

ROMANTIC LOVE AND THE DENIAL OF DIFFERENCE

Friedrich Schlegel and Dorothea Veit

Between 1790 and 1806, at least nine Jewish women in Berlin regularly opened their houses to visitors from across the social spectrum and led spirited conversations about art, literature, and society. The most famous of these Jewish *salonnières* were Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin Varnhagen; others include Sara Levy, Marianne Meyer Eybenberg, and Sara Meyer Grotthus. Scholars have long held that the informal gatherings in their homes fostered a historically unprecedented social interaction between Jews and Christians. Hannah Arendt notes that visitors could experiment with new forms of cross-class and cross-religious sociability because of the outsider status of the salon hostesses: “Precisely because the Jews stood outside of the society [the Jewish salons] became, for a short time, a kind of neutral zone where people of culture met.”¹ In recent years, scholars have cautioned against overly optimistic accounts of the egalitarianism of salon culture and painted a more differentiated picture of its form and duration.² They point out that the

1. Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, ed. Liliane Weissberg, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 127.

2. Barbara Hahn speaks of “the myth of the salon” that gradually evolved after 1945. See her *The Jewess Pallas Athena: This Too a Theory of Modernity*, trans. James McFarland, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42–55. Among other things, Hahn points out that the Jewish women of Berlin did not use the word “salon” for their own forms of socializing. For a detailed analysis of the “salon communication,” see Hannah Lotte Lund, *Der Berliner “jüdische Salon” um 1800: Emanzipation in der Debatte* (Berlin and Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2012).

socializing of the Jewish *salonnières* involved a greater variety of places, contexts, and modalities than previously acknowledged, and that it was an altogether precarious and transitory phenomenon. "Salon" conversations could happen at the tea tables of open houses, during dinner or dance parties, after theatrical or musical performances, and during leisurely walks in the parks and streets of Berlin. They could take the form of a dialogue, a letter, or a billet. They extended from Berlin to Weimar, Jena, and Breslau as well as to lakeside resorts, where social rules and conventions were generally more relaxed. Furthermore, the wealth of communicative forms, places, and media cannot gloss over the fact that the egalitarian encounter between people from different classes and religions was very short-lived and, perhaps, always more of an aspiration than a reality.

Part and parcel of the Christian-Jewish interaction in the Berlin salons were platonic and not-so-platonic love affairs that have long drawn the attention of scholars of Jewish history and are still debated controversially. The historian Deborah Hertz describes her own vacillation between two different views of these love affairs, as either an expression of individual freedom or a threat to Jewish communality. Hertz originally celebrated the intermarriages of a number of salon women as "a heroic protest against a strict system of arranged marriage," but subsequent research sensitized her to the costs of these rebellions to Jewish communities.³

The debate is of long standing. On one end of the spectrum, the nineteenth-century historian Heinrich Graetz views the salons as the beginning of the end of Jewish communal life in Germany precisely because they led to interreligious love affairs. He calls the salon of Henriette Herz a "Midianite tent," alluding to the biblical story of Midianite women who seduced the Israelites to practice idolatry.⁴ Though very different in tone, Hannah Arendt's critique of the atomizing force of romance in the biography *Rahel Varnhagen* betrays a similar concern. Arendt views the affectionate bonds in the salons as an expression of a politically problematic individualism, a tendency among Jews to seek personal liberation rather than political emancipation. The historian Steven Lowenstein similarly emphasizes the loss of Jewish collectivity. He regards the increase in Christian-Jewish love affairs around 1800 as a symptom of the crisis of the Berlin Jewish community during the second stage of modernization. After the death of Moses Mendelssohn in 1786, the belief of the early Haskalah in the reconcilability of acculturation and religious orthodoxy began to wane. In the absence of attractive alternatives within Judaism,

3. See the foreword to Deborah Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2005), XV. In the book itself, Hertz argues against the idealization of Christian-Jewish unions as love matches. She shows that such unions were ruled by a distinct social logic: the exchange of wealth for status. See the chapter "Seductive Conversion and Romantic Intermarriage," 204–50.

4. Heinrich Hirsch Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1895), 5:422.

Berlin Jews who were eager to join the modern age began to consider more radical departures from tradition and to ignore the social taboos against conversion and intermarriage.⁵ In all of these accounts, Christian-Jewish love affairs figure as either the cause or the effect of the Jews' inability to act collectively, whether toward the preservation of tradition, in the effort for religious reform, or in the struggle for political rights.

