoerfer, 'Carlyle and Jean Paul Friederich Richter', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 25.4 (Oct., 1926), 540-553, p. 550. For a contrary opinion compare Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, pp. 273-283. Tennyson argues that Carlyle's humour is a direct heir of Richter's humour and German Romantic theory of humour in general. For a discussion of Carlyle's humour compare also Richard J. Dunn, 'Inverse Sublimity: Carlyle's Theory of Humour' in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 9:1 (1970:Fall), 41-57, p. 50, where Dunn argues that Carlyle's humour is an answer to/ a suppression of Carlyle's personal uncertainty.

⁸⁹ Richter says: 'I can easily think of the devil, the true reversed world of the divine world, the great world-shadow which marks off the contours of the light body, as the greatest humorist and 'whimsical man!' But as the *arabesque* of an arabesque, he would be far too unaesthetic; his laugh would have too much pain; it would be like the colourful flowery garment of the – guillotined.' Jean Paul Richter, *School for Aesthetics in German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: The Romantic Ironists and Goethe*, ed. Kathleen M. Wheeler, pp. 162-198, p. 177.

⁹⁰ Thomas Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, ed. James Anthony Froude (New York: Harper & Brothers) 1881, p. 85.

⁹¹ 'Life is earnest': The motto to *Past and Present*, and one of Carlyle's favourite quotations, taken from the prologue to Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

life is no laughing matter and an adequately heroic effort must be made in order to laugh at it nonetheless (always as though through one's bitter tears).⁹²

Let us come back to Carlyle's portrayal of Luther: 'Laughter was in this Luther, as we said; but tears also were there. Tears also were appointed him; tears and hard toil. The basis of his life was Sadness, Earnestness.'⁹³ Luther's sour laughter stems from his appreciation of the utter wretchedness of life. How deep this portrayal was engraved in Carlyle's imagination can be seen from Carlyle's depiction of his own father. It is worth taking such a biographical detour in order to note the commonalities between Carlyle's recollections of his father and his depiction of Luther. Carlyle, as a matter of fact, often insisted that what was taken to be the influence of Jean Paul over his writing had in fact deeper roots in his childhood, and especially, in his father's character (of whom he famously claimed to be the 'second volume'⁹⁴). In the *Reminiscences* (1881) Carlyle recollects his father's laughter which comes close to tears: 'He had an air of deepest gravity, even sternness. Yet he could laugh with his whole throat, and his whole heart. I have often seen him weep too.'⁹⁵ The father's humour is always lined with a contempt for the world's folly and its sinful amusements. In an oft-quoted scene the father admonishes his friends upon the sinfulness of card-playing, upon which they penitently thrust them into the fire.⁹⁶ Another of the father's favourite narratives, in Carlyle recollections, was a story of a maniac woman throwing herself into the furnace and being devoured by fire.⁹⁷ Fire, destruction and tears go frequently in the wake of Carlyle's humour.

⁹² There has been some argument about how much this backing of Richter's humour with sternness genuinely depicts Jeanpaulian humour. Theodore Geissendoerfer in 'Carlyle and Jean Paul Friederich Richter' argued that it is an addition of Carlyle, whereas J. W. Smeed claimed that the gravity represents the genuine part of the inner duality of humour in Jean Paul's theory: 'Ever conscious of the disparity between their aspirations and their perception of reality, or between their feelings and their intellect, the "Humoristen" are possessed by a sense of life's irreconcilable dualism, which manifests itself in a bizarre mixture of humor and seriousness or in a type of humor which has a pensive, even a tragic ground.' Cf. J. W. Smeed, 'Thomas Carlyle and Jean Paul Richter', *Comparative Literature*, 16.3 (1964), 226-253, p. 233.

⁹³ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 104.

⁹⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, James Anthony Froude (ed.) (New York: Harper and Brothers) 1881, p. 65.

⁹⁵ Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, p. 22. Carlyle also describes the coldness and lack of affection in his father: 'Though genuine and coherent, 'living and life-giving,' he was, nevertheless, but half-developed. We had all to complain that we durst not freely love him. His heart seemed as if walled in; he had not the free means to unbosom himself. (...) It seemed as if an atmosphere of fear repelled us from him. To me it was especially so. Till late years, when he began 'to respect me more (...) I was ever more or less awed and chilled before him.' Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, p. 21.

⁹⁶ 'My father spoke out what was in him about the folly, the sinfulness, of quarrelling over a perhaps sinful amusement. The earnest mind persuaded other minds. They threw the cards in the fire and (...) no one of them ever touched a card again through life.' Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, p. 39

⁹⁷ Compare James L. Halliday's discussion of the fiery imagery in Carlyle's recollections of his father, among which Halliday quotes the incident in Carlyle's father's life: 'The stoker saw her but as he had often noticed her there he paid no attention. After a little when his back was turned, he heard 'a strange thump or cracking puff; and on turning suddenly the poor old maniac woman was not there; and, on advancing to the furnace-edge, he

Two ‘incidents’ in Luther’s life which Carlyle recounts in *Heroes* are strikingly similar in terms of their fiery imagery to his father’s stories. In the first, Luther’s friend and travel companion is killed by a lightning: ‘he fell dead at Luther’s feet.’⁹⁸ In the second, Carlyle recounts the tale of Luther feverishly throwing his inkpad supposedly at the passing devil.⁹⁹ The stories share the imagery of thrusting, striking and killing by fire, but also of latent insanity. Similarly laughter, in Carlyle’s view, always carries something wild, disturbing, and possibly mad. Let us compare the description of Teufelsdröckh’s wild laughter provoked by Jean Paul’s joke in *Sartor Resartus*:

[O]nce we saw him *laugh*; once only, perhaps it was the first and last time in his life; but then such a peal of laughter, enough to have awakened the Seven Sleepers! It was of Jean Paul's doing: some single billow in that vast World-Mahlstrom of Humor, with its heaven-kissing coruscations, which is now, alas, all congealed in the frost of death! (...) gradually a light kindled in our Professor's eyes and face (...) and he burst forth like the neighing of all Tattersall's, – tears streaming down his cheeks, pipe held aloft, foot clutched into the air, – loud, long-continuing, uncontrollable; a laugh not of the face and diaphragm only, but of the whole man from head to heel. The present Editor, (...) began to fear all was not right (SR, 30-31).¹⁰⁰

Finally, the wild depiction which seems to momentarily release the inner insanity in the Professor, and even to expose his animalistic instincts (he behaves like a neighing horse) proves a striking comparison with what in the recollections of one of his pupils was Carlyle’s own bestial harangue of laughter:

He was a strict and gloomy disciplinarian who stormed and walloped learning into his pupils. His large glowing eyes constantly shot forth wrath, while his protruding chin was laden with scorn. We dreaded his grins and his mocking words. How savagely his teeth used to grind out ‘dunce,’ ‘blockhead’ or ‘donkey.’ At times he would burst into a roar of laughter, a very extraordinary laugh which exploded in a succession of loud and deep guffaws, that shook his whole body and displayed all his teeth like the keys of piano.¹⁰¹

saw the figure of her, red hot, semi-transparent, floating as ashes on the fearful element for some moments. This had printed itself on my father’s brain; nor will it ever leave my brain either.’ James L. Halliday, *Mr. Carlyle my Patient* (London: William Heinemann) 1949, p. 9.

⁹⁸ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁰ Some critics have argued that Teufelsdröckh represents directly Jean Paul himself. Cf. for example Theodore Geissendoerfer *op. cit.*, or J. W. Smeed *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Quoted by Halliday in *Mr. Carlyle my Patient*, p. 35. Compare also Carlyle’s depiction of his father’s disconcerting laughter which he contrasts with his wife’s grandfather’s joyful laugh. By comparison, Carlyle’s father’s laugh is much ‘rarer’ and ‘louder far’. Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, pp. 231-232.

It is curious to note that in the space between his Richter essays, Carlyle was seriously considering writing a biography of Luther.¹⁰² However, he eventually rejected William Tait's suggestion to write an essay on Luther for the *Foreign Review* in 1830, and proposed instead to write yet another essay on Richter ('Jean Paul Richter Again').¹⁰³ It requires an exercise of imagination to recognise in Richter's fantastic Mirror Gallery the possible new incarnation of Luther, but the idea is tempting and not altogether untenable.

Certain common traits in both portraits are instantly recognizable: similarly to Luther's depiction with its stress on his wild cheerless eyes expressing 'an unnameable melancholy', Carlyle implies that under Richter's comic mask a deeply morose face is hidden. Jean Paul's apparently humorous 'roguish eyes (...) look out on us through many a grave delineation' (JP3, 154). The tearful expression under Richter's mask is echoed in his reader's physiognomy upon reading the apparently 'humorous' passages in his works: 'Some slight incident is carelessly thrown before us: we smile at it perhaps, but with a smile more sad than tears' (JP1, 334). Jean Paul also supposedly shares Luther's appreciation of the harshness and gruesome reality of earthly life which is no fitting place for trite amusements but rather an area for the exercise of one's duty. Carlyle quotes Richter saying: 'I hold my duty,' says he in [his] Biographical Notes, 'not to lie in enjoying or acquiring, but in writing; – whatever time it may cost, whatever money may be forborne, – nay whatever pleasure'' (JP3, 152). No heavenly joys, but rather the unmistakably Protestant joys coming from 'hard toil', and, in Carlyle's father's Calvinist language, the only genuinely un sinful 'fire-proof Joys' are cherished by Richter (JP3, 152).

The dramatic entry of Luther onto the scene, changes the historical and epistemological centre of Richterian landscape from the Hebrew productions of the Oriental Eden to the sixteenth century Germany. As Carlyle claimed in *Heroes*: 'Protestantism is the grand root from which our whole subsequent European history branches out.'¹⁰⁴ When describing Luther, Carlyle repeats Jean Paul's affirmation from the *School for Aesthetics*: 'Richter says of Luther's words, 'his words are half-battles.' They may be called so. The essential quality of him was, that he could fight and conquer.'¹⁰⁵ If Herder's imaginative influence over

¹⁰² Carlyle writes: 'I have long had a sort of notion to write some life or characteristic of Luther. A picture of the public Thought in those days, and of this strong lofty mind overturning and new-moulding it, would be a fine affair in many senses. It would require immense research.' Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 140.

¹⁰³ Cf. Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson) 1995, p. 106.

¹⁰⁴ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Richter's depiction opened 'to us the land of dreams', we are reminded now by Carlyle that Richter is, as a matter of fact, no 'German dreamer' (JP2, 9). Quite on the contrary, if anything, he can be compared to the heroic Prometheus bringing fire to the world (in Protestant logic – in order to purify it). A true biography of Jean Paul must reflect this 'central fire' in Richter's nature and itself become kindled with 'genial fire' (JP3, 123). On the linguistic side, Luther's fiery words augur no good to the Oriental linguistically-funded scenery. If the demesne of Herder's language was creation, Luther's new 'poetic' language, much resembling a stormy lightning, aims chiefly at destruction:

Luther's merit in literary history is of the greatest; his dialect became the language of all writing. (...) [It had a] rugged honesty, homeliness, simplicity; a rugged sterling sense and strength. He flashes out illumination from him; his smiting idiomatic phrases seem to cleave into the very secret of the matter. Good humour too, nay tender affection, nobleness, and depth: this man could have been a Poet too! (JP3, 102)

Luther's bitterly sharp humour poses a serious danger to the flow of man's Oriental conversation with God mediated through poetic images. His smiting and cleaving poetry finds an altogether anti-Edenic panorama, reminding us that in Luther's imagery God chiefly 'converses' by means of his thunders dealing destruction in the world. In the translated by Carlyle and published in *Fraser's Magazine* (1831) Psalm 'Eine Feste Burg ist unser Gott'¹⁰⁶ Luther paints the world beset by ever-watchful devils:

And were this world all Devils o'er,
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore,
Not they can overpower us.¹⁰⁷

In the Introduction to his translation, Carlyle presents Luther's electrifying style as comparable to an avalanche or an earthquake, which destroys everything in its wild passage, and to which all adversaries are 'weak; weak as the forest, with all its strong *trees*, may be to the smallest spark of electric *fire*.'¹⁰⁸ An uncontrollable, thunder-like natural force of Luther's burning words promises to

bring the whole world back to reality, for it had dwelt too long with semblance! A youth nursed up in wintry whirlwinds, in desolate darkness and difficulty, that he may step forth at last from his stormy Scandinavia, strong as

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Carlyle, 'Luther's Psalm', in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. II (Lodon: Chapman and Hall) 1864, p. 178-181.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

a true man, as a god: a Christian Odin,—a right Thor once more, with his thunder-hammer, to smite asunder ugly enough *Jötuns* and Giant-monsters!¹⁰⁹

The fiery demolishing of the ‘primeval forests’ inhabited by ugly mythological Giants portends no good to Richter’s other Giant-like Oriental self. Such is the fearful, Lutheran side of Richter’s portrait:

He has an intellect vehement, rugged, irresistible; crushing in pieces the hardest problems, piercing into the most hidden combinations of things, and grasping the most distant: an imagination vague, sombre, splendid, or appalling; brooding over the abysses of Being; wandering through Infinitude, and summoning before us, in its dim religious light, shapes of brilliancy, solemnity, or terror (JP2, 11).

The bright Oriental scenery, suffused with God’s creative energy and requiring an equally ‘roaring energy’¹¹⁰ from his reader to respond; often almost too dazzling to be faced by contemporary reader¹¹¹ has given way to a dimly lit abysmal space, in which Richter wildly performs his sublime crushing and piercing operations. Richter’s deep love of nature and his joyful acceptance of all its creatures are suddenly gone: empty, infinite space left in their wake. The Edenic co-habitation of roaring lions with milder beasts sanctioned by God’s close emotional inhabitation of the world, is darkly re-painted with the introduction of Luther to the scene. For Luther, although God does metaphorically take the form of a roaring lion it is mostly in order to afflict and ‘crush the bones’ of the sinners in order to give them a foretaste of the hellish fires which await them after death.¹¹² Faced with such a depiction of the giant monster Richter gaily crushing to pieces Carlyle’s feeble Judgment hall, his readers may well

¹⁰⁹ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 96.

¹¹⁰ Johann Gottfried Herder, *On the German-Oriental Poets in Selected Early Works 1764-1767*, ed. Ernest A. Menze and Karl Menges, trans. Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press) 1992, pp.175-189, p. 186. Herder argues that the prosperity of modern life deprived man of the richness of emotional responses to poetry witnessed among early nations: ‘Our poetical sense responds more slowly and deliberately, rather than with roaring energy.’

¹¹¹ ‘The sun of the Orientals is sometimes too bright for us, but nonetheless it must have been so in this early time of their childhood: In the ethical poetry of the Orientals the idea of God is the sun in the firmament, which illuminates the whole horizon of human existence, and even at a late period marked, with its clear and distinct radiance, the dial plate of particular relations and duties. To us of the present day, this sun seems too burning and oppressive; then its light was indispensable; for this simple, childlike morality, enforced by reverence for the Divine Being.’ Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, vol. I, pp. 170-171.

¹¹² ‘As a lion, so he breaketh all my bones.’ This is what we sometimes find in them also who are brought to the point of death, where many tremble and are horribly wracked with straits and agonies. For God often works this tribulation in that state, where the man can no more run to human comforts, and is forced to bear the hand of him that purifieth him. For it is necessary that sin should be destroyed in this manner, and be driven from us, that we may love God above all things, and may burn with an unspeakable thirsting after him.’ John Nickolas Lenker (ed.), *Luther’s Commentary on the First Twenty-Two Psalms*, trans. Henry Cole, vol. I (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lutherans in All Lands Co.) 1903, p. 343.

be justified to retreat with horror. Such are the sublime joys of the Lutheran Cyclops Jean Paul:

In all departments, we find in him a subduing force; but a lawless untutored, as it were half-savage force. Thus, for example, few understandings known to us are of a more irresistible character than Richter's; but its strength is a natural, unarmed, Orson-like strength: he does not cunningly undermine his subject, and lay it open, by syllogistic implements or any rule of art; but he crushes it to pieces in his arms, he threads it asunder (not without gay triumph) under his feet and so in almost monstrous fashion, yet with piercing clearness, lays bare the inmost heart and core of it to all eyes (JP3, 154).

The whole habitable earth, it seems, is not grand enough a field for the exercise of Jean Paul's new-found monstrous demolishing powers. Carlyle envisions the Giant Richter sportfully demonstrating his awesome force in a Titanic entertainment of wrecking the universe in an 'infinite masquerade':

Sport is the element in which his nature lives and works. A tumulus element for such a nature, and wild work he makes in it! A Titan in his sport as in his earnestness, he oversteps all bound, and riots without law or measure. He heaps Pelion upon Ossa, and hurls the universe together and asunder like a case of playthings. The Moon 'bombards' the Earth, being a rebellious satellite; Mars 'preaches' to the other planets, very singular doctrine; nay, we have Time and Space themselves playing fantastic tricks: it is an infinite masquerade; all Nature is gone forth mumming in the strangest disguises (JP2, 11).

No concept is strong enough to withstand the annihilating, crushing and shattering passage of Richter's monstrous maelstrom of humour. It forges its jests with the strokes of Vulcan's hammer and shapes even the most trifling characters with a force quite surpassing the required one, threatening to smash them in pieces. His Titanian language promises no orderly arrangement but, instead, it piles all things of heaven and earth in 'huge unwieldy heaps.' There is apparently no stop to Richter's frenzy which makes him

rend in pieces the stubbornest materials and extort from them their most hidden and refractory truth. In his Humour he sports with the highest and the lowest, he can play at bowls with the sun and the moon. (...) we sail with him through the boundless abyss, and the secrets of Space, and Time, and Life, and Annihilation, however round us in dim cloudy forms, and darkness, and immensity, and dread, encompass and overshadow us. Nay, in handing the smallest matter, he works it with the tools of a giant. A common truth is wrenched from its old combinations, and presented us in new, impassable, abysmal contrast with its opposite error (JP1, 334).

Richter's bestial demolition leaves in its wake a world shattered and cleaved by empty abysmal gorges. Such a concentration of hammering, cleaving, forging and piercing threatens even to break altogether Carlyle's reflecting mirror leaving the onlooker alone faced with the 'boundless abyss, and the secrets of Space, and Time, and Life, and Annihilation'.

Carlyle leaves the Portrait Gallery in a doubtful state, with the reader rightly wondering if any of Richter's fantastic portraits has withstood such a magnificent display of Titanic (Lutheran) force.

5) Pause: The Long Clothes-Martyrdom

Before we proceed to the examination of *Sartor Resartus*, it is worth pausing for a moment in the finishing pages of Carlyle's last essay on Richter. Upon taking his leave, Carlyle casually redirects the reader back to the 'Episode Concerning Paul's Costume' narrated earlier. In a movement which was to become the trademark of Carlyle's writing, an apparently trivial incident assumes a symbolic dimension through which Carlyle half-jokingly proposes to decipher the secrets of Richter's character. Since in 'the story of the Costume' once again the imagery of cutting and disguising, scattered nonchalantly elsewhere in his portrait (and crucial to *Sartor Resartus*) meets in a most explicit manner, it deserves a closer look.

In a passage entitled 'concerning the Costume controversies' Carlyle recounts after C. Otto the story of Richter's defiance of the accepted dressing codes (JP3, 140-142). During seven years the anglophile Jean Paul dressed *à la Hamlet* with his shirt open, without a neckcloth and with a 'docked cue' (which he personally cut off) to the horror of his neighbours. In such a carnivalesque spirit and outfit he paraded in the streets of Leipzig until this 'long clothes-martyrdom' was put an end to by public denunciations. Accused by his neighbour of such an 'indecent exposure' in shared gardens, Jean Paul in the end acknowledged the charges by 'leaving his Paradise (...) no less guiltlessly than voluntarily, for a certain bareness of breast and neck; whereas our First Parents were only allowed to retain theirs so long as they felt themselves innocent in total nudity' (JP3, 141).

Having met with such an unjust reception, Jean Paul effects a 'glorious retreat' from his Paradise. Yet the matters take an even worse course in the city of Hof where the public opinion seems to have been offended more by Richter's haircut than by his half-nude disguise. Seeing that his cropped hair will no longer be tolerated, Jean Paul issues a mockingly apologetic public note advertising his purpose to appear with a 'false cue' in order

to pacify the raging public rather than relinquishing the use of scissors. In it he half-jokingly describes his plight as the reverse of that of the Biblical Absalom, who suffered death from his enemies after he was caught up in the boughs of a tree due to his abundant hair. Yet the story seems rather a topsy-turvy take on the plight of the Biblical Samson, who lost his power after he had incautiously revealed to his wife that the secret of his strength lay in his long hair, upon which she treacherously cut it. Such is the full note on the subject of Richter's hair as Carlyle gives it:

The Undersigned begs to give notice, that whereas cropt hair has as many enemies as red hair, and said enemies of the red hair are enemies likewise of the person it grows on; whereas farther, such a fashion is in no respect Christian, since otherwise Christian persons would have adopted it; and whereas, especially, the undersigned has suffered no less from his hair than Absalom did from his, though on contrary grounds; and whereas it has been notified that the public purposed to send him into his grave, since the hair grew there without scissors: he hereby gives notice that he will not push matters to such extremity. Be it known, therefore, to the nobility, gentry and a discerning public in general, that the Undersigned proposes, on Sunday next, to appear in various important streets (of Hof) with a short false cue; and with this cue as with a magnet, and cord-of-love, and magic-rod, to possess himself forcibly of the affections of all and sundry, be who they may (JP3, 142).