On the other end of the spectrum, writers have celebrated such affairs as a sign of the emancipation of the individual from social norms and conventions. The relationship between Friedrich Schlegel and Dorothea Veit is perhaps the most famous of the Christian-Jewish love affairs that originated in the salons. Born Brendel Mendelssohn in 1764, Veit was the oldest daughter of Moses Mendelssohn, the famous Enlightenment philosopher discussed in the previous chapter. Her father personally oversaw her education but then married her off in 1783 to a Jewish businessman without much concern for her own opinion. In 1797, Dorothea, as she had begun calling herself, met and fell in love with Friedrich Schlegel, the pivotal thinker of the early Romantic movement. The couple started living together after Veit obtained a rabbinical divorce from her first husband in early 1799. They married only in 1804, largely because of stipulations in the custody arrangement for Veit's younger son. In many accounts, the story of Friedrich Schlegel and Dorothea Veit serves to illustrate the blessings of love-based marriage, in contrast to the presumed sacrifice of personal happiness in an arranged marriage. Commentators often dwell on Veit's plight in her first marriage to the Jewish banker Simon Veit, who is portrayed as kind and gentle, but uneducated and insensitive to the pleasures of high culture. According to these commentators, it was no wonder that she was dissatisfied with her dull husband and receptive to the charms of witty and artistic Schlegel. It was admirable, even, that she overcame her fears of social castigation and followed her heart into a relationship based on mutual love.⁶

At no moment, then, would one expect a greater confluence of the discourse of love and the debates around Jewish acculturation than during the short-lived era of the Berlin salons. But this is not exactly what happened. To be sure, the Christian-Jewish love affairs that often began in the salons found their way into literature, which at the time was instrumental in disseminating the new love ideal we still call Romantic. During the years in which their relationship developed and solidified, Friedrich Schlegel and Dorothea Veit each wrote a novel that centers on the Romantic love ideal. Schlegel's *Lucinde* (1799) is perhaps the clearest instantiation of this

5. See Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770–1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), esp. 104–19.

6. See, for instance, Carola Stern, "*Ich möchte mir Flügel wünschen*": *Das Leben der Dorothea Schlegel* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990).

ideal in German literature.⁷ Veit's *Florentin* (1801) relates to this ideal largely negatively, through the frustrated hopes of its eponymous hero.⁸ However, neither novel makes explicit references to Jews or Judaism. This omission is surprising, considering that interfaith romance is well suited to illustrate the power of romantic love, in which claims to individuality override social determinations, and that Christian-Jewish relationships soon afterward became emblematic of just this trend, whether evaluated positively or negatively.

This chapter explores the disjunction between the historical significance and the literary avoidance of interfaith love affairs around 1800. I begin by offering two different explanations for the absence of references to Jews and Judaism in Schlegel's *Lucinde*. (Of course, I do not suggest that literary texts need to be read biographically. But because of the literary conventions of the time, Schlegel's novel was read—and could be expected to be read—as an autobiographical document from the very beginning. This invites speculation about the role of Veit's Jewishness.) First, in early Romantic and Idealist philosophies of love, Jews come to embody a negative principle. Thinkers such as Schleiermacher and the young Hegel pit Judaism, which they associate with a state of stasis or alienation, against the principle of unification that is love. While Schlegel himself barely ever mentions Judaism in his writings, his work participates in these philosophical currents and at least sets nothing against their latent antisemitism. Second, I read the absence of references to Jewishness in Schlegel's *Lucinde* as part of a larger pattern of signification in literary love stories. Around 1800, when love becomes a privileged medium of individuation, the lack of markers of social identity, especially of such overriding markers as Jewishness, helps create literary characters conceived as unique individuals.

The most important strand of my argument concerns the ways in which romantic love, which initially entails a withdrawal from society, generates new models of society and politics. This happens in both *Lucinde* and *Florentin*. As I will show, these novels wrestle with the question of how to incorporate strangers into a community, and thereby implicitly comment on the process of Jewish emancipation and acculturation. However, they offer two quite different visions of sociopolitical integration. Wherever Schlegel turns love into a metaphor for society, he elides differences of class and religion in favor of the sexual dichotomy between the lovers. Differences other than gender become unspeakable as Schlegel projects the gender dichotomy onto society at large. Against the backdrop of Schlegel's problematic elision of difference—which would include Jewish difference—Veit's work reveals

7. See Paul Kluckhohn, *Die Auffassung der Liebe in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts und in der deutschen Romantik*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1966), 361–93; and Sara Friedrichsmeyer, *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism: Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and the Metaphysics of Love* (New York: Peter Lang, 1983), 131–67.

8. Many contemporary text editions and critical essays speak of Dorothea *Schlegel*, even though her last name at the time of the publication of *Florentin* was Veit (and her official first name still Brendel). Veit was baptized and married Friedrich Schlegel on April 6, 1804.

its critical potential. I read *Florentin*, in which love conspicuously fails to secure the hero the sense of home and identity he desires, as a subversion of the Romantic love ideal and a critique of the political models derived from this ideal. While in *Lucinde* the polity gets reorganized along gendered lines, in *Florentin* the polity remains in a state of becoming.