Let us examine this Jeanpaulian seven-year-long 'clothes martyrdom', and the subsequent episode, which could perhaps be termed, 'the hair martyrdom'. Both parts of the story (the 'lost Paradise' and its mocking fake regaining) seem jokingly reflected in each other. Richter, who by the time of the incident, according to Carlyle, had acquired 'not only Herculean strength, but the softest tenderness of soul' (JP3, 139) is, in the carnivalesque logic of the story, unjustly thrown out of his Edenic abode for *displaying* his nakedness (a fact he undauntedly accepts as long as allowed to continue disguised). He is thereby also apparently deprived of his strength, although it is not clear who has ultimately castrated this German Hercules. It appears to have been Richter himself (for the extravagant keeping of abundant hair is clearly a tricky business, as the moral of the Absalom narrative seems to imply). Even Richter's pen-name appears to corroborate such a supposition: 'His Christian name,' Carlyle recounts, 'Jean Paul, which long passed for some freak of his own, and a pseudonym, he seems to have derived honestly enough from his maternal grandfather, Johann Paul Kuhn, a substantial cloth-maker in Hof; only translating the German *Johann* into the French *Jean*' (JP3, 128). Richter's attempt to cut himself off from his Lutheran cloth-making family roots, and re-clothe himself *à la française/ à l'anglaise* seems to be, in Carlyle's implied verdict, one of Richter's famous snaky 'detours' which in the end brings him back home (or not very

far from it). Reflecting on his childhood school memories, Richter recollects that ‘holidays occur in every occupation’: in the breaks between his lessons little Jean Paul relishes his visits to the tailor (JP3, 128). Carlyle eagerly quotes, perhaps already anticipating the plot of his masterpiece, *Sartor Resartus*, whose eponymous hero is to be a (metaphorical) tailor. But, like in his essays on Richter, Carlyle’s tailor is to be re-tailored according to the Scottish (Calvinist) standard.

Chapter Two. *Sartor's* Genesis: From *Thoughts on Clothes* to *Teufelsdröck*

‘Every man that writes is writing a new Bible; or a new Apocrypha; to last for a week, or for a thousand years.’ Thomas Carlyle, *Two Note Books*¹¹³

Sartor Resartus (‘Tailor Retailored’) (1833-34), one of the most eccentric texts in literary history (the generic classification of which has been the object of debate among literary scholars ever since it was published¹¹⁴) and Carlyle’s most cherished literary production was delivered to the world, Carlyle boasted, after nine months of hard labour, in August 1831 (in fact eight: between January and August 1831).¹¹⁵ This was already Carlyle’s second major attempt at fiction after the miscarried autobiographical novel *Wotton Reinfred* which, after his marriage in 1826, he took desperate pains to complete, but which, nonetheless, remained unfinished and unpublished until his death. (Nothing seems to have come out of Carlyle’s plans to write an epistolary novel together with his wife, a project suggested by Carlyle during his long courtship of Jane and apparently aborted after the first two letters.¹¹⁶)

It was not until the Carlyles’ move from Edinburgh to the countryside in 1828 ‘among the mountain solitudes,’¹¹⁷ ‘at this Devil’s Den, Craigenputtock’¹¹⁸ that ‘Teufelsdröck’ (‘Devil’s

¹¹³ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 264.

¹¹⁴ Compare for example: Jerry Allen Dibble, ‘Carlyle’s British Reader and the Structure of *Sartor Resartus*’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 16:2, (1974:Summer), 293-304, in which Dibble proposes a reading of *Sartor* as ‘a novel of education’; George Levine, ‘*Sartor Resartus* and the Balance of Fiction’, *Victorian Studies*, 8:2 (1964: Dec.), pp. 131-160, where Levine argues that *Sartor* must not be classified as a novel, and proposes instead a reading of *Sartor* as a ‘confession-anatomy romance’, p. 132; or Gerry H. Brookes, *The Rhetorical Form of Carlyle’s Sartor Resartus* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1972, where Brookes summarises the so far proposed generic classifications of *Sartor* and discards them all as unsuitable. Brookes notices that *Sartor* has been read in three ways: as a novel or narrative work, as a work of expression, and as a vehicle of ideas. Instead, he classifies *Sartor* as a persuasive essay: ‘The work is organised not as a philosophical proof or simple explanatory essay, but as a complex exhortation to belief and action.’ Brookes, *The Rhetorical Form*, p. 9. For early confused reactions to Carlyle’s *Sartor* after its first publication compare the reviews from the contemporary newspapers included by Carlyle in the 1836 edition, where *Sartor* is taken to be a philosophical treatise in accordance with Carlyle’s presentation of the book as a supposed translation from an unknown German philosopher.

¹¹⁵ ‘Nine months,’ I used to say, it had cost me in writing.’ Quoted in Rodger L. Tarr, ‘Introduction’ in Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, Rodger L. Tarr (ed.) (Berkeley: University of California Press) 2000, p. XLV.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Carlyle to Jane Baille Welsh, 16 December 1822, *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO]* 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 02.09.2012. In the novel Jane was to play the muse and spiritual saviour of the young hero with suicidal tendencies (Carlyle’s alter ego).

¹¹⁷ Tarr, ‘Introduction’, p. XCIII.

¹¹⁸ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 129.

Dung') was conceived (only in 1833 to be 'slit in pieces'¹¹⁹ and retailed as *Sartor Resartus*). Carlyle and Jane had been forced by financial problems to move from Edinburgh to the farm she had inherited. After years spent in Edinburgh, the unhealthy influence of which he blamed for his life-long digestive problems, the prospect of a change to the countryside was embraced by Carlyle as a promise of a much 'healthier' life which would cure his returning dyspepsia.¹²⁰ In his periods of down-spiritedness, Carlyle used to bombard his family from Edinburgh with letters centred around his bad health:

I have been sick, very sick, since Monday last—indeed I have scarcely been one day right, since I came back to this accursed, stinking, reeky mass of stones and lime and dung. I was better somewhat yesterday—for I swallowed salts the day before to supersaturation; but to-day the guts are all wrong again, the headache, the weakness, the black despondency are overpowering me. I fear those paltry viscera will fairly dish me at last. And do but think what a thing it is! that the ethereal spirit of a man should be overpowered and haggard by what? by two or three feet of sorry tripe full of ——.¹²¹

The omitted word – and seedbed of Carlyle's spiritual torments – spelled in his description of Edinburgh, is of course 'dung'. The move to Craigenputtock, a much 'healthier' place to live, Carlyle was desperately (apparently mostly through his letters) trying to convince the much opposed Jane, would cure him from his indigestion and allow him finally to truly appreciate her presence. The move to the isolated farm would, however, also restrict their social contacts in the next six years largely to correspondence, and with her husband's tendency to bury himself in books and forget her presence, Jane needed strong arguments. As he did before and later in life, Carlyle presented the proposed move in Paradise-like language:¹²²

O Jeanie! How happy we shall be in this Craig o' Putto! Not that I look for an Arcadia or a Lubberland there: but we shall sit under our bramble and our saugh-tree [shrubby willow tree] and none to make us afraid; and my little

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Friedrich Althaus, *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, John Clubbe (ed.) (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press) 1974, p. 69. The quote comes from Carlyle's notes to the text of his biography by Althaus. Carlyle talks of *Sartor* as 'slit in pieces (but rigorously *unaltered* otherwise)'. Compare also p. 83: '[Fraser] was willing to accept *Sartor* in the slit condition (...) tho', from his Public, he had a sore time with it'.

¹²⁰ Carlyle was also keen to escape from his possessive mother-in-law, who suggested that Jane and Thomas move in with her.

¹²¹ Thomas Carlyle to Jane John A. Carlyle, 10 February 1821, *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO]* 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 10.09.2012.

¹²² Cf. Althaus, *Two Reminiscences*, p. 53. In glorifying the wholesomeness of the new environment Carlyle might also have been referring in code to his sexual problems, as he probably did days after their wedding when asking for his brother's immediate medical help: 'Why am I not happy then? Alas Jack I am *billus*: I have to swallow salts and oil: the physic leaves me pensive yet quiet in heart and on the whole happy enough; but next day comes a burning stomach, and a heart full of bitterness and gloom; for I feel well that with health far more than ever my happiness is connected. Will you come and see me, and let us take counsel together?' Cf. Thomas Carlyle to John A. Carlyle, 24 October 1826, *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO]* 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>>. 10.09.2012.

wife will be there forever beside me, and I shall be well and blessed, and the latter end of that man will be better than the beginning. Surely I shall learn at length to prize the pearl of great price which God has given to me unworthy; surely I already know that to me the richest treasure of this sublunary life has been awarded, the heart of my own noble Jane!¹²³

However, it soon became obvious that the six years of a solitary retreat, further marked by Carlyle's determination to produce a book of his own which would 'bring to the fore (...) the wealth of his knowledge'¹²⁴ (after publishing Encyclopaedia articles, critical reviews, and translations from German), turned the much longed-for paradise into an earthly inferno for him and Jane. Carlyle's presentiment that he was about to give birth to his intellectual masterpiece: 'far more pregnant enquiries were rising in me, and gradually *engrossing* me, *heart* as well as head', and his suffering from the birth pains rendered him a particularly difficult companion to live with.¹²⁵ After his wedding, in his *Note Books* Carlyle quoted Goethe:

'There is just one man unhappy; he who is possessed by some idea which he cannot convert into an action, or still more which restrains and withdraws him from action.'¹²⁶

adding: *Wie wahr!* (how true!). In June 1830, in view of the returning depressive thoughts,¹²⁷ and haunting financial troubles, Carlyle urged himself in his *Note Books* to start working: '*im Teufel's Namen*, get to thy work then!'.¹²⁸ The product of such desperate cries was *Teufelsdreck* (named alternatively 'Teufelk', 'Devilsdreck', or 'Dreck'), as Carlyle came to call both the main hero and the text itself, describing *Teufelsdreck* in his letters in a purposefully disturbing bodily language: 'Teufelsdreck I *hege und pflege* [nurture], night and

¹²³ Thomas Carlyle to Grace Welsh and Jane Welsh Carlyle, 19 April 1827, *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO]* 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>>. 10.09.2012. Carlyle presented to Jane all their prospective abodes as Paradise on earth, all of which sooner or later turned out to be infernal traps in Carlyle's eyes. Compare: Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of his Life*, pp. 338, and 343.

¹²⁴ Althaus, *Two Reminiscences*, p. 69. Althaus writes that after his move to Craigenputtock Carlyle devoted his time 'in a certain sense (...) to his work in order that he might bring to the fore (...) the wealth of his knowledge.' Carlyle corrects emphatically: 'in all senses!' Compare also Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 154: 'I carry less weight now, and skim more smoothly along (April 12): why cannot I write books (of that kind) as I write letters? They are and will be of only temporary use.'

¹²⁵ Compare also Carlyle's language when he describes his determination to deliver to the world his masterpiece: 'I have a book in me that will cause ears to tingle, and one day it must and will issue.' Norwood Young, *Carlyle: His Rise and Fall* (London: Duckworth) 1927, p. 78.

¹²⁶ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 81.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152: 'I attend to few things as I was wont: few things have any interest for me; I live in a sort of waking dream. Doubtful it is in the highest degree, whether ever I shall make men hear my voice to any purpose or not. Certain only that I shall be a failure if I do not, and unhappy: nay unhappy enough (that is with suffering enough) even if I do.'

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

day. (...) *Teufk* is not the *right* thing yet, but there is a kind of life in it, and I *will* finish it.’¹²⁹
And then: ‘It is not wholly a Lie that Lucubration of Dreck’s; it can rest for twelve months and will not wormeat.’¹³⁰

Teufelsdreck, however, was not the baptismal name of the manuscript, which was *Thoughts on Clothes*, and the inventive impulse to compose the work apparently came from Herder’s writings. The following quote from Carlyle’s *Note Books* from 1829 has traditionally been regarded as documenting Carlyle’s first intention of embarking upon what was finally to become *Sartor Resartus*:

All Language but that concerning sensual objects is or has been figurative. Prodigious influence of metaphors! Never saw into it till lately. A truly useful and philosophical work would be a good Essay on Metaphors. Some day I will write one!¹³¹

Carlyle is here most probably re-stating his impressions after having read Herder’s *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772), which he praised highly in 1823.¹³² In the *Treatise* Herder presented his theory of Hebrew as a primitive language belonging to the childhood phase of humanity. We already followed Carlyle’s answer to Herder’s creative reading of the Bible in the previous chapter. What interests us here is that in his *Treatise* Herder specifically stresses the importance of a metaphor as a basic unit of primitive expression, which derives from man’s original amazement at the world and his ‘impulse to speak’. Primitive languages, according to Herder, are richest in metaphorical expression precisely because they are poor in abstract systems of thought. In the absence of such systems, metaphors become the natural means of ordering the primitive man’s experience of the world. They are alive and life-giving, steeped in inventive energy, but tend to ossify and become unproductive/impotent in the course of their gradual development.

The basis of the bold verbal metaphors lay in the first invention. But what is going on when late afterwards, when all need has already disappeared, such species of words and images remain out of mere addiction to imitation or love for antiquity? (...) Then, oh then, it turns into the sublime nonsense, the turgid wordplay which in the beginning it actually was not. In the beginning it was bold, manly wit which perhaps meant to play least at the times when it seemed to play most! It was primitive sublimity of imagination that worked out such a

¹²⁹ Thomas Carlyle to John A. Carlyle, 4 March 1831, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>>. 10.09.2012.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, p. 149.

¹³¹ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 142.

¹³² ‘Herder writes a Prize-essay about the origin of Speech Another about the decay of taste, from which Mad. de Stael appears to have borrowed something.’ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 34.

feeling in such a word. But now in the hands of insipid imitators, without such a feeling, without such an occasion (...) ah!, ampullae of words without spirit!¹³³

Compare *Sartor Resartus*:

Examine Language; what, if you except some few primitive elements (of natural sound), what is it all but Metaphors, recognized as such, or no longer recognized: still fluid and florid, or now solid-grown and colourless? (SR, 55)

Although Herder's theological syntax at the end of the quote echoes the Protestant idiom, his emphasis on metaphor (and especially Biblical metaphor) as a fully human, imaginative, 'sublime' response to the world shows his Romantic predilections. It is, however, ultimately the highly sexually-charged language in which Herder depicts metaphors which situates him in the antipodes of the sexually-inhibited Protestant thought. In his *Treatise* Herder argues that it is the sexual nature of metaphors which ultimately betrays their human-origin. In his theory the development of languages mirrors man's natural growth. Like man, languages go through their childhood, adolescence, and maturity until becoming over-restricted by fixed codified systems of expression thereby nearing their decline, marked by the lack of innovative change and overall dullness and bareness. But such an ossified non-creative form is an unnatural state. It is, moreover, not in humanity's interest to stultify its linguistic creative powers since it is only through language that it can ever hope to broaden its self-understanding. The way to promote such enlargement of knowledge is to cultivate the metaphorically-potent poetic diction, the proper sphere of man's cognitive reproduction:

The poetry and the gender-creation of language are hence humanity's interest, and the genitals of speech, so to speak, the means of its reproduction.¹³⁴

True poetic expression I saturated with life, nouns 'pair off into genders and articles', while verbs in passive and active tenses couple begetting 'many legitimate and illegitimate children'¹³⁵ and resulting often in excessive and semi-nonsensical connections. From such an infinitely resourceful field, man's first utterances spring in form of poetic diction, expressing his first appraisal of/response to the (active and life-giving) Divine order working in the world.

The metaphorically-impregnated speech of the Hebrews constitutes for Herder a model *per se* of humanity's creative linguistic potential at its very best, a source of constant inspiration to

¹³³ Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, p. 115.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

the succeeding epochs. The Hebrews' imaginative inhabiting of the genesis of man's development on earth (and of the Biblical Genesis) makes of them specifically the virtuosos of poetic expression stemming from their sensual appreciation of life, birth-giving, and dawn:

If for us *life* expresses itself through the pulse, through undulation and fine characteristic marks, in language too, it revealed itself to the Easterner respiring aloud – the human being lived when he breathed, died when he breathed out his last, and one hears the root of the word breathe like the first living Adam.

If we characterize *giving birth* in our way, the Easterner hears even in the names for it the cry of the mother's fear, or in the case of animals the shaking out of an afterbirth. This is the central idea around which his images revolve!

If we in the word *dawn* [*Morgenröte*] obscurely hear such things as the beauty, the shining, the freshness, the enduring nomad in the Orient feels even in the root of the word the first, rapid, delightful ray of light which one of us has perhaps never seen, or at least never felt with the sense of feeling.¹³⁶

The Oriental unconstrained reproduction of metaphors will have strong repercussions upon the text of *Sartor*, suffusing Carlyle's style with Herderian 'intoxication' with the 'youthful' poetical mastery of the Biblical writers. Yet an essay which had even more profound influence over *Sartor* in terms of the appreciation of the contemporary culture as 'mechanical', 'barbarian' and 'paper culture' (expressions echoed in Carlyle's 'Signs of the Times' (1829) and *French Revolution* (1837) most prominently) was Herder's 'This Too a Philosophy' (1774). In it Herder fully exposed his theory of the mankind's stages of growth and depicted allegorically the development of man's religious creed as *clothes* through which human spirit expresses itself in history. In Herder's Romantic historical school the succeeding epochs preclude any literal comparison in the same way, metaphorically, that the clothes which used to fit a boy are of no practical use to a man. Thus, no holistic 'quintessence of all times and periods' can ever be critically reached since there is a gulf between any two historical periods which requires an imaginative (and emotional) effort from the reader:

You can pour out as much gall as you like on Egyptian *superstition* and *clericalism*, as for example that amiable Plato of Europe who wants to model everything only too much on a Greek original model has done – all true!, all good, if Egyptian antiquity were supposed to be *for your land* and *your time*. The boy's coat is certainly too short for the giant!, and the school-jail disgusting for the youth with a fiancée – but behold!, your formal gown is in turn too long for the former (...) Hence these disadvantages were for him

¹³⁶ Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, pp. 112-113.

advantages and *necessary evils*, as is for the child care with alien ideas, for the boy adventures and school discipline.¹³⁷

In the passage in which he claims that the manhood of humanity was only reached with the arrival of the Romans, Herder describes the Greeks as still in the stage of ‘adolescence’ and in many respects ‘almost *too much* originals who *clothed* or *re-clothed* everything in accordance with their own nature’.¹³⁸ He could thus be providing the blueprint for the final title of Carlyle’s masterpiece – *Sartor Resartus*.

Herder bemoans the decaying, barren and sterile state of the contemporary culture which, having committed the error of turning its back upon its own ‘childhood’, has reverted into the state of barbarity:¹³⁹ ‘who will bring back his outgrown garment of childhood, out of fashion and suiting?’¹⁴⁰ The efforts to regenerate the dry cultural landscape through abstract teaching methods, Herder notes elsewhere, have been even more counterproductive:

Latin terms for a few rhetorical and logical tricks, turns of phrase, and wordgames, and then this *terminology* is often so eagerly devoured, as in the case of the patient – referred to by Hudibras – who swallowed the prescription rather than the pills prescribed. This informs method with that barren, infertile barbarism that assigns a lexicon of names to be studied and impedes thought.¹⁴¹

Carlyle’s eagerness to answer Herder’s call for a cultural panacea suited to his times (which in *Sartor*, as we will see, is delivered to the reader in the form of the stinky laxative called asafetida) almost immediately leads him in rather unexpected directions. Already in the 1828 article on Zacharias Werner¹⁴² Carlyle places Herder’s thought in the dubious company of Werner’s dramas which weave the dark legend of the fall of the medieval order of the Templar Knights. In the essay, he quotes ‘Herder, a Protestant clergyman’ along with Werner and Schelling as espousing one common creed:

¹³⁷ Johann Gottfried von Herder, ‘This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity’ in *Johann Gottfried von Herder: Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Michael N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2002, pp. 268-360, p. 283.

¹³⁸ Herder, ‘This Too a Philosophy’, p. 289.

¹³⁹ Herder rehearses Giovanni Battista Vico’s (1668–1744) theory of the cyclical development of civilizations, whereby the stages of development are intertwined with periods of returning ‘barbarity’. However, in Herder’s reading the Oriental ‘childhood’ stage of humanity assumes an altogether more important position.

¹⁴⁰ Herder, ‘This Too a Philosophy’, p. 329.

¹⁴¹ Johann Gottfried von Herder, ‘On Recent Latin Literature’ in *Selected Early Works 1764-1767*, ed. Ernest A. Menze and Karl Menges, trans. Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press) 1992, pp. 195- 214, p. 196.

¹⁴² Thomas Carlyle, ‘Life and Writings of Werner’ in *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, vol. II, pp. 66-110.

It is a common theory among the Germans, that every Creed, every Form of worship, is a *form* merely; the mortal and the ever-changing *body*, in which the immortal and unchanging *spirit* of Religion is, with more or less completeness, expressed to the material eye, and made manifest and influential among the doings of men. (109)

In his popular series of dramas, which helped to build the nineteenth-century wide-spread fable of the Templars' occult and Gnostic/satanic worship of the demon Baphomet (in fact, medieval misspelling of 'Mahomet'), Werner tells the story of the destruction of the Order by a secret congregation of the mystical Brotherhood of the Valley. From their headquarters hidden under the Carmelite Monastery in Paris (apparently modelled on the famous catacombs of the Camedul order in Bielany woods near Kraków which Werner used to frequent during his stay in Poland) the Brotherhood controls and governs the world following a secret knowledge transmitted to them by their chosen deity, god Phosphoros. Recognising the blindness and error of the world, liable to re-clothe itself in ever new (false) religious apparels, the elect, righteous members of the congregation limit themselves to controlling its proceedings, yet simultaneously preserving the illusion of free-will among the non-initiate who, Carlyle states, 'are nothing more than puppets in the hands of this all-powerful Brotherhood, which watches, like a sort of Fate, over the interests of mankind'.¹⁴³ (Critics who have seen affinities between Carlyle's later political theorems and his Calvinist mindset, would be surprised to note where the doctrine of the elect led Carlyle early in his career!)

Although the Brotherhood claim themselves to be the unique heirs and preservers of the true creed in the fallen master Phosphoros, their engagement in the worldly matters is limited to the justified destruction of the idolatrous creeds, since they do not have enough time nor patience to 'correct' the misled lower-worldly beliefs (and they are apparently also afraid of the possible 'pollution' through such of their own phosphorean faith). The great master of the Brotherhood, Adam, describes the refusal of the elect to 'do tailors' work', i.e. to 'Patch worn-out rags/ On tattered clothes of men' in a language directly reminiscent of *Sartor Resartus* (also translated as 'tailor re-patched, or sewn together anew):

Adam
That policy, those forms, wherein to-day
The world like a chameleon clothes itself
And otherwise to-morrow, can these be
The kernel of our entity? Are not
They rather the mere husk which be it light

¹⁴³ Carlyle, 'Life and Writings of Werner', p. 81.

Or heavy, cannot change the actual body?
Can despots rob thee of that inner strength,
Thy Self, which makes of thee God's counterpart?
Can commonwealths bestow the heavenly ray
For which alone thou liv'st?

Robert
The circle then
Of consecrated souls —

Adam
Who can create,
Should they do tailors' work? Patch worn-out rags
On tattered clothes of men, the while they feel
Themselves appointed and endowed with power.
To make them gods? This shall they do? Embark'd
Towards their high aim (the time being sparingly
Allotted for their course) should they take heed
To try which bench within their circle has
The softer seat, while wastes that precious time?
In one word, shall and may the elite forget
Their lofty aim and supereminent powers.
And share the lower people's lower cares?¹⁴⁴

One disciple of the Templars specifically selected by the secret council of the Valley Order to be initiated into their creed is a Scot, Robert d'Herdon, who is to establish a second headquarters of the Brotherhood in the Scottish Hebrides.¹⁴⁵ The description of his initiation rites in *The Brotherhood of the Cross* (1804) (and the mirroring description of the Templar's ceremony in *The Templars in Cyprus* [1803]) was subsequently re-tailored by Carlyle into the climax scene of *Sartor Resatus*, 'the Baphometric Fire-baptism', which conveys Teufelsdröckh's conversion from his old anti-creed, 'Everlasting No', to the new one, 'Everlasting Yea'. Although nothing certain has ever been established regarding the Templars' rites of initiation of the new members, the secrecy which surrounded their proceedings grew in most fantastic legends (particularly appealing to the nineteenth-century widespread para-scientific tastes) in which the fiery head of the demon Baphomet played the

¹⁴⁴ Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, *Brethren of the Cross*, trans. E. A. M. Lewis (George Bell and Sons) 1892, pp. 198-199.

¹⁴⁵ Werner is drawing on the legend of the Masonry who claimed the direct descent from the Templar order through Scotland. Significantly for the imagery of *Sartor* which promises to raise the dead society from its ashes, according to the Templar legend 'the Templars carried to the remote Hebrides their dead Phoenix there to resuscitate in silence and mystery its ashes.' Cf. Werner, *Brethren of the Cross*, translator's note, p. 231.

major role. Werner draws on these tales when he recounts the stories of the fallen Baffometus and Phosphoros, carefully picked and quoted *in toto* by Carlyle in his article.

Both narratives (the story of Baffometus being supposedly a corrupt version of the true Phosphoros creed) have clear satanic connotations, recounting the story of the fallen masters who in punishment for their pride are thrown from the heavens, imprisoned on earth and doomed to suffer from consuming fire, and, in a corruption of the Christian creed, told to await the redemption from ‘a Saviour (...) from [their] own seed’.¹⁴⁶ In Werner’s ‘Story of the Fallen Master’ recounted in *The Templars in Cyprus*, Baffometus is punished for telling lies and failing to build the Lord’s temple with the gold given him, by being changed into a ‘colossal Devil’s-head’:

His eyeballs rolled like fire-flames,
His nose became a crooked vulture’s bill,
The tongue hung bloody from his throat...
and of his hair
Grew snakes, and of the snakes grew Devil’s-horns’.¹⁴⁷

In thus altered form, Baffomethus is embellished with many occultist signs: ‘its form is horrible; it is gilt; has a huge golden Crown, a Heart of the same on his Brow; rolling flaming Eyes; Serpents instead of Hair; golden Chains round its neck (...) and a golden Cross, yet not a Crucifix, which rises over its right shoulder’.¹⁴⁸ In the succeeding grotesque initiation ceremony, recounted (as Carlyle advertises with clear relish) on many ‘sulphurous’ pages,¹⁴⁹ the initiate is half-forced half-wooded by Baffomethus to deny his faith through performing the monstrous deeds of blasphemy by removing the cross from Baffometus’s back, throwing it on the ground, stepping over it, denying the Christ, and finally kissing the lips of Baffometus who has all the while been imploring the awestruck initiate for help in a frail ‘piteous’ voice not unlike the voice of the initiate’s lover, Agnes. Upon questioning on the identity of his thus gained new object of love, he is told that Baffometus is ‘the Baptizer, who with fire baptizes!’¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Carlyle, ‘Life and Writings of Werner’, p. 77.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁰ Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, *Templars of Cyprus*, trans. E. A. M. Lewis (George Bell and Sons) 1886, p. 179. *Encyclopaedia Americana* published in 1830 thus describes the mythical Baphometric baptism: ‘The baptism was performed by cups or chalices, accompanied by the symbols of generation and of the mystical meal of the Gnostics (...) These vessels are said to have been fixed at the feet of certain images, and to have been filled with fire, by which the initiation in their shameful mysteries was completed in the secret chapters of the Templars. The image of Baphomet was girded with serpents, as a symbol of unnatural sins. In several is to

Robert's own initiation to the order of the worshippers of Phosphoros (Baffomethan *doppelganger*) is recounted in a similar startlingly 'narcotic' mode,¹⁵¹ whereby he renounces his self in order to unite with the mystical Phosphorean All. With a cult strikingly akin to that of the fallen Templars, the Valley brothers worship Phosphoros, another fallen master punished for his desire to be 'One and Somewhat' (*nota bene*, one of Carlyle's favourite phrases, which he used in reference to himself in his *Reminiscences*)¹⁵² in opposition to the mystical/occultist creed of renunciation in order to become 'Naught and All': 'The dream of being One and Somewhat pass'd;/ His Being in the boundless All was fus'd.'¹⁵³

Carlyle comments admiringly on the representation of the Phosphorean creed by calling Werner 'another Luther' who proselytises the new creed 'among the ruins of the decayed and down-trodden Protestantism'¹⁵⁴ (although he also much laments the fact that Werner should ultimately play to his followers the 'fantastic trick' of converting to Catholicism and renouncing all his previous erroneous beliefs, even if his wild imagination had supposedly from the beginning predetermined him to such a fate). In Werner's depiction of the Baffometric Baptism, Carlyle recognises an allegory ('couched in Masonic language') of the Catholic church and 'this trampling of the Cross, which is said to have been actually enjoined on every Templar at his initiation, to be a type of his secret behest to undermine that Institution, and redeem the spirit of Religion from the state of thralldom and distortion under which it was there held.'¹⁵⁵ Carlyle dedicates the rest of his essay to the discussion of Werner's *Martin Luther*, with which he is much disappointed since it appears to fail to elevate the 'rugged materials of life' to the 'ideal grandeur the doings of real men',¹⁵⁶ an appreciation of Werner's work confirmed and sealed in the last words of the essay by a quote from Jean Paul.

be seen also the T, the truncated cross, the character of Baphomet, which, being put as a part for the whole, was used to signify the instrument of life, the creating wisdom, the key of life; and was also called, by the Ophites, the tree of life, and the key of the Gnosis. On some images, the serpent is also to be seen, entwined round this cross.' Francis Lieber (ed.) *Encyclopaedia Americana* (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea) 1830, p. 557.

¹⁵¹ Carlyle, 'Life and Writings of Werner', p. 81.

¹⁵² Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, p. 67: 'They are all dead, the good souls—Campbell himself, the Duke told me, died only lately, very old—but they were to my rustic eyes of a superior, richly furnished stratum of society; and the thought that I too might perhaps be "one and somewhat" (*Ein und Etwas*) among my fellow creatures by-and-by, was secretly very welcome at their hands.'

¹⁵³ Carlyle, 'Life and Writings of Werner', p. 89.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

After this detour to Werner's underworlds, let us now come back to Carlyle's *Note Books* in what refers to the immediate preparation for the arrival of *Sartor Resartus*. Although, as we saw in the previous chapter, Carlyle seems to have genuinely caught some of the spirit of Herder's writings in his essays on Richter (so that I would argue that there can be no claim of his accidental misunderstanding of Herderian creed), yet he was not willing to introduce the Herderian doctrine into his planned 'essay on metaphors' without letting it first pass through a purifying (Baffometric) baptism of fire. He notes:

I have now almost done with the Germans. Having seized their opinions, I must turn me to inquire how true are they?¹⁵⁷

Carlyle's decision to deliver a new work on metaphors is qualified by the immediate resolution to discuss Luther:

Begin to think more seriously of discussing *Martin Luther*. The only Inspiration I know of is that of Genius: it was, is, and will always be of a divine character.¹⁵⁸

The passage on metaphors is also preceded by Carlyle's long discussion of the role of Luther in history and a question about the coming of 'new Luther':

Luther's character appears to me the most worth discussing of all modern men's. He is, to say it in a word, a great man in every sense; has the soul at once of a Conqueror and a Poet. His attachment to Music is to me a very interesting circumstance: it was the channel for many of his finest emotions; for which words, even words of prayer, were but an ineffectual exponent. Is it true that he did leave Wittenberg for Worms 'with nothing but his Bible and his Flute'? There is no scene in European History so splendid and significant.— I have long had a sort of notion to write some life or characteristic of Luther. A picture of the public Thought in those days, and of this strong lofty mind overturning and new-moulding it, would be a fine affair in many senses. It would require immense research.—Alas ! alas ! —When are we to have another Luther? Such men are needed from century to century: there seldom has been more need of one than now.¹⁵⁹

Carlyle had in fact been seriously considering writing a life of Luther from 1827, when he first stated in his notebooks:

Works which I could like to see written:

¹⁵⁷ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 150.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

1. A Biography and History of Luther; a picture of the great man himself, and of the great scenes and age he lived in.¹⁶⁰

However, as we have previously seen, in 1830 Carlyle had already rejected a commission for writing a life of Luther on the basis that: ‘If I write *Luther*, it must be more than a Biographic chronicle or less.’¹⁶¹ At the same time he had managed to introduce Luther into his unpublished History of German Literature on which he had been working and of which he received the disappointing tidings in the same year that it was not to be published. If the ‘Richter’ essay was a preliminary test of his ‘allegorical’ introduction of Luther into his writings, *Sartor* promised to provide the proper literary ‘pulpit’¹⁶² for the proselytising of the new Lutheran creed.

There is yet another fact which confirms the hypothesis that *Sartor* was to become a new allegorical-symbolic representation of Reformation thought and spirit. At the end of 1830 Carlyle writes on Taylor’s survey of German Literature: ‘This Taylor is a wretched Atheist and Philistine: it is *my* duty (perhaps) to put the flock, whom he professes to lead, on their guard. Let me do it *well!*’¹⁶³ In his ‘Review of Taylor’ (1831) one of Carlyle’s main objections against Taylor was his derogatory appraisal of Reformation:

‘[H]e criticises Luther’s Reformation, and repeats that old and indeed foolish story of the Augustine Monk’s having a merely commercial grudge against the Dominican; computes the quantity of blood shed for Protestantism; and, forgetting that men shed blood in all ages, for any cause, and for no cause (...) thinks that, on the whole, the Reformation was an error and a failure.’¹⁶⁴

Taylor’s misunderstanding of Lutheran theology, Carlyle thinks, makes of his *Historic Survey* ‘one great Error’.¹⁶⁵ For Taylor, German literary history is as though a ‘sealed

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

¹⁶² Carlyle writes in a letter to his brother John: ‘True I have no Pulpit: but as I once said, cannot any man make him a pulpit, simply by inverting the nearest Tub?’ Thomas Carlyle, 4 March 1831, *The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO]* 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 02.09.2012.

¹⁶³ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 182.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Carlyle, ‘Taylor’s Historic Survey of German Poetry’ (1831) in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (London: Chapman and Hall) 1864, vol. 2, pp. 309-340, p. 328. In a passage echoed in *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle states: ‘In so far as he seems a safe guide, and brings true tidings from the promised land, let us proclaim that fact, and recommend him to all pilgrims: if, on the other hand, his tidings are false, let us hasten to make this also known; that the German Canaan suffer not.’ p. 313. He later states: ‘This *Historic Survey* is one great Error.’ Carlyle, ‘Taylor’s Historic Survey’, p. 323.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

book'.¹⁶⁶ He misses altogether the 'German Canaan' delivered to the world through Reformation thought, the 'embodiment' and 'fulfilment' of the greatest European tendencies at the time.¹⁶⁷ The survey of Taylor's book thus by force turns into a glorification of the German Reformation, which for Carlyle represents the climax and highest point of development not only in German history but also in German literature, in which it seems that 'the genius of the country had exhausted itself', as subsequently 'we behold generation after generation of mere Prosaists succeed these high Psalmists. (...) The World has lost its beauty, Life its infinite majesty, as if the Author of it were no longer divine: instead of admiration and creation of the True, there is at best criticism and denial of the False.'¹⁶⁸ In the following centuries German thought wanders unproductively in the deserts until finally gaining sight of the Promised Land with the arrival of the Romantics. Not until then does the German genius awaken again proclaiming to the whole world that 'the Germans also are men'.¹⁶⁹

Carlyle's *Note Books* indicate that the review of Taylor might have played an important part in his decision early in 1831 to withdraw the first manuscript from publication (critics still speculate about how much had been written by that point¹⁷⁰) with an intention to 'add some more biography' to it and develop it into a book of his own. The decision was apparently taken on 7th February 1831, following Carlyle's note in his *Note Books*: 'Finished the Review of Taylor some three weeks ago, and sent it off.'¹⁷¹ Thus, it seems that Carlyle's choice to re-tailor his *Teufelsdröckh* and develop it into a book was also strongly motivated by his desire to re-Taylor the anti-Lutheran creed by presenting his own appreciation of Luther's importance on a deeper, symbolic level (*not* as a straightforward biography or chronicle, as Carlyle emphasised), in other words, by weaving the (new) Protestant incarnation into literary fiction.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ '[T]he grand Tendencies of Europe have first embodied themselves into action in Germany, the main battle between the New and the Old has been fought and gained there. We mention only the Swiss Revolt, and Luther's Reformation.' Carlyle, 'Taylor's Historic Survey', p. 316.

¹⁶⁸ Carlyle, 'Taylor's Historic Survey', p. 318.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ The general assumption is that Book Two was missing, and the original manuscript consisted in a mixture of what was to be developed into Book One and Book Three. Cf. Tarr, 'Introduction' in *Sartor Resartus*.

¹⁷¹ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, 'Sent to Jack to liberate my *Teufelsdröckh* from Editorial durance in London, and am seriously thinking to make a Book of it. The thing is not right, not Art yet perhaps a nearer approach to Art than I have yet made.' p. 183.

¹⁷² Spelled in many ways scattered in Carlyle's writings the Lutheran revolution is presented by Carlyle as the true genesis of modern history: 'The Diet of Worms, Luther's appearance there on the 17th of April, 1521, may be considered as the greatest scene in Modern European History; the point, indeed, from which the whole

Chapter Three. Beware of Tailors: The Devilish Optics in *Sartor Resartus*

The Country Maiden's Lamentation

For the Loss of her Taylor: Who after pretence of a great deal of Love, ran away with her Clothes, and left her destitute both of Clothes and Sweetheart

Maidens beware, who have not known

The Tricks and Humours of the Town:

For you will find that there are many,

Who of a Maid will make a penny.

Tune of, Ladies of London.

There came up a Lass from a Country Town,
intending to live in the City;

In Steeple-Crown Hat, and a Paragon Gown
who thought her self wondrous pretty:

Her petticoat Serge, her stockings were green,
her Smock was cut out of a sheet sir;

And under it something was not to be seen,
but that here I dare not repeat sir.

With joyful heart and a pretty full purse
she came to this City of London;

Little expecting to meet with curse,
by which she should quickly be undone:

She had not been here a fortnight in Town,
e're a Pricklouse began for to wooe her,
who quickly made bold for to rumple her gown
and take up her Petticoat too sir.

It was in the season of Cucumber time,
when Taylors were sharp as their Needles,

when ninety were scarce full as weighty as nine
their bodies were grown so feeble.

When their first progress was every day
to their Chappel of ease in the Fields sir,
There kneel down in clusters & heartily pray
their stomachs may go to the Deal sir.

But you shall hear how he served the wench,
who thought he would never be fickle;
He soon made her belly as plump as a Tench,
that her Gown it was grown too little:
He bid her one day she should keep in her bed,
and send him her Gown to be alter'd,

subsequent history of civilisation takes its rise.' Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 99. Compare also 'Signs of the Times', p. 109: 'The Reformation had an invisible, mystic and ideal aim; the result was indeed to be embodied in external things; but its spirit, its worth was internal, invisible, infinite.' Cf. also Carlyle, 'State of German Literature', p. 59.

And he would enlarge it, and fit her he said;
but now you shall hear how he faulter'd.

But when he had got all her cloaths in his hand
he quitted his Country baggage,
And run from his lodging which was in the Strand
thus cleverly rub'd with his cabbage,
And left the poor wench in such a sad state,

who hardly believ'd he would fail her,
Till three or four days she had spent at this rate
then curst the sad Rogue of a Taylor.

Therefore all Maidens you'd best have a care,
when first you come up to the City,
For Taylors and other such sharpers there are,
will strive if they can to out-wit ye:
And after they tell ye y'are pretty and fair,
though with all protestations they wooe ye,
If once you but let them come in for a share,
you'l find they will quickly undo ye.

FINIS. ¹⁷³

The critics of *Sartor* have been surprisingly incautious in accepting the tenets of Teufelsdröckh's mystical Philosophy of Clothes which promises to deliver to those determined enough and willing to be led through Teufelsdröckh's labyrinthine theory of symbols to the German Canaan, the reward of a mystical union between the heavens and earth. Only recently have new readings of *Sartor* revealed the strikingly shaky (and, as we will see, also *snaky*) grounds on which the whole project of Teufelsdröckh's masterwork, *Kleider*, is founded¹⁷⁴ - something which Carlyle's uninterrupted flow of metaphors, German echoes and neological 'monsters' does much to gaudily conceal by distracting and blinding the reader's vision with its golden reflections (where no gold is to be found). All such philosophically-founded readings of *Sartor* (following Carlyle's joking depiction of *Die Kleider* as a new-found philosophical treaty) have led most prominently to a nearly univocal

¹⁷³ English Broadside Ballad Archive. <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/21358/xml>> 12.10.1012. Cf. also: William Chappell (ed.), *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, (London: Chapell and Co.) 1859, vo. 2, p. 593.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. for example: Tom Toremans, 'A Typical Romantic': Carlyle and Coleridge Revisited.' *Thomas Green Lecture for the Carlyle Society* 2008; Cairns Craig, 'Carlyle and Symbolism' in *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*, David R. Sorensen and Rodger L. Tarr (eds.) (Aldershot: Ashgate) 2004, pp. 103-112; and J. Hillis Miller, 'Hieroglyphical Truth in *Sartor Resartus*: Carlyle and the Language of Parable' in *Victorian Perspectives: Six Essays*, John Clubbe, Jerome Meckier (eds.) (London: Macmillan Press) 1989, pp. 1-20.

concentration on the chapters spelling Carlyle's symbol-creed (of philosophically dubious quality) and to the almost complete critical disregard of other ones (to give just one example, hardly any critical attention whatsoever has been paid to the chapter 'Helotage' in Book Three, voicing Councillor Heuschrecke's prediction of 'the frightfulest consummation' of the world by an imminent massive cannibalism). The Editor catches Teufelsdröckh red-handed when he compares the Professor's scholastic disquisition to a virtuoso performance of a sharper at a fair introducing to his much bewildered spectators the con game 'fast-and-loose', in which he is eagerly seconded by his accomplices cleverly scattered among the public and giving 'secret' advice on how to secure the reward (with the sharper obviously in full control of the outcome of the game – the secret lay in the arrangement of the rope which, depending on which end was being pulled, would either close 'fast' or 'lose' regardless of the participant's bet).

It is needless to say after this introduction that all critical readings which follow the intricate logic of the Clothes Philosophy are strongly encouraged by the text which, we should be reminded, was embarked upon and delivered to the world as a practical joke at the readers' expense, with Carlyle relishing so much the first puzzled reviews from the critics (who complained that they had failed to encounter mentions of Professor Teufelsdröckh from Weissnichtwo in German chronicles, and who proclaimed the book 'a heap of clotted nonsense') that he had them reprinted in the book-version of *Sartor* in 1836. One can speculate that Margaret Fuller's anecdote about Carlyle on one occasion breaking into a sudden laughter at the 'gorgeous' absurdity of his own opinions¹⁷⁵ illustrates best the attitude with which *Sartor*'s 'nonsensical' writing (as Carlyle originally described it) was embarked upon.¹⁷⁶ It will be my claim in what follows that the failure to recognise the full implications of Carlyle's 'gorgeous' joke on his audience has led Carlylean criticism, prompted by the Editor of the Clothes Philosophy, into a cleverly designed trap in which the mystical considerations of Carlyle's book within the book, *Die Kleider* (a 'narcotic', explosive mixture of Herderian thought and German Romantic philosophy and mysticism) serve as little more than a fig leaf to the true (theologically-founded) preoccupations of *Sartor*. It is baffling indeed that serious criticism should have so long dealt with a perfect poker face with the views delivered by a person of such low credentials as 'Professor Devil's-shit' from

¹⁷⁵ A. Abbott Ikeler, *Puritan Temper and Transcendental Faith: Carlyle's Literary Vision* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press: 1972), p. 50.

¹⁷⁶ Carlyle referred to his writings as 'nonsense' when he started writing: 'I am going to write— Nonsense. It is on " Clothes." Heaven be my comforter ! —' Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 176.

*Kennaquhair*¹⁷⁷ seconded by the thoughts of the Councillor Grasshopper (or perhaps Scarecrow).¹⁷⁸ One is inclined to suspect that Carlyle would have been delighted to learn that his ‘divine’ joke has lasted so long undetected.

According to Carlyle’s own design, his trick is perpetuated as a ‘Divine’ mocking castigation (we should already note here the theologically suspicious undertones) that he, in the cloak of new Luther, is serving to his times which, following Herder’s classification, he reads as soaking in the peat bogs of religious ‘barbarism’ and cultural bareness. One of the few critics to express a true appreciation of Carlyle’s humour was Chesterton, who called *Sartor* a refreshing and ‘beneficent heresy’ designed to force the readers to rethink ‘the assumptions upon which they reasoned’¹⁷⁹ (whether this is what actually happened is debatable). Yet Chesterton is all too confident in calling Carlyle the ‘merry prophet Elijah’ whose humour stems from his calm and trustful relationship with God. If Herder’s answer to the supposed insipidness of his times was the impregnation of the poetic idiom with the light, joyful sensuality of the Orient,¹⁸⁰ Carlyle favours a much hotter dish. Carlyle’s chief accusation against his times, spelled out in a truly diabolically-alliterative idiom in *Sartor*, was that they had discarded the devil: ‘in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil’ (SR 113).¹⁸¹ Carlyle is mimicking here Luther’s claim that the role of the devil in the world had not been sufficiently appreciated by Christian theologians. In his polemics and Biblical commentaries Luther presented a new revolutionary conception of the world which, he thought, took full account of the devilish presence in the world. In the wake of the Fall, in Luther’s reading, the world became possessed uniquely and entirely by the devil. In accordance with this image, *Sartor*’s language is transformed into the exclusive arena for the unfettered maestro performance of the devil resounding loudly with confused Germanic echoes (German ‘quotes’ are included in

¹⁷⁷ ‘Professor Devil’s-excrement of Know-not-where’, as Alasdair Gray translates in his introduction to *Sartor*.

¹⁷⁸ In *Sartor* Carlyle plays on the literal translation of ‘Heuschrecke’ as ‘scarecrow’ (in fact ‘Heuschrecke’ means ‘a grasshopper’).

¹⁷⁹ G. K. Chesterton, *Twelve Types* (Teddington: Echo Library) 2008, p. 35. Compare also Owen Dudley Edwards’s discussion of Chesterton’s appraisal of *Sartor* in Owen Dudley Edwards, ‘Carlyle and Catholicism’, *Carlyle Studies Annual* (Cullowhee: 2008) vol. 24.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Herder, ‘This Too a Philosophy’, p. 348: ‘The *sensuality* of the Orient, the more beautiful sensuality of Greece, the strength of Rome is passed beyond – and how miserably we are consoled by our *wretched abstract consolations* and *maxims*.’

¹⁸¹ Compare also the devilish alliterativeness of *Sartor*’s tongue elsewhere: ‘this all parched away, under the Droughts of practical and spiritual Unbelief, as Disappointment, in thought and act, often-repeated gave rise to Doubt, and Doubt gradually settled into Denial! If I have had a second-crop, and now see the perennial greensward, and sit under umbrageous cedars, which defy all Drought herein too, be the Heavens praised, (and Doubt)’. SR, p. 125.

parenthesis next to Carlyle's supposed translation), which every now and then leap out of the parentheses and merge freely with their English counterparts producing most fantastic neologisms (some of which – as the most famous case of the word 'environment' – were subsequently adopted into English).

Before we go any further, I would like to suggest that this creative and joyful frenzy of Carlyle's text, despite (and perhaps even precisely because of) Carlyle's repeated and emphatic assertions that his style in *Sartor* was of the Puritan make of his father's and Edward Irving's, points in fact directly to the Herderian legacy (John Sterling [1806-44], interestingly, sensed that something was very wrong with *Sartor*'s style and he accordingly advised Carlyle to go back to 'the life and works of Luther'¹⁸² in order to revise his writing and doctrine). I would argue that Carlyle's later embarrassed disavowals of any literary connection between Jean Paul's and his writings (despite his early admiration of Richter, and the fact that, next to Goethe, Jean Paul had probably had most impact over his writings at the time prior to the writing of *Sartor*) were targeted at Herder's joyful Oriental theology reflected in Jean Paul's lively fiction.¹⁸³ This indebtedness seems to have been no secret to some of Carlyle's early readers who easily recognised the Jeanpaulianisms in *Sartor*. Nathaniel L. Frothingham (1793-1870) from the Congregational Church of Boston (presided over by William Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson's father), commenting on the 'grotesque' style of *Sartor*, wrote: 'If any should wonder how it came to be adopted by the author of *The Life of Schiller*, we think that, if they will but turn to the same author's masterly translation of John Paul's (Richter's) *Life of Quintus Fixlein*, the mystery will be found solved at once. It seems to have been caught from familiarity with that strange genius, and suits perfectly the assumed character which he here undertakes to sustain.'¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Jules Paul Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1971, p. 33.

¹⁸³ When Althaus remarked (in an oft quoted assertion) that Jean Paul transported to the nineteenth century Scotland would have been a Carlyle, and 'Carlyle transported into eighteenth-century Germany, perhaps a Jean Paul'; Carlyle answered immediately (in a much less quoted retort): 'Never, I should think, in any conceivable case. Jean Paul and I are not made alike, but different *very*.' And he continued: 'Edward Irving and his admiration of the Old Puritans & Elizabethans (...) his and everybody's doctrine on that head, played a much more important part than Jean Paul on my poor 'style';- & the most important part by far was that of Nature, you would perhaps say, had you ever heard my Father speak, or very often heard my Mother & her inborn melodies of heart and of voice!' Althaus, *Two Reminiscences*, p. 59.

¹⁸⁴ Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, p. 41. Compare also Sterling's letter, in which he asserts that the prototype of Teufelsdröckh was Jean Paul. Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, p. 27.

Hardly any of Carlyle's early critics were as appreciative of Carlyle's 'bastard English'¹⁸⁵ as Frothingham. Even Carlyle's closest friends, Emerson and John Sterling, as well as Carlyle's readers from New England who opined highly on *Sartor*'s intellectual and moral merits, repeatedly advised him to stop beating around the bush and to put his message in plain words. John Sterling (eleven years Carlyle's junior) scolded Carlyle for his 'positively barbarous' use of the word 'talented' ('a mere newspaper and hustings word'¹⁸⁶), and he patronisingly mocked Carlyle's language for its 'grotesque and somewhat repulsive mannerism.'¹⁸⁷ Lady Sydney Morgan (1793?-1859), a sentimental novelist, called *Sartor* a sick product of 'an epoch of transition in which all monstrous and misshapen things are produced' and 'a mark of the decadence of literature'.¹⁸⁸ It is stunning to note the shared feeling of self-consciousness about the 'barbarous' state of the nineteen-thirties among Carlyle's readers and yet simultaneously their nearly unanimous failure to recognise in *Sartor* a concave mirror of the epoch.¹⁸⁹ In a letter to Sterling in answer to the charges regarding his style, Carlyle wrote:

[D]o you reckon this really a time for Purism of Style; or that Style (mere dictionary style) has much to do with the worth or unworth of a Book? I do not: with whole ragged battalions of Scott's-Novel Scotch, with Irish, German, French and even Newspaper Cockney (when "Literature" is little other than a Newspaper) storming in on us, and the whole structure of our Johnsonian English breaking up from its foundations,—revolution *there* as visible as anywhere else!¹⁹⁰

And yet, as everything in *Sartor*, even this joyful unleashing of the text's linguistic powers is cleverly pocketed by the devil and incorporated into his black comedy. *Sartor* provides the best comment on its own style in the first pages of the book. After noticing that the first definition of clothes is that they are masks under which man is wont to hide himself, the Editor proceeds to introduce *Die Kleider* which is written: 'in a style which, whether understood or not, could not even by the blindest be overlooked' (SR,15). The assertion is mockingly repeated in the Chapter 'The Dandical Body' in which Teufelsdröckh writes

¹⁸⁵ Herman Merivale, from an unsigned review, *Edinburgh Review* July 1840 in Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, p. 77.

¹⁸⁶ Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, p. 29.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56: "Nay," 'manifold,' 'cunning enough significance,' 'faculty' (meaning a man's rational or moral power), 'special,' 'not without,' haunt the reader as if in some uneasy dream which does not rise to the dignity of nightmare.'

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46; Cf. also Herman Merivale's review who referring to *The French Revolution* spoke of Carlyle's 'barbarian eloquence of language', p. 77.

¹⁸⁹ Carlyle's keen appreciation of the linguistic (Babel-like) confusion of his times was perhaps best expressed in his 'Signs of the Times' (1829).

¹⁹⁰ Thomas Carlyle to John Sterling, 4 June 1835, The Carlyle Letters Online [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 15.08.2012.

ironically on the dandies: ‘Your silver or your gold (...) he solicits not; simply the glance of your eyes. Understand his mystic significance, or altogether miss and misinterpret it; do but look at him, and he is contented’ (SR, 177). In both cases, *Sartor*’s vibrant metaphorical style should be understood as an attractive mask designed to cover the deeper preoccupations of the text (and yet at the same time, *Sartor* almost implores the reader to visually contemplate its rich ‘clothes’ without looking any further).

Sartor’s true concern with metaphors is best understood when placed in the context of Carlyle’s *Diamond Necklace* (1837), a short exercise between *Sartor* and *The French Revolution* (1837), which depicts in much more explicit language one of the devil’s supreme drama-performances, in which the actors and actresses are no more than an ‘unconscious tool of skilful knavery’ setting the scene for a performance overseen by the devil, the only ‘Great creative dramaturgist’ in the whole drama. The last word in *The Diamond Necklace* is given to the Quack-of-Quacks, and the devil’s prophet-of-prophets, Count Cagliostro (whose prophetic vision announces the coming of the French Revolution, a demonically-triggered and conducted event *per se* in Carlyle’s historiography). Demonically possessed Cagliostro delivers the last advice to his Fellow Scoundrels in sexually-underscored language and takes the opportunity to give a quick summary of the demonic creed, which approaches dangerously Carlyle’s own self-confessed doctrine. In Cagliostro’s vision the devil effectually *creates* the world not by entering the already established Creation but by means of a *coitus interruptus* in the pre-creational eternity:

For what was Creation itself wholly, according to the best Philosophers, but a Divulsion by the Time-Spirit (or Devil so called); a forceful Interruption, or breaking asunder, of the old Quiescence of Eternity? It was Lucifer that fell, and made this lordly World arise. But the grand problem, Fellow Scoundrels, as you well know, is the marrying of Truth and Sham; so that they become one flesh, man and wife, and generate these three: Profit, Pudding, and Respectability that always keeps her Gig. Wondrously, indeed, do Truth and Delusion play into one another; Reality rests on Dream. Truth is but the skin of the bottomless Untrue: and ever, from time to time, the Untrue sheds it; is clear again; and the superannuated True itself becomes a Fable. Thus do all hostile things crumble back into our Empire; and of its increase there is no end.¹⁹¹

In this ultimate heresy of the devilishly-possessed Cagliostro, the devil is not only the ruler of the fallen world but apparently also its unwanted progenitor (a thought with which

¹⁹¹ Thomas Carlyle, *The Diamond Necklace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company) 1913, pp. 151-152.

demonically-possessed Teufelsdröckh in Book Two plays as well). Passing on the devil's secret alchemical procedures to his followers, Cagliostro performs here a satanic linguistic sham-marriage ceremony between truth and sham, reality and delusion, aimed at begetting his children: Profit, Pudding, and Respectability (as we will see, in *Sartor* Editor proudly places before the reader an 'amorphous Plum-pudding' of *Kleider*).

Satan's procreation of his unwanted progeny who end up in his hellish empire is reminiscent of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) in which Satan's daughter, Sin, becomes pregnant by him and gives birth to her insatiable son, Death, eager to devour his own parent. Sin herself, like mythological Minerva (Greek Athena), issues from her father's head, an image which the Editor of *Sartor* evokes in his description of Teufelsdröckh's *Kleider*. Teufelsdröckh's 'burning' (sinful?) thoughts, similarly to Satan's daughter, spring in legions from his head:

his burning thoughts step forth in fit burning words, like so many full-formed Minervas, issuing amid flame and splendour from Jove's head; a rich, idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricky turns; all the graces and terrors of a wild Imagination, wedded to the clearest Intellect, alternate in beautiful vicissitude (SR, 29).

Carlyle's imagery suggests that he actually has in mind not Athena but Medusa, a Greek maiden of ravishing beauty punished by Athena for losing her virginity through being raped by Poseidon in Athena's own temple, and transformed into a female monster, Gorgon, with biting venomous snakes in place of hair and a terrible ugly face. Medusa was believed to turn to stone anyone who looked directly into her eyes. In *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* Jane Ellen Harrison notices that 'Gorgoneia' stem from a long tradition of ritual masks in primitive cults, the main function of which was 'to 'make an ugly face,' at you if you are doing wrong, breaking your word, robbing your neighbour, meeting him in battle; for you if you are doing right.'¹⁹² Thus, despite their apparently deadly powers, Gorgoneias could be double-edged weapons, capable of reflecting the wearer's *own* ugly face and potentially healing him if he was brave enough to face his own evil-doings (much like Moses' brazen snake, looking at which healed the snake-bitten Israelites in the Book of Numbers 21.4-8). One implication could be that if *Sartor's diablerie* is taken for what it is, the result will not be the 'death' of the text but rather its miraculous healing.

¹⁹² Jane Ellen Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press) 1991, p. 188.

Let us have a closer look at the development of the Gorgoneian imagery in *Sartor*. The Medusa-like depiction of Teufelsdröckh reflects the central event in Teufelsdröckh's autobiography, by which he earns in Editor's eyes the emphatically near-tautological title of 'a man who had manfully defied the "Time-Prince," or Devil, to his face' (SR, 189): Teufelsdröckh's face-to-face encounter with the devil through his Baphometric Fire Baptism. The Baphometric Baptism is in fact a second act in the drama which begins with Teufelsdröckh's Romance. Young Teufelsdröckh pictures his beloved as 'a mysterious priestesses, in whose hand was the invisible Jacob's-ladder, whereby man might mount into very Heaven.' (SR, 95). However, Teufelsdröckh seems less interested in mounting to heaven and obtaining his new name through struggling with God, as Jacob-Israel did, than in entering into a struggle with the devil. As he takes a desperate 'terrific Lover's Leap' into his lover's arms, she in the last moment ducks the assault by marrying his best friend and giving him a final deadly 'Basilisk' look before departing forever (the story is in fact a mixture of Carlyle's two love experiences, with Margaret Gordon who declined to marry him, and Jane Welsh who confessed to him to have been in love with his best friend, Edward Irving, and quite possibly still so when marrying Carlyle):

That Basilisk-glance of the Barouche-and-four seems to have withered up what little remnant of a purpose may have still lurked in him: Life has become wholly a dark labyrinth; wherein, through long years, our Friend, flying from spectres, has to stumble about at random, and naturally with more haste than progress. (SR, 106)

Teufelsdröckh's first leap results in his greatest fall (so far). From the steps of the Jacob's ladder of his enchanting Beatrice, he is now 'falling, falling, towards the Abyss' (SR, 93). His short vision of the Garden of Eden gone forever with his fall (or Biblical Fall), Teufelsdröckh departs into the deserts of the world both in the likeness of Jesus (to be tempted by the devil), Moses (in search for the Promised Land), and a wondering Jew (or rather Biblical Cain, as it soon turns out) eager to effect a second 'leap', if necessary, into the hellish fires:

Had a divine Messenger from the clouds, or miraculous Handwriting on the wall, convincingly proclaimed to me *This thou shalt do*, with what passionate readiness, as I often thought, would I have done it, had it been leaping into the infernal Fire. (SR, 111)

Teufelsdröckh's wish is granted in what can be read as the second act of his 'conversion'. However, if Teufelsdröckh is willing to blame his unfortunate infernal leap on the unfulfilled love experience, there are signs in the text of his earlier propensities to 'leap' dangerously beyond Christian dogmas. Teufelsdröckh's Autobiography is arranged in bags signed with

astrological zodiac signs (modelled on Richter's fantastic narrative techniques) the deciphering of which has troubled critics. However, I would suggest that they should be read as part of the development of Teufelsdröckh's religious thought with each sign bearing more or less explicit Christian connotations. In such a reading *Sagittarius*, Archer, would refer to the Biblical Ishmael, traditionally believed to be the patriarch and father of Islam, who, according to the Book of Genesis, became an archer in the desert;¹⁹³ *Capricorn*, Goat, would stand for the devil (a goat is also associated specifically with Baphomet, though more widely so in the second half of the nineteenth century) and *Pisces* (the first coded sign of their belief among persecuted Christians) would depict Teufelsdröckh's early Christian credence 'before' the 'Exodus' from his youthful Eden (in Teufelsdröckh's mingled Biblical language, in which all Biblical references point to man's Fall).¹⁹⁴ Already in the chapter entitled 'Genesis', in his 'Garden of Eden' as Teufelsdröckh describes his childhood, Teufelsdröckh is all too eager to depart to the deserts. In fact, it seems that his wild 'leaping' to and fro like a 'mettled colt' threatens to leave him lame (we should be reminded that Ishmael also bears the epithet 'wild ass' in the Scriptures¹⁹⁵):

A young man of high talent, and high though still temper, like a young mettled colt, "breaks off his neck-halter," and bounds forth, from his peculiar manger, into the wide world; which, alas, he finds all rigorously fenced in. Richest clover-fields tempt his eye; but to him they are forbidden pasture: either pining in progressive starvation, he must stand; or, in mad exasperation, must rush to and fro, leaping against sheer stone-walls, which he cannot leap over, which only lacerate and lame him. (SR, 88)

Teufelsdröckh's last leap (but not yet the leaps of Editor and Reader who are to follow in Teufelsdröckh's footsteps) and the Medusa's final deadly look through the Baphometric Fire-baptism take place if not directly in hell, apparently in its close surroundings, in Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer'. The name of the street introduces Thomas Carlyle's own presence into the book (Carlyle later claimed the story was a poetic version of his personal experience in

¹⁹³ 'And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer' (The Book of Genesis 21.14–21). Compare *Sartor*: 'Thus from poverty does the strong educe nobler wealth; thus in the destitution of the wild desert does our young Ishmael acquire for himself the highest of all possessions, that of Self-help.' SR, p. 83.

¹⁹⁴ Whereas critics have tended to read the sign *Libra* (Balance) as an expression of the artistic and intellectual harmony which *Sartor Resartus* manages to achieve, I would suggest that no such balance is ever reached except perhaps Jeanpaulian anxious 'so-called 'unrest' or balance wheel in a watch, which works only to moderate, and hence to maintain the motion' as described in Chapter One. Compare: George Levine, 'Sartor Resartus and the Balance of Fiction', *Victorian Studies*, 8:2 (1964: Dec.), pp. 131-160, p. 137, where Levine quotes Raymond Williams' appreciation of Carlyle's achievement of a 'genuine balance' in 'Signs of the Times'. Levine claims that the same applies to *Sartor Resartus*.

¹⁹⁵ 'He shall be a wild ass of a man: his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the face of all his brethren.' (The Book of Genesis, 16.12)

Leith walk, something which has been debated since¹⁹⁶) and it also names the returning voyeuristic theme in the book through association with the ‘peeping Tom’. The legendary ‘peeping Tom’ was turned into stone in punishment for gazing at the naked body of Lady Godiva during her passage through the city of Coventry. If we wanted to be playful, following the logic of Werner’s legend we would say that Teufelsdröckh is fittingly punished for his excessive (voyeuristic) interest in the devil, by being transformed into/‘inlocked’ (as the Editor has it) in the text of *Sartor (Teufelsdröckh)*, awaiting the deliverance from his chosen British Reader. In the last chapter of *Sartor* we are led to believe that this is precisely what has happened and the swap has taken place, even if the reader (before his transformation into the British Reader, i.e. a character in the Editor’s scheming) might have been understandably unwilling to take part in the act.

Also Carlyle’s own description of his conversion as an experience in which he managed to ‘take the Devil by the nose withal (...) and fling him behind me’¹⁹⁷ disturbingly suggests that the devilish presence has not been done away with but rather taken away from immediate sight. Rather than standing face to face with the big-nosed devil, Carlyle is now apparently stalked by the devilish shade behind him. In *Sartor*, given that the city of Weissnichtwo is metaphorically constructed by Orpheus’s sweet music,¹⁹⁸ it is highly probable that Teufelsdröckh will not be able to resist the temptation of looking behind again at its dreadful yet tempting stalker.

This is in fact precisely what happens in Teufelsdröckh’s baptism through fire. Similarly to Werner’s Baffomet, who seduces good Christians by singing in the siren-like voice of their loves (Baphomet was traditionally depicted as half man-half woman), Teufelsdröckh’s new baptism seems to constitute the second act of his amorous life in which the Basilisk-like Blumine, a dangerously tempting participant in the ‘Aesthetic Tea’ gatherings (referring to the Spanish legend of devil cunningly inviting himself for a dinner with his victim, reused

¹⁹⁶ For a discussion of Carlyle’s claim of his conversion in Leith Walk and its later depictions in his writings compare: Walter L. Reed, ‘The Pattern of Conversion in *Sartor Resartus*’, *ELH*, 38.3 (Sep., 1971), pp. 411-431; Carlisle Moore, ‘*Sartor Resartus* and the problem of Carlyle’s Conversion’. *PMLA*, 70.4 (Sep., 1955), pp. 662-681.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Althaus, *Two Reminiscences*, p. 51.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. SR, p. 171: ‘Were it not wonderful, for instance, had Orpheus, or Amphion, built the walls of Thebes by the mere sound of his Lyre? Yet tell me, Who built these walls of Weissnichtwo; summoning out all the sandstone rocks, to dance along from the *Steinbruch* (now a huge Troglodyte Chasm, with frightful green-mantled pools).’

most famously in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*¹⁹⁹) at which Teufelsdröckh was one of the invitees, is metamorphosed into the no-less attractive (in Teufelsdröckh's eyes) golden devil-head. Commenting directly on the consummation of his new love through 'a stream of fire' passing 'over my whole soul' Teufelsdröckh announces proudly: 'It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometric Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man.' (SR, 115) Echoing Teufelsdröckh's assertion about his new-found fiery spiritual pleasures, the Editor also claims that through his initiation into Teufelsdröckh's creed, he has lost his own 'English purity': 'Thus has not the Editor himself, working over Teufelsdröckh's German, lost much of his own English purity?' (SR, 189) In both cases, similarly to Werner's hero's forced renouncement of his religious creed, there are strong undertones of sexual violation, not alien to Teufelsdröckh's thief-like nature which by definition is apt to violate the laws of property, but especially so the most natural law of property one exercises over one's own body:

When the widest and wildest violations of that divine right of Property, the only divine right now extant or conceivable, are sanctioned and recommended by a vicious Press, and the world has lived to hear it asserted that *we have no Property in our very Bodies, but only an accidental Possession and Life-rent*, what is the issue to be looked for? Hangmen and Catchpoles may, by their noose-gins and baited fall-traps, keep down the smaller sort of vermin; but what, except perhaps some such Universal Association, can protect us against whole meat-devouring and man-devouring hosts of Boa-constrictors.²⁰⁰ (SR, 133)

Coached in Teufelsdröckh's supposedly sociological discussion we have here an example of Carlyle discussing with much anxiety the devilish possession of human body. The Editor immediately retorts by accusing Teufelsdröckh of conducting a fast-and-loose (of course another boa-constrictor-like) game with the reader, implying that it is in fact Teufelsdröckh who is the main predator in the text. Prior to his Baphometric baptism Teufelsdröckh *is* in fact depicted as a man possessed by the demonic Legion, and apparently, in Editor's judgment in the last chapter, stays so beyond any possible cure. Yet the fruit and offspring of Teufelsdröckh's pseudo-sexual encounter with Baphomet seems to be not only the multiplication of the legionary forces within him, but, even more dangerously, the spreading

¹⁹⁹ Tarr gives Wilhelm Hauff's *Notes on the Memoirs of Satan* (1825-26) as the immediate source of *Sartor's* Aesthetic Teas. Cf. Tarr, 'Introduction', p. 329.

²⁰⁰ Compare also Teufelsdröckh's miracle theory spelled in the climax of *Kleider*, 'Natural Supernaturalism': 'But is not a real Miracle simply a violation of the Laws of Nature?' ask several. Whom I answer by this new question: What are the Laws of Nature?' SR, p. 167. According to Teufelsdröckh, Nature itself with its laws is constantly violated by the 'mysterious-terrific, altogether *infernal* (...) Nether Chaotic Deep' upon which it rests precariously.

of the disease further on the Editor and the Reader. In the Biblical account, the man possessed by Legion is cured through Legion leaving his body and entering into a herd of swine.²⁰¹ In *Sartor*'s twisted Biblical idiom, the demons apparently come to possess the bodies of the Editor and the Reader. The Editor succumbs passively, inviting the British Reader to follow:

Regret is unavoidable; yet censure were loss of time. To cure him of his mad humours British Criticism would essay in vain: enough for her if she can, by vigilance, prevent the spreading of such among ourselves. What a result, should this piebald, entangled, hyper-metaphorical style of writing, not to say of thinking, become general among our Literary men! (SR, 189)

And he adds provocatively: 'As it might so easily do.' The Editor's reference to the British Criticism in general (not the British Reader in particular) for the first time with a feminine pronoun here in the last chapter is striking, given the Reader's previous male identity. Not only does the British Reader appear to have multiplied in accordance with Teufelsdröckh's scheme, but he is also suddenly in the last pages of the book revealed as a 'she'. The next one to follow the metamorphosis is the Editor who now presents himself to the reader as apparently suffering the bereavement of a 'widowed heart' (SR 191-2) following the departure of his beloved master. What has happened? It appears that, following Luther's legendary disregard of women, in order for the masquerade of the internal war between the inner voices in the text to continue, they must undergo a progressive feminisation (or at least a 'transvestialisation'). One is tempted to suggest that, following Carlyle's etymological experiments (usually dovetailed to his own intended meaning), Carlyle's crucial concept of *worship* which he emphatically spells as 'Worth – ship' should actually read 'war – ship' or the celebration of the state of war. Carlyle's parting question to his *alter ego*, Oliver York (who incidentally also undergoes immediate split into 'YORKE and OLIVER') in the last lines of the book, seems to confirm this:

farewell; long as thou canst, *fare-well!* Have we not, in the course of Eternity, travelled some months of our Life-journey in partial sight of one another; have we not existed together, though in a state of quarrel?

²⁰¹ Cf. Luke 8.26-39. It is also through the association of Editor and Reader with swine that *Sartor* refuses to them the reward of its deep hidden theological 'pearl'. If Staël and Richter were anxious to define the theological gold for their new epoch (and so was Carlyle to an extent in 'Richter' essays by transforming it into an Oriental pearl), *Sartor* purposefully invites the reader to dive in Teufelsdröckh's oceans of thought in search of its 'Orient's' supposedly hidden deep on the bottom, and at the same time purposefully withholds and denies the reward to his reader. Given the association of men with swine (both are 'humorous' creatures according to Teufelsdröckh), this is a deliberate move, which invokes Matthew 7.6: 'Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.'

Sartor's proud celebration of its inner 'Pandemonium' and the refusal to be 'cured'/'censored' (which serves of course also as an invitation for the reader to have a try anyway) could have been modelled not only on Jean Paul's answer to Mme de Staël's 'healing procedures', but perhaps they also refer to Carlyle's own refusal in his letters to be 'exorcised' by Jane from his 'blue devils' of which he was particularly fond. A year before their marriage Carlyle in his typically hypochondriac style revealed to Jane that he was a man she did not know and that the marriage with him would be her ruin:

You know me not; no living mortal knows me, seems to know me. I can no longer love. My heart has been steeped in solitary bitterness, till the life of it is gone: the heaven of two confiding souls that live but for each other encircled with glad affection, enlightened by the sun of worldly blessings and suitable activity is a thing that I contemplate from a far distance, without the hope, sometimes even without the wish, of reaching it. Am I not poor and sick and helpless and estranged from all men? I lie upon the thorny couch of pain, my pillow is the iron pillow of despair.²⁰²

And he added invitingly: 'What am I (...) that you should sacrifice yourself for me?' Carlyle's terrible 'confession' came as a revenge for Jane's forwarding to him the letter from their friend, Mrs Montagu, in which she had accused Jane of being in 'delusion' concerning her feelings towards Carlyle, albeit 'a noble and generous one, but still a delusion.'²⁰³ Mrs Montagu also implied that Jane's wish to marry Thomas was based not so much on her love as on compassion and on Jane's 'generous' desire to 'exorcise' his spiritual malaise.

In reply Carlyle made it clear to Jane not only that he was beyond any exorcism, but also that he felt deeply offended by the insinuation that the demons within him were nothing more than 'blue devils' or 'vapours of sickness' as Jane would name them: 'I smile to hear the recipe of our kind Mrs Montague. "Exorcism"! [with] a vengeance! *Ach, du lieber Gott* [Oh, dear God]!',²⁰⁴ He wrote that he could never love or become a 'happy man' again. He imagined Jane standing 'humbled and weeping before him' asking for his forgiveness and him answering that he was a man altogether inadequate to administer such forgiveness. Still, the terrible fact (of Jane's love for Irving) had to be faced (or rather *not* faced) with resignation by both of them: 'it may be borne; we must bear it *together*; what else can we

²⁰² Thomas Carlyle to Jane Baillie Welsh, 29 July 1825, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>>. 02.09.2012.

²⁰³ Jane Baillie Welsh to Thomas Carlyle, 19 July 1825, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>>. 02.09.2012. Footnote.

²⁰⁴ Thomas Carlyle to Jane Baillie Welsh, 29 July 1825, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>>. 02.09.2012.

do?’²⁰⁵ Finally, he presented himself as no more than an *ignis fatuus* (will o’ the wisp) next to Irving’s ‘smoky fire’, and finished by giving Jane his ultimatum, should she decide to ‘sacrifice’ herself after all: ‘As I am, take me or refuse me: but not as I *am not*; for *this* will not and cannot come to good.’ (And yet in another letter Thomas was back to promising Jane that, should she marry him and come to live him in Scotsbrig, ‘the bitterness of life would pass away like a forgotten tempest’ and he and she ‘would walk in bright weather thenceforward’ to the end of their existences.²⁰⁶)

Let us come back to *Sartor*’s strange transvestite practices. While the Editor and the Reader are enjoying their camouflaged affairs with *Kleider*, one single woman character in Teufelsdröckh’s own life who apparently enjoys sovereignty over his person, is an emphatically de-sexualized and almost de-sexed old, mute and deaf cleaning-lady, Leischen, with whom he communicates by means of ‘secret divination’ and whose chief attributes are that she is spotlessly clean, orderly and ‘purse-mouthed’, and who is Teufelsdröckh’s main ‘bed-maker’, ‘his right-arm, and spoon, and necessary of life.’ (SR, 25) (Carlyle also in his letters ‘endearingly’ referred to Jane as his ‘Necessary Evil’). As most characters in *Sartor*, Leischen is indebted to Goethe’s *Faust*. Leischen appears in one single scene in *Faust* and only in order to tell Gretchen that their common friend had been ruined through being discovered to be with child, which, Leischen cruelly thinks, is a fitful punishment for all the fun the girl had been having behind their backs. Leischen’s cruelty in the face of Gretchen’s own secret pregnancy with Faust in the end potentially leads to Gretchen’s decision to murder her own baby.

Like *Faust*’s Lieschen, Teufelsdröckh’s old cleaning-maid is apparently a threatening and much-dreaded character. Her strict and violent cleaning procedures (or ‘Earthquakes’, as Teufelsdröckh calls her unexpected passages through his studio) threaten with the destruction of Teufelsdröckh’s valuable manuscripts scattered among the accumulated litter. Although Teufelsdröckh dreads them ‘worse than the pestilence’ (SR, 25), he yet passively succumbs to them, saving his best work in the last moment before the ‘earthquake’ arrives. Lieschen’s sudden cleaning raids are yet another illustration of the ‘self-censoring’ procedures which Carlyle stages in *Sartor* (next to the fire-baptism). It is in this light that *Sartor*’s mysterious ‘riddle that cannot rede (sic)’, a puzzle which cannot be answered, the allusions to which are

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years*, p. 342.

scattered throughout the text, should be read.²⁰⁷ Carlyle delivers his unsolvable mystery in Biblical Samson's language ('Out of the eater cometh forth meat; out of the strong cometh forth sweetness.'). Similarly to Richter (in Carlyle's reading), also Carlyle voluntarily submits his text to Delilah's 'shaving' procedures (Leischen's scrupulous 'cleaning') which, were they to be obeyed strictly and literally, threaten with the destruction of the text itself (which, after all proudly calls itself 'devil's-dirt'). Next to Leichen's violent passages, Teufelsdröckh dreads just as much that the alchemical roasting of his poor body through Baffometic baptism will leave of him no more than a *caput mortuum* (dead head or a skull).²⁰⁸ Unsurprisingly, this is precisely what happens after the encounter with Baffomet. Like in Werner's account, Teufelsdröckh is symbolically transformed into his idol, a giant head of stone. The Editor describes Teufelsdröckh's words as 'issuing from a head apparently not more interested in them, not more conscious of them, than is the sculptured stone head of some public fountain, which through its brass mouth-tube emits water to the worthy and the unworthy; careless whether it be for cooking victuals or quenching conflagrations; indeed, maintains the same earnest assiduous look, whether any water be flowing or not.' (SR, 23)

A temporary escape from Leischen's deadly cleaning cloth is achieved not through a face-to-face encounter, though, but rather by means of a humouristic trick (not unlike Richter's detours through his 'inverted sublimity' of the Merops-look which hides its tears under the cover of laughter when descending into the hells).

Leischen's earthquakes which are so destructive to Teufelsdröckh's 'dirt' (in which both Teufelsdröckh's sexual prowess and his 'dirty' writing are included) are prefigured in Teufelsdröckh's childhood spent in an 'orderly house' which apparently rejects children's presence as 'litter' posing a threat to the cleanliness of the place:

²⁰⁷ Rather than in the context of Teufelsdröckh's mystical vision of the world in *Die Kleider* as an ultimate mystery beyond expression. Cf. for example: Lee C.R. Baker, 'The Open Secret of *Sartor Resartus*: Carlyle's Method of Convincing His Reader', *Studies in Philology*, 83:2, (1986:Spring), 218-235; or Anne K. Mellor, *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press) 1980; who read *Sartor* in the light of the Romantic irony theory which qualifies all symbols as inadequate to express the infinite: 'In these works, symbols are generated only to be qualified and rejected; mythic patterns, including the Christian one of fall-penance-redemption, are tested and found wanting.' Mellor, *English Romantic Irony*, p. 6.

²⁰⁸ *Caput-mortuum* (literally dead head, worthless remains left over from a chemical operation): 'At length, after so much roasting,' thus writes our Autobiographer, 'I was what you might name calcined. Pray only that it be not rather, as is the more frequent issue, reduced to a *caputmortuum*!' SR, p. 122.

My Active Power (*Thatkraft*) was unfavourably hemmed in; of which misfortune how many traces yet abide with me! In an orderly house, where the litter of children's sports is hateful enough, your training is too stoical; rather to bear and forbear than to make and do (SR, 73).

The Professor's childhood, depicted in chapter 'Genesis', is full of demonic undertones, a fact symbolically prefigured in Teufelsdröckh's disquisition on the Biblical Genesis in a chapter of *Kleider* entitled 'Paradise and Fig Leaves' in which, before the Fall, Eden becomes inhabited by the demonic progeny of Adam and his first wife Lilith (regarded in Jewish mythology as a female demon). Although the events in the life of young Gneschen are presented as an imitation of the lives of Biblical Moses and Jesus (Gneschen is found in a basket like Moses, he delivers his first interpretation of the Scriptures at the age of twelve like Jesus), he is also specifically connected with the story of the First Fathers through his name (literally 'little Genesis' as well as the diminutive for 'Diogenes') as well as the names of his foster parents who are referred to as Adam and Eve. Yet all these Biblical references are also covering the fact that Gneschen might in fact be a bastard child. The Editor ironically urges the lost father to 'disclose himself' and 'to claim openly a son, in whom any father may feel pride' (SR, 68) (Teufelsdreck, 'the devil's dung', is not precisely the type of son that any father might be proud of).

One person to answer the Editor's call is Carlyle himself who in his letters and *Note Books* often half-jokingly referred to *Teufelsdreck* as his 'prodigal son' referring to his withdrawal of the manuscript from publication in London early in 1831. Having sent a letter to his brother John in order to 'rescue' *Teufelsdreck* from publication, Carlyle noticed in the *Note Books*:

Thro' Teufelsdreck I am yet far from seeing my way; nevertheless materials are partly forthcoming. — Goethe has lost his son, and been on the point of death himself. Venerable old man!²⁰⁹

Carlyle is referring to Goethe's *Faust* (the translation of which he was considering at that point) but he is also probably thinking about his *Teufelsdreck*. Thus, in the mirror-within-mirror, 'wheel within wheel' accumulation of 'sardonic rogueries' which 'defy all reckoning' (SR, 134) to which *Sartor* is committed, old Leischen could almost be said to be committing infanticide, through destroying *Die Kleider* generated by Teufelsdreck, the son of *Teufelsdreck*, the 'prodigal son' of Carlyle. Such a descent through *Sartorian* genealogy

²⁰⁹ Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, p. 183.

would not be amiss given *Sartor*'s inferno-like model with its wheel-within-wheel structure of Dante's origin where the *nine* hellish circles lead the reader deeper and deeper inside (also mirroring the Editor's mesmerised stare into Teufelsdröckh's eyes in which he finally believes to discern the devilish fire²¹⁰). The text also plays on Dante's inferno's imagery by making the eponymous tailor no more than a ninth part of a man. In Teufelsdröckh's search for manhood, the reader is encouraged to descend with him in tailor's demonic genealogy all the way down to the mythical Tubalcain (descendant of Cain), metal-worker, who is said to have made 'thy very Tailor's needle, and sewed that court-suit of thine' (SR, 162). Deep on the bottom of the Clothes Philosophy genealogy in the last circle of hell one encounters Cain and his sinful progeny, tailors. In such an image Teufelsdröckh's progressive falls into the diabolic embrace of Baphomet could be read as his gradual descent down the hellish circles. Similarly to Teufelsdröckh's 'vast World-Mahlstrom of Humor' which sucks all the meaning inside, like Chronos-Time who devours all his children, the text sucks both his characters and readers inside its hellish rings. The Editor complains by the end: 'Even as the smaller whirlpool is sucked into the larger, and made to whirl along with it, so must the lesser mind (...) become portion of the greater' (SR, 189). The Editor has been sucked into the text's insatiable boa-constrictor stomach.

Teufelsdröckh's doubt regarding his manhood which leads him deep down the tailors' genealogy is ironically underscored in the diminutive of his name, Gneschen, which is both suspiciously feminine-sounding and also specifically resembles his foster mother's name, (*Faustian*) Gretchen.²¹¹ The name also cryptically carries one essential theological key to *Sartor*. It plays on the associations with 'Genesung' (convalescence) and 'Gnade', grace. Goethe's Gretchen at the end of the first part of *Faust* is saved, despite all Mephisto's combinations, through her submission to God but *Sartor* refuses to his hero any such Divine protection. In place of God's grace capable of curing the sick (devilishly-possessed) hero (and the possessed text), Gneschen is described as 'a visible Temporary Figure (*Zeitbild*)' waging war against 'the Time-Prince (*Zeitfürst*), or Devil' (SR, 86-87) (Gneschen is named 'Son of Time', and by consequence – of the devil). Gneschen also bears a mocking

²¹⁰ Cf. SR, 21: 'In thy eyes too, deep under their shaggy brows, and looking out so still and dreamy, have we not noticed gleams of an ethereal or else a diabolic fire, and half fancied that their stillness was but the rest of infinite motion, the *sleep* of a spinning-top?'

²¹¹ Carlyle was quoted to say that no woman in his life could ever equal his mother. Cf. A. S. Arnold, *The Story of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Ward and Downey) 1888, p. 42: 'Carlyle's good peasant mother was to him the type of what a woman should be. He confessed, 'he always judged her beautiful, religious nature superior to Jane's.'

association with *Gnadenbild*, the venerated images depicting the Virgin Mary, which came under direct attack from Luther and Knox (Knox's chief deed of bravery, commemorated by Carlyle on the pages of *Heroes and Hero Worship*, was throwing a depiction of the Virgin into the water off the board of the ship in a refusal to venerate it²¹²). It is enough to trace the German references to establish that Gneschen instead of the image of God's grace (*Gnadenbild*) is in fact the image of the devil, the prince of Time (*Zeitbild*). As such, he must be destroyed by means of the mad maelstrom of humour, which, as we shall see, comes in Carlyle's 'reformed Lutheranism' to occupy the place of Luther's concept of Divine grace.

Another heavily-charged name in Carlyle's theology following Teufelsdröckh's baptism is the name of his new 'patron saint', St Thomas de l'Enfer, who can also be read as a bestialised demonic version of the doubting Thomas. The act of doubting plays a special (ambiguous) role in Carlyle's creed, doubting religious creeds being considered (next to the Idolatrous worship) the chief sin, and yet at the same time (in view of the 'wearing-out' of all religious creeds) at the point when a religion has reached its decadence, the doubt becomes not only justified but even required. Critics have recently demonstrated that Carlyle's theory of symbol is self-contradictory and moves in vicious circles²¹³. However, I would suggest that the contradiction is embedded in Carlyle's flawed theological premises. Carlyle's stress on the importance of faith makes him define 'the beginning of all immorality' as *insincere* worship. Yet, in the light of the devil's domination over this world, not only do all creeds ultimately fall under his absolute reign, but also all religious creeds by definition already *are* idolatrous and 'the worst Idolatry is only *more* idolatrous.'²¹⁴

On such shaky premises, Carlyle is yet still trying to argue that, given the 'gradability' of Idolatry, certain species of idolatry fall more strongly under devilish power than other, supposedly depending not so much on the creed itself but on the believers' own *sincerity*:

²¹² Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 108: 'In the Galleys of the River Loire, whither Knox and the others, after their Castle of St. Andrew's was taken, had been sent as Galley-slaves,—some officer or priest, one day, presented them an Image of the Virgin Mother, requiring that they, the blasphemous heretics, should do it reverence. Mother? Mother of God? said Knox, when the turn came to him: This is no Mother of God: this is "*a pented bredd*,"—a piece of wood, I tell you, with paint on it! She is fitter for swimming, I think, than for being worshipped, added Knox; and flung the thing into the river. It was not very cheap jesting there: but come of it what might, this thing to Knox was and must continue nothing other than the real truth; it was a *pented bredd*: worship it he would not.'

²¹³ Cf. for example Craig, 'Carlyle and Symbolism', *op. cit.*; and Cairns Craig, *Associationism and the Literary Imagination: From the Phantasmal Chaos* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) 2007, p. 72.

²¹⁴ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 91.

‘Condemnable Idolatry is *insincere* Idolatry. Doubt has eaten-out the heart of it.’²¹⁵ Given that the insincere worship delivers the believer directly into the hands of the devil, there arises in Carlyle’s opinion, a necessity for a chosen few (Priests or Prophets) capable of diagnosing and determining when a creed has neared its insincere stage and to destroy it for the good of the community of believers. In the end, in accordance with the devil’s plan, as depicted in ‘Old Clothes’ chapter, all creeds fall into wide devilish jaws of *Monmouth Street*.²¹⁶

Teufelsdröckh’s social theory supposedly modelled on the Biblical concept of *palingenesia* (Greek word meaning ‘regeneration’, as in Matthew 19.28) referring to the new world to come with the second coming of Christ, is in fact a direct replica of Teufelsdröckh’s second baptism. It is described by Carlyle explicitly as a snaky business of the devilish re-generation through the shedding of the society’s old skin and a re-emergence as a new community. From this diabolic re-shaping, a new brotherhood of liars is to arise following Teufelsdröckh’s rule of ‘inverted sympathy’²¹⁷ which expresses itself in the act of lying. After his own re-birth through fire Teufelsdröckh claims a new universal brotherhood of all society members connected through their common propensity to lie:

‘In vain thou deniest it,’ says the Professor; ‘thou art my Brother. Thy very Hatred, thy very Envy, those foolish Lies thou tellest of me in thy splenetic humor: what is all this but an inverted Sympathy? Were I a Steam-engine, wouldst thou take the trouble to tell lies of me?’ (SR, 161)

Teufelsdröckh, proposing to stand at the head of the thus formed new snaky social body as the High Priest and ‘Pontiff of the World’, promises in turn to his followers to become a new ‘Poet and inspired Maker who, Prometheus-like, will shape new Symbols, and bring new Fire from Heaven to fix it there’. At this point Teufelsdröckh’s Clothes Philosophy proposes a new look at the symbol theory. Old clothes ‘in this Ragfair of a World’ are accordingly understood to be (in boa constrictor language) hoodwinking, haltering, and tethering the society and ‘if you shake them not aside, threatening to accumulate, and perhaps produce suffocation’ (SR, 150). Therefore, the role of Teufelsdröckh, the inspired new Prometheus is to judge the old (religious/social) clothes and ‘gently remove them’ (SR, 150). Yet in spite of such assurances of gentle undressing of the social body, there can be no doubt that the

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Teufelsdröckh elsewhere describes his vision of the world falling ‘fast enough into the jaws of the Devil!’ SR, p. 101.

²¹⁷ Perhaps an echo of Richter’s humour as ‘inverted sublime’. Cf. Richter, *School for Aesthetics*.

Promethean stripping of the society is to be far from ‘gentle’.²¹⁸ In stark contrast to Teufelsdröckh’s theory, we subsequently see Teufelsdröckh, the ‘Clothes-Professor’ in his earthly ‘empire’ in Monmouth wandering among the unclothed (or rather skinned) souls and through the voice of an old Jew (Teufelsdröckh’s *alter ego*) summoning them to the Purgatory through ‘fire and with water’. (SR, 160)

At the same time, the scene in Monmouth represents an impregnation of the Editor’s imagination with Teufelsdröckh’s ‘erotic’ imagery. In the previous chapter we see Teufelsdröckh’s exercise of ‘undressing’ (or dissecting) the society not only of its outer clothes (an attempt already undertaken in chapter ‘The World out of Clothes’) but also of its very skin and nervous tissues in a disturbing bodily language:

Religion [is] the inmost Pericardial and Nervous Tissue, which ministers Life and warm Circulation to the whole [social body]. Without which Pericardial Tissue the Bones and Muscles (of Industry) were inert, or animated only by a Galvanic vitality; the SKIN would become a shrivelled pelt, or fast-rotting rawhide; and Society itself a dead carcass,—deserving to be buried. (SR, 144)

At this point, in a kind of self-parody, *Sartor*, a book obsessed (and also *possessed*) by the question of the ‘Origin of Evil’ ignites the Editor’s imagination to picture Teufelsdröckh laying his ‘Egg of Eros, one day to be hatched into a Universe’ (*Die Kleider*) among the clothes in Monmouth (and also within *Sartor*-text). The Editor shows himself as a clever disciple who has caught properly the erotic nature of Teufelsdröckh’s clothes cult. Rummaging among the old clothes Teufelsdröckh signals that their chief interest and threat lies for him in the absent bodies:

The Coat-arm is stretched out, but not to strike; the Breeches, in modest simplicity, depend at ease, and now at last have a graceful flow; the Waistcoat hides no evil passion, no riotous desire; hunger or thirst now dwells not in it. Thus all is purged from the grossness of sense, from the carking cares and foul vices of the World. (SR, 159)

Later in the book we are introduced into the ‘true’ genesis of *Die Kleider*, which lies not too far from Editor’s guess. Teufelsdröckh describes himself standing in ‘the Scottish Town of Edinburgh’ mesmerised by the tailor signpost of the Royal ‘Breeches-Maker’ depicting ‘a pair of Leather Breeches, and between the knees these memorable words, SIC ITUR AD ASTRA’ (thus one rises to the stars). ‘Look up,’ he urges himself, ‘thou much-injured one, look up with the kindling eye of hope’ (SR, 187). Seemingly, the true purpose of

Teufelsdröckh's rummaging among the old clothes is to find a new creed which would return to him his (sexual) 'Active Power (*Thatkraft*)' apparently lost already in his childhood. According to Teufelsdröckh's theory, the most 'potent'²¹⁹ among clothes are religious clothes, and among those the strongest change-inducing ('thaumaturgic') power belongs to names. Names are supposedly capable of determining one's life and even (possibly) one's sexual prowess: 'Notable enough too, here as elsewhere, wilt thou find the potency of Names; which indeed are but one kind of such custom-woven, wonder-hiding Garments' (SR, 170).

Given the life-changing/or life-determining role ascribed to names, it is interesting to note that both of the Professor's names, 'Diogenes' and 'Teufelsdreck', are of Jeanpaulian provenience. 'Diogenes' is borrowed from Richter's *School for Aesthetics* in which Diogenes the Cynic figures as the emblem of Jeanpaulian humoristic theory: 'raving Socrates, as the ancients called Diogenes.'²²⁰ Carlyle is well aware of the association and he refers to Richter in *Jean Paul Richter Again* as 'young Diogenes' (JP3, 142). Significantly, Carlyle calls Richter Diogenes in reference to his 'Costume Episode', whose Biblical imagery is recycled in *Sartor*:

Richter might have stood beside Socrates, as a faithful though rather tumultuous disciple; or better still, he might have bandied repartees with Diogenes, who, if he could nowhere find Men, must at least have admitted that this too was a Spartan Boy. Diogenes and he, much as they differed, mostly to the disadvantage of the former, would have found much in common: above all, that resolute self-dependence, and quite settled indifference to the 'force of public opinion' (JP3, 139-40).

If 'Diogenes' refers to Richter's humoristic masquerade theory, 'Teufelsdreck' also is of a distinctly Jeanpaulian make. In his *Titan* Richter states that 'ships always have their assaf[oe]tida [*Teufelsdreck*] which they bring from Persia hanging overhead on the mast, in order that its stench may not contaminate the freight on deck.'²²¹ Asafoetida is a strong laxative, (also known as devil's dung, stinking gum, and food of the gods) known for its pungent, unpleasant smell. Etymologically the name is a Latinized version of the Persian *azā*: mastic and *fætida*: feminine of *fætidus* ill-smelling, stinking.²²² As though in confirmation of his origin, in *Sartor* Teufelsdröckh is delivered to his foster parents wrapped up in Persian

²¹⁹ Carlyle also states in his *Note Books* that names are the most 'potent' of all words. Carlyle, *Note Books*, p. 176.

²²⁰ Richter, *School for Aesthetics*, p. 183.

²²¹ Jean Paul Richter, *Titan*, trans. Charles T. Brooks (Boston: Ticknor and Fields) 1862, vol. I, p. 64.

²²² Cf. *Oxford English Dictionary*: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11311?redirectedFrom=Asafoetida#eid>. 10.08.2012.

silk, with nothing but ‘a ‘Taufschein’ (baptismal certificate)’ (SR, 64) about him and some golden Friedrichs. Given that the German echo usually follows the English translation in *Sartor*, this reversal of the set order further emphasises the ‘Taufschein’, on the one hand from the beginning stressing the fact that, despite the Oriental origin, Teufelsdröckh is a baptised Christian (which is almost all the reader learns about his origins), on the other, playing on the sound resemblance between ‘Tauf’ (baptism) and ‘Teufel’ (anticipating, or perhaps ‘predetermining’ Teufelsdröckh’s assonative Baphometric baptism). Carlyle further emphasises that ‘Diogenes’ is an emphatically *unchristian* name: ‘what may the unchristian rather than Christian ‘Diogenes’ mean?’ (SR, 66). Between the Professor’s two names originally included in the title – not unlike in Edgar Allan Poe’s *Purloined Letter*’s (1844) open secret (the stolen letter has been purposefully collocated in the most visible place and thus missed by the searchers) – lies the answer to *Sartor*’s theological questions spelled in an equally explicit way in the first pages of *Sartor* in Carlyle’s virtuoso tongue-in-cheek language. Let us have a look at them before we move on to *Sartor*’s answers.

Commenting mockingly on the nineteenth-century overly-scientific mindset to which ‘the Creation of the World is little more mysterious than the cooking of a Dumpling’ Carlyle notices: ‘concerning which last, indeed, there have been minds to whom the question, *How the Apples were got in*, presented difficulties.’ (SR, 13) Carlyle is improvising here on the satirical verse on George the III, ‘The Apple Dumplings and a King’, by Peter Pindar.²²³ After looking for the seams in the dumplings the King exclaims: ‘How, how the devil got the Apple in?’ The question is a canny joke which immediately situates *Sartor* in the Biblical Eden and the story of the Fall, and it also, in a covert way, spells *Sartor*’s religious theme. As we shall see, in the pages of *Sartor* Teufelsdröckh is employed precisely in the cooking of a metaphorical dish (or perhaps also in the ‘sewing’ of a metaphorical dumpling) for his ‘elect’ readers, which, similarly to the king’s dumpling, carries within it a rather unexpected surprise.

On the same note (perhaps improvising on his own description of the power of Luther’s serpent-quelling music to scare off the devils²²⁴) Carlyle also evokes the tunes of ‘The Song

²²³ Pindar was the pseudonym of John Wolcot (1738-1819), cf. Notes to *Sartor Resartus*, Rodger Tarr (ed.), p. 241.

²²⁴ Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 104. Carlyle in a dubious compliment to Luther’s musical skills notices: ‘The Devils fled from his flute’.

of Sixpence', in which, four and twenty blackbirds are baked in a pie set before the much surprised king (but clearly no more so than his maid who loses her nose in a sudden and unexpected blackbird raid). The song has been traditionally thought to carry Reformation undertones, with the twenty-four blackbirds representing the translation of the English Bible in twenty-four letters, and more specifically perhaps alluding to the printing of Luther's Bible translation on a larger-scale thanks to the invention of Gutenberg's printing press (the symbolical heart of the Lutheran heritage which Carlyle exalts in *Sartor*²²⁵). In Carlylean numerology it also refers specifically to Luther, whose 'four-and-twenty quartos' (the popular eighteenth-century edition of Luther's works compiled by Johann Georg Walch which Carlyle would have been using) he glorifies in *Heroes and Hero Worship*²²⁶. Number twenty-four also reverberates with the echoes of the 1524 German Peasants War, according to Carlyle, the symbolic pre-figuration of the French Revolution (both direct heirs of the Reformation thought).²²⁷

The tune musically bridges the gap between the first and the last chapters of *Sartor*, in which it is resumed once again in the Mosque of St. Sophia where Teufelsdröckh is spying on Four-and-Twenty-Tailors sewing 'that rich Cloth' (*kiswah*) covering the holy black stone of Mecca (*kaaba*), which, according to Muslims, dates back to the times of Adam and Eve. In this final chapter of Teufelsdröckh's *Kleider* ('Tailors') Teufelsdröckh, watching the tailors, spells the central preoccupation of the Clothes Philosophy: 'How many Unholies has your covering Art made holy, beside this Arabian Whinstone'? Both thus musically introduced questions set the frames for the theological discussion of the Fall.

The discussion is properly developed in the first chapters of the book through Carlyle's comments on the role of *clothes* in history, which he determines to be not a practical one but (emphatically) a question of *decoration*:

²²⁵ Cf. SR, p. 34: "He who first shortened the labor of Copyists by device of *Movable Types* was disbanding hired Armies, and cashiering most Kings and Senates, and creating a whole new Democratic world: he had invented the Art of Printing.'

²²⁶ 'Luther's merit in literary history is of the greatest: his dialect became the language of all writing. They are not well written, these Four-and-twenty Quartos of his; written hastily, with quite other than literary objects. But in no Books have I found a more robust, genuine, I will say noble faculty of a man than in these. A rugged honesty, homeliness, simplicity; a rugged sterling sense and strength. He dashes out illumination from him; his smiting idiomatic phrases seem to cleave into the very secret of the matter. Good humour too, nay tender affection, nobleness and depth: this man could have been a Poet too! He had to work an Epic Poem, not write one. I call him a great Thinker; as indeed his greatness of heart already betokens that.' Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 102.

²²⁷ Number twenty-four also plays an important role in Werner's writings (and life) with his most famous work entitled *Der 24. Februar* (1810).

Nevertheless, the pains of Hunger and Revenge once satisfied, his next care was not Comfort but Decoration (*Putz*). Warmth he found in the toils of the chase; or amid dried leaves, in his hollow tree, in his bark shed, or natural grotto: but for Decoration he must have Clothes. (SR, 34)

Although Carlyle does not spell the fact, German ‘Putz’ means decoration, jewellery or polish, but also the act of cleaning (from the verb ‘putzen’).²²⁸ The clothes in fact have predominantly the latter function, since they are primarily defences against dirt, or to be more precise ‘against injury to cleanliness, to safety, to modesty, sometimes to roguery’ (SR, 37), i.e. moral (sexual) corruption, and even to lies. But the clothes’ protective power comes at a cost, which *Sartor* may not be able to afford, as is shown in the story of the daughter of John Knox eager to see her husband decapitated rather than to hear him *lie* and become a bishop. *Sartor*’s own record of lying (following the Editor’s ironic proclamation that Satan, the Prince of Lies, shall find no entry to his text in which not one lie is to be found) is stunning: seventy-three times, counting in the verb when it refers to the act of lying down.²²⁹

The chapter ‘Aprons’ also echoes the question from the Mosque: ‘How much has been concealed, how much has been defended in Aprons!’ (SR, 37) They are depicted as a necessary protection ‘in this Devil’s smithy (*Teufels-schmiede*) of a world, and in plain words, defences against the devil. As such, they are cunningly linked to literature, since Parisian cooks, *Teufelsdröckh* notices, make their aprons of newspapers made of old clothes ground into paper, by use of a special machine called ‘devil’ (thus ‘*Teufelsdreck*’ could also mean ‘devil’s dust’).²³⁰ *Sartor* proposes to weave with its text a much needed ‘garment’–defence against the assaults of the devil. However, one crucial fact not spelled in the chapter is that it is none else but devil who in *Sartor* plays the role of the main cook.

In *Sartor*’s twisted devilish optics in fact all men become no more than potential *food* to be prepared and devoured by the devil. *Teufelsdröckh*’s melancholic wanderings are also described in terms of his hunger. We see him looking ‘through the Universe seeking after somewhat to *eat*’ while he imagines the earth as open jaws:

²²⁸ Also an offensive term for ‘penis’ in Yiddish, which *Teufelsdröckh* posing as a Hebrew prophet should be aware of.

²²⁹ I would suggest that in all these cases the association with devil’s lies is present, as for example in the last bizarre mention of *Teufelsdröckh* after his disappearance: ‘Our own private conjecture, now amounting almost to certainty, is that, safe-moored in some stillest obscurity, not to *lie* always still, *Teufelsdröckh*, is actually in London!’ [my emphasis, JM] SR, p. 192.

²³⁰ This is yet another borrowing from Jean Paul. Cf. Tarr (ed.), Notes to *Sartor Resartus*, p. 272.

it seemed as if all things in the Heavens above and the Earth beneath would hurt me; as if the Heavens and the Earth were but boundless jaws of a devouring monster, wherein I, palpitating, waited to be devoured. (SR, 114)

However, after his leap into the Baphomethan ‘furnace’, Teufelsdröckh’s attention from devouring his own heart is turned to the world around him, which becomes his next victual to be prepared to the devil’s taste:

In a word, he is now, if not ceasing, yet intermitting to "eat his own heart;" and clutches round him outwardly on the NOT-ME for wholesome food. (SR, 116)

Both in his autobiographical materials and in *Die Kleider*, Teufelsdröckh is in fact deeply troubled by the idea of the religious collapsing into mere materialistic appetites. Yet these worries are given a characteristically hypochondriac turn whereby physical disease and especially ‘diseases of the Liver’ (reminiscent of Carlyle’s own digestive problems) are presented as an attractive alternative to the sublime ‘terrors of the conscience’ (SR, 111). When Teufelsdröckh makes the doubtful claim that in Finnish language ‘soul’ has come to refer to ‘stomach’ (SR, 85), there is a real anxiety that *Sartor*’s grand demonic battles may collapse into no more than a shallow dream caused by indigestion. Let us have a closer look at what terrifies Teufelsdröckh:

With Stupidity and sound Digestion man may front much. But what, in these dull unimaginative days, are the terrors of Conscience to the diseases of the Liver! Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold: there brandishing our frying-pan, as censer, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things he has provided for his Elect! (SR, 111)

Sartor’s obsession with eating transforms the text into an arena of cannibalistic appetites. Teufelsdröckh’s insatiable appetite is mirrored in Councillor Heuschrecke’s (mockingly baptized in *Sartor* ‘the very Spirit of Love embodied’) disquisition on the world’s ‘frightfulest consummation’ through men eating one another. Given that *Die Kleider* is similarly characterised as a work of deep philanthropy (‘love for people’, *Menschenliebe*) (SR, 16), Heuschrecke’s *Institute for the Repression of Population* should not be ignored, despite its apparent unimportance. The text is found carelessly ‘stuffed into the bag *Pisces*’ smelling distinctly of ‘aloetic drugs’ (SR, 151) marking Teufelsdröckh’s smelly imprint (and also another ‘stinky’ contamination of the Christian doctrine). In his treatise, Heuschrecke (‘Grasshopper’) is in fact only playing into his master’s doctrine of ‘leaping’ or prancing upon his victim in order to possess it (or ‘devour it’) entirely. It is in such a light that the Professor’s outraged answer to Heuschrecke’s ‘zeal’ which ‘almost eats him up’ (SR, 151) should be read. *Sartor*’s appetite-centred optics stem from Luther’s account of the total depravity of man’s

nature in the wake of the Fall, after which both man's intellectual and volitional powers are transformed into no more than animalistic *appetites*. In his *Servo Arbitrio (On the Bondage of the Will)* (1525), Luther presents human soul as a beast ridden on by the devil. No longer capable of using his reason or will, man follows blindly the devil's mandates. The only redemption comes from God's apparently equally violent possession of human soul (though His grace):

[T]he human will is, as it were, a beast between the two. If God sit thereon, it wills and goes where God will (...) If Satan sit thereon, it wills and goes as Satan will. Nor is it in the power of its own will to choose, to which rider it will run, nor which it will seek; but the riders themselves contend, which shall have and hold it.²³¹

The understanding of all man's intellectual and spiritual longings as earthly 'appetites' is specifically emphasised in Carlyle's native Calvinist doctrine:

Now in this natural appetite a person does not distinguish what he ought to seek by reason, according to the excellence of his immortal nature, and does not consider it with true knowledge; but without reason and without counsel, he follows the movement of his nature as a beast does.²³²

The concept of man's animalistic appetites becomes the true centre of gravity in Teufelsdröckhian universe. The Professor's first name gives occasion to another 'savoury' joke rehearsed in *Sartor*. Playing on the story of the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope who was said to have brought to Plato a plucked chicken which fitted Plato's definition of man as 'featherless biped'²³³, Teufelsdröckh describes man as 'an omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches' (SR, 51) (this subsequently becomes the linguistic standard in *Sartor*, whereby a 'biped' frequently substitutes 'man'). Similarly, Sterne's satirical depiction of men as turkeys driven to the market is repeated in *Sartor*, while Teufelsdröckh (cannibalistically) presents himself as a chicken-eater disgusted by being presented with chicken food in one of the 'Aesthetic Teas' (when he would clearly much prefer to devour the participants instead).

However when in the last pages of *Sartor* the Editor proudly places before the reader his 'Scotch Haggis' obtained from Teufelsdröckh's 'enormous, amorphous Plum pudding' (SR, 189) in which he had been dabbing all the while, he in fact only pretends to have been

²³¹ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. Henry Cole (Grand Rapids, Michigan: B. Erdmans Publishing Co.) 1931, p. 74.

²³² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Version* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2009, p. 77.

²³³ Diogenes was also reputed to have spent his life walking with his lamp and 'looking for a man' whom he never found.

cooking. On the face of it, similarly to ‘Little Jack Honor’, Editor seems to have been rummaging in Teufelsdröckh’s pie in order to treacherously ‘pick out the choicest Plums’ (echoing Thomas Horner’s betrayal of Abbot Whiting at the time of the dissolution of Monasteries²³⁴). Yet the thus obtained ‘dainty dish’ or rather ‘solid pudding’ (SR, 90), and, as the Editor calls it, ‘Scotch Haggis’, resembles much more Teufelsdröckh’s eponymous dung than any victual. The Editor fittingly washes his hands having terminated his ‘culinary’ work:

we can now wash our hands not without satisfaction. If hereby, though in barbaric wise, some morsel of spiritual nourishment have been added to the scanty ration of our beloved British world, what nobler recompense could the Editor desire? (SR, 189)

Indeed, it seems that Teufelsdröckh himself has all along been engaged in rummaging among dung-heaps: ‘scraping in kennels, where lost rings and diamond necklaces are nowise the sole conquests.’ (SR, 189) The imagery is reminiscent of the landscape of contemporary anti-culture painted by Herder: ‘The whole face of the earth becomes a *dungheap* on which we seek kernels and crow!’²³⁵ *Sartor* in the last chapter justly repaints its textual scenery, thereby providing Carlyle’s low judgment of his times. Given the return to Scottish Edinburgh and the Editor’s homely Scotch Haggis in the last pages of *Sartor*, the dung heap covered scenery also marks the text’s home-coming after its many tiresome wanderings round the globe and down the hellish circles. Now, in a much more homely surrounding, all Teufelsdröckh’s wild voyages appear as no more than the scraping in search for food by a hungry cock from Robert Henryson’s fable, ‘The Cok and the Jasp.’²³⁶ In the fable the cock finds a jewel thrown away by mistake, but is unable to appreciate its true worth. Such an ending might also suggest the re-discovery of Teufelsdröckh’s lost Calvinist ‘ring of Necessity’, to which all his wild ‘leaping’ after freedom tragically collapses.

For all the masquerading and clothes-covering effectuated by Teufelsdröckh’s philosophy and Diogenes’s mad maelstroms of laughter, Teufelsdröckh’s first name in the end remains a badly masked version of ‘Teufelsdreck’, itself a camouflaged Scottish ‘Devil’s Dirt’,²³⁷ and

²³⁴ The Abbot was said to have tried to save his estates by sending through Thomas Horner a bribe in form of a Christmas pie filled with the deeds to twelve manorial estates. Horner treacherously retrieved the deeds to the “plum” of the manorial estates, The Manor of Mells; and saw subsequently the Abbot convicted and hanged.

²³⁵ Herder, *This Too a Philosophy*, p. 332.

²³⁶ ‘The Tail of the Cok and the Jasp’ by Robert Henryson, a Scottish Medieval rendition of the Aesopian fable ‘The Cock and the Jewel’.

²³⁷ Ralph Jessop in his path-breaking studies of Carlyle’s philosophical thought has comprehensively demonstrated Carlyle’s tendency to mask his Scottish creeds under German garments, Cf. Ralph Jessop, *Carlyle and Scottish Thought* (London: Macmillan Press) 1997.

thus the text in the end fittingly returns to its ‘predetermined’ destiny. Jacob Vijn is one critic who refuses to read the ‘dreck’ in Diogenes’ surname as referring to ‘dung’ and instead reads the Professor’s surname exclusively as a much more heroic ‘God-born devil-fighter’.²³⁸ Vijn proves this by referring to Carlyle’s letter to his mother on the one hand (in which Carlyle explains the Scots word ‘traik’ by referring it to the German ‘dreck’²³⁹) and to Jamieson’s *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, on the other. In Jamieson’s *Dictionary* one of the given definitions of the noun listed is ‘a plague, a mischief, a disaster’. Vijn suggests that it could by extension also mean ‘a gadfly’: ‘a person who persistently annoys or provokes others with criticism, schemes, ideas, demands, requests, etc.’²⁴⁰ Accordingly, the name ‘Teufelsdröckh’ would properly read (in agreement with the Editor’s description) as ‘a man who had manfully defied the ‘Time-prince’, or Devil, to his face’, a Devil-Traik, a ‘Gadfly to the ‘Prince of Lies and Darkness’.²⁴¹ Vijn insists that Teufelsdröckh is a Devil-Traik, and *not* a Devil’s Dung. Interestingly (a fact not recorded by Vijn), Jamieson’s dictionary also associates ‘traik’ with the devil: ‘It [*traik*] is sometimes used, in profane language, like *meikle Sorrow*, apparently as a designation for the devil: ‘The meikle Trake came o’er their snouts.’ All in all, however, Vijn’s exclusive reading of Teufelsdröckh as devil-fighter is unfounded because Carlyle himself frequently explicitly refers to Teufelsdröckh as ‘Devil’s Dung’:

I am struggling forward with Dreck, sick enough, but not in bad heart. I think the world will nowise be enraptured with this (medicinal) *Devil's Dung*; (...) It was the best I had in me; what God had given me, what the Devil shall not take away.²⁴²

Carlyle also in his later correspondence frequently refers to ‘Devil’s Dung-heaps’ in the sense of Augean stables requiring a Herculean work to clean. In his letters discussing Oliver Cromwell, Carlyle describes his process of writing in a clearly religious language as ‘pious and honest’, and yet at the same time a ‘most disgusting piece of labour’ of cleaning Cromwell’s face from critical ‘obscene dung’ gathered there over years. It is achieved

²³⁸ Vijn, *Carlyle and Jean Paul*, *op. cit.*

²³⁹ In the letter of 1st September 1834 to which Vijn refers, Carlyle explains the word ‘traik’ in his typically flamboyant etymology: ‘*Traiked*’ means ‘*Perished*’],—contemptuous term, applied to cattle &c: ‘*Traik*’ = German ‘*Dreck*’ [*Dung*]. Cf. Jane Welsh Carlyle to Margaret A. Carlyle, 1 September 1834, *Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 02.09.2012.

²⁴⁰ Vijn, *Carlyle and Jean Paul*, p. 144.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Thomas Carlyle to John A. Carlyle, 12 July 1831, *Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> . 01.06.2012.

through a Herculean effort of turning the fresh critical streams over the dirty face of Cromwell:

I sometimes think I may have turned a little running brook in upon the obscene dung-mountains, whereby they may at last be swum away, and the face of Oliver and his earnest time laid bare from them: but this also I do not know for certain; neither indeed need one specially care. I have got done with a most disgusting piece of labour; which, in so far as it was pious and honest, will not be useless to myself at any rate.²⁴³

Carlyle's revelling in German literary 'dung heaps' could hardly be expressed in a more emphatic image than in a letter in which he announces almost proudly to John Forster: 'I am up to the lips in German literary dung.'²⁴⁴ Thus the Herculean figure which we saw depicted in Carlyle's essays on Richter is assigned in *Sartor* a much less pleasant task of 'clearing' the Augean stables of the German Clothes Philosophy. Realising that the reader may not be as enthusiastic as the Editor to plunge himself into the 'devil's dung', *Sartor* gaudily embellishes its pages with its flowery ambrosial creations. A discerning reader (*Sartor*'s elect Reader) will at the same time recognise the secret unsightly surprise hidden by Teufelsdröckh's outgrowth of metaphors, mystical philosophy and universal *Menschenliebe*, and know better to *keep* it secret, lest the whole text sewn together (*resartus*) by Tubalcain's ancient needle (following Cagliostro's specifications on marrying truth and sham) should fall apart through its divulgence. *Sartor*'s dandy-like gaudy (and perhaps also transvestite) costumes hide beneath a stinky secret the breaking of which is strictly prohibited:

O my Friends, when we view the fair clustering flowers that overwreath, for example, the Marriage-bower, and encircle man's life with the fragrance and hues of Heaven, what hand will not smite the foul plunderer that grubs them up by the roots, and, with grinning, grunting satisfaction, shows us the dung they flourish in! Men speak much of the Printing Press with its Newspapers: *du Himmel!* what are these to Clothes and the Tailor's Goose? (SR, 147)

One alternative explanation of the source of Professor's name is to be found in Goethe's *Faust*, the translation of which Carlyle had been considering before *Sartor*, ever since his translation of *Wilhelm Meister*. Faust uses the German 'Dreck' to refer to Mephistopheles as

²⁴³ Thomas Carlyle to Jean Carlyle Aitken, 22 March 1842; *Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> .02.09.2012.

²⁴⁴ Thomas Carlyle to John Forster, 11 April 1853, *Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO] 2007. <<http://carlyleletters.org>> .02.09.2012.

‘Spottgeburt von *Dreck* und Feuer’²⁴⁵ (literally: ‘the monstrous progeny of dung and fire’). *Sartor*’s ‘Dreck’ and ‘Teufel’ would thus refer again to one and the same person, ‘Dreck’ being only a doubling/mocking echo of the first.²⁴⁶ *Faust*’s Mephistopheles provides also the standard for *Sartor*’s ‘leaping’ movement which has its origins in Mephisto’s twisted (but also humorous, in the spirit of Jeanpaulian Merops-like humour) readings of the Scriptures. During his friendly chat with God, Mephistopheles gives his rendition of the Prophet Isaiah²⁴⁷ describing man as a grasshopper who, Mephisto says, created to pass his life hopping and flying among green grass, instead, chooses to poke his nose into ‘each bit of dung’:

Life somewhat better might content him,
But for the gleam of heavenly light which Thou hast lent him:
He calls it Reason—thence his power's increased,
To be far beastlier than any beast.
Saving Thy Gracious Presence, he to me
A long-legged grasshopper appears to be,
That springing flies, and flying springs,
And in the grass the same old ditty sings.
Would he still lay among the grass he grows in!
Each bit of dung he seeks, to stick his nose in.²⁴⁸

Mephisto’s flawed renditions of the Bible are the poetic standard of *Sartor*. Frothingham, an already quoted member of the Congregational church in New England, remarked in 1836 that *Sartor* could be said to contain ‘a whole canon of Scripture in the wondrous *diablerie* of the *Faust*.’²⁴⁹ *Sartor*’s diabolical linguistic deal is fittingly signed with the name of Teufelsdröckh’s faithful ‘James Boswell’-type disciple, Hofrath Heuschrecke (Councillor Grasshopper). Heuschrecke is an unrealised, ‘passive’ or ‘feminine’ genius, according to Jean Paul’s classification in the *School for Aesthetics*²⁵⁰ who follows Teufelsdröckh like a shadow

²⁴⁵ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta) 1808, p. 234, v. 3536.

²⁴⁶ As the main proof that Teufelsdreck’s name was meant to refer in the first place to a person (‘Devil-Traik’), and not to a quality (‘Devil’s Dung’) Vijn quotes the fact of the change to ‘Teufelsdröckh’ in 1833 which Vijn reads as Carlyle’s attempt to redirect the reader’s attention from its stinky connotation. However, another explanation had been given by Tennyson and earlier critics who argued that the change made the name more similar to a real German surname without diminishing the obvious resemblance to ‘Teufeldreck’. This allowed Carlyle to play his joke on the readers by presenting the book as a translation from a non-existent book of a non-existent German author (another devilish trick in a book permeated with the devil’s lies and deceptions). Cf. Vijn, *Carlyle and Jean Paul*, p. 144; and Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, p. 152.

²⁴⁷ Isaiah 40.22: ‘He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.’

²⁴⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Bayard Taylor (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus) 1872, ‘Prologue in Heaven’, p. 11.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Seigel (ed.), *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, p. 40.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Kathleen M. Wheeler (ed.), *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: The Romantic Ironists and Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1984, p. 165. See the description of passive or feminine geniuses: ‘these suffering borderline geniuses are the quiet, earnest, upright, protohumans of the forest and the night, to whom destiny has refused speech.’ They are ‘the mutes of heaven’.

and who inherits and controls the distribution of his master's sacred papers. By Editor, jealous of his master's love, Heuschrecke is too confidently taken to be Teufelsdröckh's failed apprentice. In fact, the opposite is true in face of *Faust's* evidence. Reflected in Mephistopheles' concave mirror, Heuschrecke is not so much a failure but rather Teufelsdröckh's righteous apprentice, as keenly interested in 'filth and dung' as his master. Even his name fittingly bears a resemblance to Teufelsdröckh's: while Goethe in original uses the word 'Zicade' rather than 'Heuschrecke' to refer to man, 'Heuschrecke' (literally the 'hay-fright/scarecrow') carries a much stronger association to 'Teufelsdreck'. If Heuschrecke's master wages war against the devil, he himself, on a smaller scale, fights with the crows (or perhaps demonic blackbirds from the returning tune of the 'Song of Sixpence', in which the blackbird pecking off the maid's nose is traditionally associated with dark forces²⁵¹).

The Mephistophelian presence in *Sartor* is also obviously marked in the figure of Teufelsdröckh himself. The similarities between the persons of Teufelsdröckh and Mephistopheles have been long noticed.²⁵² Joseph Sigman²⁵³ draws attention to the close and friendly relationship which Mephistopheles enjoys with God in *Faust*, with God referring jovially to Mephisto as 'Schalk' (knave/rascal).²⁵⁴ Sigman does not spell the fact that 'Schalk' is one of the nicknames under which Teufelsdröckh is also known in *Weissnichtwo*. Teufelsdröckh bears even stronger similarities to the voyeuristic Satan in *Paradise Lost* who is depicted spying on the First Parents, and also described as the 'first grand Thief' stealing into Eden by tricking the naive Gabriel.²⁵⁵ Teufelsdröckh's fascination with demonic possession makes of him a model thief *per se*. What is more, given Carlyle's doctrine of the

²⁵¹ Heuschrecke, as 'scarecrow' also mockingly echoes Teufelsdröckh's anxiety over his manhood: "It will remain to be examined," adds the inexorable Teufelsdröckh, "in how far the SCARECROW, as a Clothed Person, is not also entitled to benefit of clergy, and English trial by jury: nay perhaps, considering his high function (for is not he too a Defender of Property, and Sovereign armed with the *terrors* of the Law?), to a certain royal Immunity and Inviolability; which, however, misers and the meaner class of persons are not always voluntarily disposed to grant him." SR, p. 48.

²⁵² Cf. Lore Metzger, 'Sartor Resartus: A Victorian Faust' in *Comparative Literature*, 13 (1961), pp.316-331 in which Metzger reads the duality in the presentation of Teufelsdröckh as stemming from his dual origin in the characters of Faust and Mephistopheles; Margaret Storrs, *The Relation of Carlyle to Kant and Fichte* (Bryn Mawr, PA.: Bryn Mawr College) 1929, p. 34, where Storrs argues for a Mephistophelean reading of Kant by Carlyle. Carlyle, according to Storrs felt that Mephistopheles was a Kantian which 'gives evidence of an amusement which he sometimes felt for the 'logical cobweb'.

²⁵³ Joseph, Sigman, "'Diabolico-angelical Indifference": The Imagery of Polarity in *Sartor Resartus*', *Southern Review* 5 (1972).

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

²⁵⁵ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Septimus Prowett) 1829, Book IV, p. 98.

‘potency’ of names, his thief-like name predetermines him to compose the Philosophy of Clothes:

In a very plain sense the Proverb says, Call one a thief, and he will steal; in an almost similar sense may we not perhaps say, Call one Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, and he will open the Philosophy of Clothes? (SR, 67)

Also the whole text of *Sartor Resartus* through its title is strongly associated with stealing. In the chapter ‘Tailors’ Carlyle refers to the common practice of stealing of the materials left from the sewing process by tailors as he improvises on ‘The Country Maidens Lamentation For the Loss of her Taylor’. In the song the girls are warned against the tailors who threaten not only to ‘undo’ them but also escape with their gowns into the bargain.

The spirit and imagery of *Paradise Lost* is duplicated in the Editor’s invitation of the reader to hop along him ‘leap by leap’ down his newly constructed and full of treacherous holes bridge between Teufelsdröckh’s empire and the reader. In *Paradise Lost* Satan builds a model bridge between earth and hell over the chaotic dark waters of limbo in between, and subsequently delivers a ‘sympathetic’ invitation for man to his empire (Milton’s Satan claims that he is acting out of his deep ‘sympathy’ with humanity which renders a separation from man unbearable for him, a claim later aped by Milton’s Eve when she considers sharing the apple with Adam).²⁵⁶ At the end of the journey, after performing his head-breaking ‘last leap’²⁵⁷ (SR, 167) into the empire of Teufelsdröckh’s ‘Love embodied’, the Editor casts a sad look about him confirming that he has lost most of his followers in the quagmires of the

²⁵⁶ Yet no purpos'd foe

To you whom I could pittie thus forlorne
Though I unpittied: League with you I seek,
And mutual amitie so streight, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth; my dwelling haply may not please
Like this fair Paradise, your sense, yet such
Accept your Makers work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give; Hell shall unfould

To entertain you two, her widest Gates,
And send forth all her Kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous ofspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge

On you who wrong me not for him who wrongd. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, p. 103.

²⁵⁷ Editor’s deadly leap is also reminiscent of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi’s *salto mortale* (often wrongly translated as ‘moral’ rather than ‘mortal’ leap), i.e. a leap in which a person turns heels over head in the air. In polemics with Hume’s deconstruction (in Jacobi’s words, the ‘stripping away of all appearances’ p. 491) of man’s rational powers and his critique of religion, in his essay, Jacobi proposed to Lessing a desperate head-braking leap back into common sense position. Cf. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel 'Allwill'*, trans. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press) 2009, p. 189.

inane. They now ‘swim weltering in the Chaos-flood’ (SR, 175), the Editor confirms with regret looking around. Only few elect ones have survived Editor’s terrible *salto mortale*.

In a much profounder sense, like *Paradise Lost*, *Sartor* proposes to the reader a devil’s optics of the universe (similarly to the opening books of Milton’s oeuvre in which the reader perceives Eden through Satan’s eyes; and arguably also in the remaining books), spiced with Richter’s alluring humour. Richter’s enchanted Mirror Gallery in *Sartor* gives way to Teufelsdröckh’s observatory/*camera obscura* located in the city of *Weissnichtwo* (*Kennaquhair*). Through an apparently intended error Carlyle describes Teufelsdröckh’s watch-tower as a *speculum* (mirror) rather than a *specula* (watch-tower).²⁵⁸ The confusion itself, as Suzanne Conklin Akbari in *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory*²⁵⁹ has demonstrated, was a common one despite St. Augustine’s explanation of the difference in *De Trinitate* when commenting on the passage from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 3.18:

‘Nos vero omnes revelata facie gloriam Domini *speculantes* in eandem imaginem transformamur a claritate in claritatem tamquam a Domini Spiritu’ (We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord).

However, rather than from Medieval poetics, Teufelsdröckh’s tower seems to be borrowed directly from Luther’s imagery. In his commentary on *Psalms*, Luther presents his version of the tower as the image of the church inhabited by the bishops (*episcopoi*) whom Luther calls ‘seers’ or ‘spyers’ ever watchful for the approach of the beast Leviathan:

The name Zion signifies 'a distant view' (*speculam*), a watch tower or observatory. And the church is called 'a distant view' (*specula*), not only because it views God and heavenly things by faith, that is, afar off, being wise unto the things that are above, not unto those that are on the earth; but also, because there are within her true viewers, or seers, and watchmen in the spirit, whose office it is to take charge of the people under them, and to watch against the snares of enemies and sins; and such are called, in the Greek, bishops

²⁵⁸ For a philosophical discussion of Carlyle’s *specula*-tower compare Ralph Jessop, “‘A Strange Apartment’: The Watch-Tower in Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*”, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 29 (1996), 118-132.

²⁵⁹ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (University of Toronto Press) 2012. Akbari depicts fascinatingly the medieval poetic uses of the association between the two meanings in which the text becomes the mirror reflecting either God, or individual’s narcissistic image. Both images are specifically connected with the symbolical depiction of tower in Guillaume de Lorris’s *Roman de la Rose*.

(*episcopoi*), that is, spyers or seers; and you may for the same reason give them, from the Hebrew, the appellation of Zionians or Zioners.²⁶⁰

Let us compare *Sartor*'s rendition of this image. Teufelsdröckh in his tower located in the 'lane of delusion' (*Wahngasse*) pays to his city a dubious (deluded) night-guard from which he performs his devilish voyeuristic antics. He is apparently possessed of magical powers which allow him to annihilate/or transcend space (and time) as he imagines the hanging of the culprits on the gallows in the morning to come, as well as looking directly through the roofs into the houses of the citizens, whom he perceives as 'salted fish in their barrel':

All these heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them;— crammed in, like salted fish in their barrel;— or weltering, shall I say, like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed vipers, each struggling to get its *head above* the others. (SR, 24)

Teufelsdröckh's Babel-like tower rises above the whole city equalling in height even the church tower: 'I see it all; for, except Schlosskirche weather-cock, no biped stands so high.' (SR, 23) From there Professor not only perceives the despicable misery of the life beneath but also his sight and smell are offended by 'hideous (...) vapours, and putrefactions' that rise up to heaven:

That stifled hum of Midnight, when Traffic has lain down to rest; and the chariot-wheels of Vanity, still rolling here and there through distant streets, are bearing her to Halls roofed in, and lighted to the due pitch for her; and only Vice and Misery, to prowl or to moan like nightbirds, are abroad: that hum, I say, like the stertorous, unquiet slumber of sick Life, is heard in Heaven! Oh, under that hideous coverlet of vapours, and putrefactions, and unimaginable gases, what a Fermenting-vat lies simmering and hid! (SR, 24)

Teufelsdröckh's impossible (yet apparently achieved) deed of dark art of alchemical mastery consists in converting these deadly putrefactions into 'gold vapour, as from the crucible from an alchemist' (SR, 158). Carlyle is playing here on another of Luther's famous images (although never found literally under such a form) of the 'snow-covered dung'.²⁶¹ Luther's condemnation of man's fallen state leads him to frequent comparisons of man's corrupt nature with dung. The grace sent by God to his Elect occults man's dung-like nature from

²⁶⁰ Lenker (ed.), *Luther's Commentary on the First Twenty-Two Psalms*, trans., pp. 74-75.

²⁶¹ *Sartor* is saturated with images of melting snow. Clothes theory describes the 'bodying forth' of new concepts and then their 'melting again into new metamorphosis', SR, p. 178. Compare also: "Often also could I see the black Tempest marching in anger through the Distance: round some Schreckhorn, as yet grim-blue, would the eddying vapor gather, and there tumultuously eddy, and flow down like a mad witch's hair; till, after a space, it vanished, and, in the clear sunbeam, your Schreckhorn stood smiling grim-white, for the vapour had held snow. How thou fermentest and elaboratest, in thy great fermenting-vat and laboratory of an Atmosphere, of a World, O Nature!—" SR, p. 126.

God's eyes (and nose!) yet without changing it substantially.²⁶² In *Sartor*, we see Teufelsdröckh, with his clearly devilish and 'deluded' perception of the world, mimicking God's work of the dispensation of grace, a confusion which is signalled by Teufelsdröckh in Book Two when he asks rhetorically: 'Why was the Living banished thither companionless, conscious? Why, if there is no Devil; nay, unless the Devil is your God?' (SR, 113) Instead of God's grace, man's unsightly and stinky nature (like Teufelsdröckh's asafetida) is adequately covered and hidden by means of Carlyle's humour, which, like an open secret, simultaneously hides and proclaims to the whole world the terrible truth of man's wretched existence (it's no better than a dung). However, Carlyle's Phoenix, like Richter's Merops, insistently declines to 'start up by miracle, and fly heavenward' from the 'dead cinereous heap.' (SR, 161) Instead, like carnivorous Merops, which only pretends to be a humming bird living on flowery nectar, *Sartor* dispenses its humoristic coverlet of snow over a world emphatically devoid of God's grace, while it challenges the reader to proclaim the obvious, although frozen under the humoristic spell, truth.

Before the last leap, the Editor and Teufelsdröckh prepare their followers for the final grand revelation of *Sartor*'s 'Holy of Holies'. The Editor asks himself curiously: 'one knows not what, or how little, may lie under it. Our readers shall look with their own eyes.' (SR, 164) Finally, as the snow has 'melted as into vapour' again, *Sartor*'s 'Divine' joke is complete:

In a word, he [Teufelsdröckh] has looked fixedly on Existence, till, one after the other, its earthly hulls and garnitures have all melted away; and now, to his rapt vision, the interior celestial Holy-of-Holies lies disclosed. (SR, 167)

The mystery from the Mosque of St. Sophia is resolved. The dirty, yet 'necessary work' (SR, 163) of voyeuristically discerning and disclosing the 'unholy' through Teufelsdröckh's devilishly sharp sight has been completed. It must now be covered anew, Macbeth's ravelled sleeve and king's blackbird-filled dumpling knit up again (*resartus*). Everything again 'lies swept, silent, sealed up' [my emphasis, JM] in the last pages of *Sartor*. In fact, the silence covers also the fact that Teufelsdröckh with the assistance of his helper, the Editor, has finally with the 'last leap' over the hellish bridge leading directly inside Teufelsdröckh's tower (this should now come as no surprise) managed to *inlock* his followers within, and set his watch-tower on fire while leaving the flame to lead other somnambulistic souls in this

²⁶² Luther's doctrine despite this image allowed for a gradual change, something which was understandably forgotten in the following tradition given the sheer force of the image.

culturally-barren, and unimaginative 'Night of the World' (SR, 190) straight into him arms:²⁶³

Teufelsdröckh's 'enormous Clothes-Volume' is now revealed to be

an enormous Pitch-pan, which our Teufelsdröckh in his lone watch-tower had kindled, that it might flame far and wide through the Night, and many a disconsolately wandering spirit be guided thither to a Brother's bosom! – (SR, 190)

Finally, Teufelsdröckh himself disappears forever with the final *Fiat*, i.e. his last recorded 'prophetic' (Cagliostro-like) words to the world: '*Es geht an* (It is beginning)'. Thus the book has made a whole circle and returns once again to its genesis. After the text has sucked all its characters (and also devoured the Reader) into one *Sartorian* 'Divine ME' (SR, 55) (in place of the 'Divine Messenger' [my emphasis, JM] which Teufelsdröckh had been so anxiously expecting), *Sartor* is now once again raising the alarm of the imminent delivery of its demonic characters to the world in an act which is a blasphemous parody of God's creative *Fiat* (but threatens instead to be a large purge induced by Teufelsdröckh's overdoses of *asafoetida*). Yet, after such a grand announcement, the much awaited for 'Sedition' (or revolution) (SR, 191) turns to be nothing more than an 'ambrosial' *Sedation*, by means of which the over-wearied Editor-Oliver-Yorke-Heuschrecke-Teufelsdröckh-Sartor-Carlyle finally fall asleep, laying down the pen. What seemed to be the 'smoky fire' of a newly ignited theological revolution, now turns out no more than a faint *ignis fatuus*. After such incredible loud advertising of 'the Fire-Creation of the World to its Fire-Consummation' (SR, 170), in the end it turns out that nothing happens. The whole book has been no more than an 'uneasy interruption to [reader's] ways of thought and digestion' (SR, 192), and the tired tailor in the long last falls asleep from over-weariness, proclaiming in the last words to the reader that, he hopes, the reader also will find such an ending to be a 'satisfying consummation' of their recent love adventure:

Here, however, can the present Editor, with an ambrosial joy as of over-weariness falling into sleep, lay down his pen. Well does he know, if human testimony be worth aught, that to innumerable British readers likewise, this is a satisfying consummation. (SR, 192)

If nothing else, the reader must agree that, like Luther before him, *Sartor* has erected a fitting monument to its (blue) devils²⁶⁴ which, in accordance with Editor's description of *Kleider*,

²⁶³ According to Carlyle's appreciation in *Heroes*, the great achievement of Reformation in Scotland was the kindling of a noble cause 'like a beacon set on high; high as Heaven, yet attainable from Earth.' Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 106. See also Carlyle's early poem 'Tragedy of the Night-Moth' (1822?) in which he compares himself to a night-moth which he has allured to his candle-light, and then watched alight momentarily on the pages of a book of Goethe's only to subsequently perish in the flame of the candle. In the remaining part of the poem, Carlyle expresses his self-pity over his tragic fate.

‘whether understood or not, could not even by the blindest be overlooked.’ (SR, 15) Having played into its own predestined sepulchral epitaph, *Sartor* now grants his rebellious tailors a well deserved ‘rest from their labours’ for ‘their works do follow them’ (Revelation 14:13). In a fittingly clothed in Latin idiom prompt to the reader, *Sartor* twists Christopher Wren’s inscription in St. Paul’s Cathedral (‘If you seek his monument, look around you’) into *Si monumentum quaeris, fimetum adspice* (‘If you seek his monument, look at this dung-hill’).

HIC JACET
PHILIPPUS ZAEHDARM, COGNOMINE MAGNUS,
ZAEHDARMI COMES,
EX IMPERII CONCILIO,
VELLERIS AUREI, PERISCELIDIS, NECNON VULTURIS NIGRI
EQUES.
QUI DUM SUB LUNA AGEBAT,
QUINQUIES MILLE PERDICES
PLUMBO CONFECIT:
VARIIS CIBI
CENTUMPONDIA MILLIES CENTENA MILLIA,
PER SE, PERQUE SERVOS QUADRUPEDES BIPEDESVE,
HAUD SINE TUMULT DEVOLVENS,
IN STERCUS
PALAM CONVERTIT.
NUNC A LABORE REQUIESCENTEM
OPERA SEQUUNTUR.
SI MONUMENTUM QUAERIS,
FIMETUM ADSPICE.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ In the end, it matters little whether the demons of *Sartor* be real or imaginary ones since, as Teufelsdröckh notes: ‘Was Luther’s Picture of the Devil less a Reality, whether it were formed within the bodily eye, or without it? In every the wisest Soul lies a whole world of internal Madness, an authentic Demon-Empire; out of which, indeed, his world of Wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as on its dark foundations does a habitable flowery Earth rind.’ SR, p. 170.

²⁶⁵ ‘Here lies Philip Zaehdarm, called the Great, Count of Zaehdarm, member of the Imperial Council, Knight of the Golden Fleece, of the Garter, and of the Black Vulture. Who, while he lived on earth, shot five thousand partridges: a hundred million hundred-weights of various kinds of food he openly, by himself and his servants, quadrupeds and bipeds, not without tumult in the course of it, converted into manure. Now resting from his labor, his works follow him. If you seek his monument, look at this pile’ Tarr (ed.), Notes to *Sartor Resartus*, p. 331. (In fact *fimetum* means ‘a dung-hill’ and *not* ‘a pile’).

Conclusion.

The preceding thesis has attempted to trace the development of Thomas Carlyle's Calvinist fascination with the devil in his early writings. It has read the devilish imagery channelled through Luther's theological thought as the linking theme between Carlyle's essays on Jean Paul Richter (1817, 1817, 1830) and *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34). In such a reading, the sketching of Richter's literary portrait has been interpreted as a preparation for the staging of Carlyle's theological tenets in *Sartor*. Carlyle is still still wavering, in these early essays, between, on the one hand, Richter's destructive Lutheran side and, on the other, a more open and joyful depiction of Jean Paul through Herder's optics. One lesson taken from Richter, in my proposed reading, is the linking of Lutheran theology to Richter's theory of humour defined by Jean Paul as a (Lutheran) *lex inversa*. Richter's theory fundamentally accepts the Lutheran depiction of man's fallen state but attempts to redress it through a humorous trick. Imaginatively represented as the bird *Merops* which refuses to rise to heaven, much more interested instead in the underworld, Richter's humour is subsequently 're-tailored' by Carlyle into the figure of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus*.

My reading of Carlyle's *Note Books* has demonstrated how interested Carlyle was in metaphorically rewriting Luther's creed under a new form. *Sartor* was accordingly presented as a translation from German bearing a Latin title, symbolically referring to Luther's translation of the Bible. By taking Jean Paul's humoristic (Lutheran) detours into hell in full seriousness, Carlyle transformed *Sartor* into a humoristic descent into the hells, from which the text promises to return purified from its devilish shadow. However, instead of becoming 'cleaned' through the fire, *Sartor*'s devilish forces 'miraculously' spread and multiply in Teufelsdröckh's humorous alchemical laboratory. Rather than awakening from the nightmare to which it has given birth in the first place, the text snakes away from facing its theological conclusions by putting its tired tailors to an uneasy sleep. This anxious rest is threatened by the outbursts of Teufelsdröckh's uncontrollable and apparently insane laughter, capable of awakening and releasing the dormant demons again. Under the thin cover of the embellishing style of Jeanpaulian origin, deep infernal forces are boiling and menace to erupt, tearing the text into pieces.

Carlyle's battle with the devil thus finishes in an insecure shallow dream from which Teufelsdröckh/the devil has only apparently been removed. The reader is warned that

‘safemoored in some stillest obscurity, not to *lie* always still, Teufelsdröckh is actually in London!’ [my emphasis, JM] (SR, 192) The text proudly brandishing Diogenes’ philosophical torch in its first pages, by which it promises to read the devil’s (Teufelsdröckh’s) dark, overshadowed face, in the last pages withdraws its light, leaving the reader in ‘a dark still darker’. Yet, even though *Sartor* thus refuses to spell its conclusions, the reader should have by now become aware that the textual marriage between Carlyle’s Herderian/Jeanpaulian style and his mystical disquisition on the mysterious and ineffable nature of the world, flourishes out of the text’s profound disapproval and ‘censure’ of life. Jean Paul’s merry masquerades allow him enough distance to (albeit anxiously) approach humorously his own creed, and to grant his characters relieving escapes from the devilish sight. However, Carlyle, in Calvinist spirit, stretches Jean Paul’s textual practices to their very limits, allowing for no such escapes from the devil’s claws. The merry clothing of his demons in German costumes does little to change the essence of *Sartor*’s deeply pessimistic and even life-despising creed. In fact, *Sartor*’s mad outgrowth of linguistic neologisms and stylistic ‘monsters’ occurs as a means of obliterating the fact that Carlyle does not allow any place in his *credo* for God’s redeeming grace. Sacrificed to the unrestricted devilish machinations, the text and its characters (or voices) are granted nothing but gaudy (but also straitjacket-like) clothes to cover-up their shameful (in a literal reading of the Fall) nakedness. Carlyle’s humour, rather than resolving the tensions within the text, covers them up with a new coat(ing), which the perceptive reader will be able to see through and proclaim *Sartor*’s naked truth (much dreaded by the text). All *Sartor*’s loud proclamations of facing and heroically fighting the devil are in fact one of the text’s many *lies*. Their real role is to obfuscate *Sartor*’s refusal to confess its own devilish practices designed to lead the reader into the uneasy darkness in which no mystical ‘wonder of wonders’ but rather the devilish presence is silently lurking.

In my thesis I have argued that the mainstream criticism has tended to overlook these inner tensions of Carlyle’s theological thought, in a kind of haste to translate its tenets all too smoothly and too eagerly into a cultural/political/sociological idiom. While G. B. Tennyson in a structuralist vein comprehensively traced the development of the structural concerns of Carlyle’s texts from Carlyle’s early essays to his composition of *Sartor*, a study in the dynamics of Carlyle’s religious thought from his early writings to the late texts is much needed. I would suggest that whereas the essays on Jean Paul serve as a preparatory staging for the exercise of Carlyle’s Herder-Luther (unequal) battle centred on the position of the

devil in Carlyle's system, *Sartor* prepares the ground for Carlyle's *Diamond Necklace* (1837) and *The French Revolution* (1837), two texts which read history as fully and uniquely conducted by demonic powers. Carlyle's imagery is much-telling here: Richter's Samson and Deliah theme canonized through *Sartor*'s demonic tailor (or 'cutter') with his symbolic scissors, are yet to be transformed into the grand symbol of *The French Revolution*, the guillotine. It is to be hoped that future criticism will examine more carefully these religious (demonic) roots of Carlyle's *Weltanschauung*.

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