Excursus: "The Jew" as Negative Principle in Philosophies of Love

The figure of "the Jew" functioned as a negative principle in the Idealist and Romantic philosophies of love that developed around 1800. The young Hegel, for instance, advances a secular version of the traditional Christian opposition between Judaic law and Christian love in his "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate" ("Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal," 1798–1800). The work belongs in the context of Hegel's critique of Kantian moral philosophy and its concept of freedom. Against Kant's categorical imperative, which he deemed a too external law, Hegel posits love as a principle of union and the true ground of human freedom. Only love can reconcile subject and object, the spiritual and the sensual, the human and the world, the idea of individual autonomy and the need for reciprocal relationships with others.⁹ In the first section of his tract, entitled "The Spirit of Judaism," Hegel uses the image of the Jew as a negative foil for these ideas. As in Kant, the Jew in Hegel is an embodiment of heteronomy. Hegel conjures a series of historical Jewish figures from Noah to Moses Mendelssohn who submit to God's command rather than recognize the possibility of human freedom. But even more important for Hegel is the purported Jewish lack of love. He describes how Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, first cut all bonds of love to his native country and then failed to form new bonds in his chosen country. Abraham's unwillingness to wed his son to a Canaanite woman is for Hegel the most salient expression of the alienation that characterizes Jewish existence. Hegel goes so far as to call the rape of Dinah, related in Genesis 34, a mere "insult" (*Beleidigung*) and her brothers' revenge of the rape further proof of the Jewish inability to create loving bonds with their environment.¹⁰

Significantly, Hegel does not encourage increased social interaction between Christians and Jews, such as he most certainly witnessed in his surroundings, as a solution to the perceived problem of Jewish separateness. He alludes to the possibility of friendly and amorous bonds with Christians but immediately adds that in the past such cross-religious socializing led to dialectical backlashes. Hegel

9. See also Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, *Romantischer Antisemitismus: Von Klopstock bis Richard Wagner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2005), 94.

10. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," in *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings by Friedrich Hegel*, trans. T. M. Knox (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1970), 182–301; here 188. (The translator chooses a stronger word here than the German "Beleidigung ihrer Schwester" suggests: "outraging of their sister.")

uses Judaism exclusively as a foil for his ideas about human freedom in and through love. His “The Spirit of Christianity” shows how the figure of the Jew comes to embody negative principles in German Idealism: in this case, the state of alienation that ensues from the inability to love.¹¹

Closer to the home of Friedrich Schlegel and Dorothea Veit, Friedrich Schleiermacher provides another example of how Christian-Jewish love is excluded from the purview of early Romantic thought. A Christian theologian, Schleiermacher was a close friend of the couple and an ardent supporter of civic equality for the Jews. It thus comes as a surprise that, in his contribution to the debates around David Friedländer’s proposal for a “dry baptism” of the Berlin Jews, he expresses reservations about interfaith marriage.¹² Schleiermacher ends his plea for abolishing the laws against marriage between members of different religions with a caveat: “It may perhaps not be advisable in most cases for a Christian man and a Jewish woman (or vice versa) to contract a marriage tie.”¹³ This caveat indicates the conservative thrust of his tract, the primary concern of which is the problem of conversions without true faith. Schleiermacher believes that a Jew’s desire to marry a Christian is frequently the cause of such opportunistic conversions, which he fears will infuse Christianity with Judaic elements. In other words, he supports the idea of civil marriage not because he wants to ensure a separation between church and state but because he wants to prevent an infiltration of Christianity with insincere converts, or any other kind of unregulated exchange between Judaism and Christianity.¹⁴ Fear of hybridity characterizes his essay throughout. Schleiermacher complains, for instance, about “Jews who wish

11. On the figure of the Jew as a negative principle in German Idealism, see Michael Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew: The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also Martha B. Helfer, *The Word Unheard: Legacies of Anti-Semitism in German Literature and Culture* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011). Helfer argues that between 1750 and 1850, German-language writers developed a new, “latent” antisemitism that has been largely ignored by scholars. Although she focuses on literary authors, her argument about the subtle presence of anti-Jewish constructions around 1800 also applies to many philosophers of the time.

12. See Schleiermacher’s response to David Friedländer’s *Open Letter to his Reverend, Provost Teller, Councillor of the Upper Consistory in Berlin* (1799). Friedländer, one of the leaders of the Berlin Jewish community, had become frustrated with the slow progress of Jewish emancipation and proposed that a number of Berlin Jews should convert to Protestantism under special conditions. In order to gain entrance into German society, they would accept Christianity as a rational religion without fully espousing all of its practices and rituals. Schleiermacher rejected Friedländer’s (anonymous) proposal and in so doing touched upon several issues pertaining to the relationship between state and religion. See their exchange in David Friedländer, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Wilhelm Abraham Teller, *A Debate on Jewish Emancipation and Christian Theology in Old Berlin*, ed. and trans. Richard Crouter and Julie Klassen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004).

13. Friedländer, Schleiermacher, and Teller, *A Debate on Jewish Emancipation*, 100.

14. See also Hess, *Germans, Jews, and the Claims of Modernity*, 169–204. According to Hess, Friedländer’s proposal, which is usually read as a document of opportunistic assimilationism, is an attempt on the part of Jews to enter German society on their own terms. In contrast, Schleiermacher allows for no internal reform of Judaism and seeks to bring the reform of Judaism under the purview of the state.

to have their children circumcised and at the same time baptized. There are now already amphibians whose nature might be difficult to determine.”¹⁵

In *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (*Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 1799), Schleiermacher construes Judaism as a remnant of the past and practicing Jews as incapable of change. In these speeches, Schleiermacher formulates the Romantic view of religion as a personal experience rooted in feelings. At the same time, he is invested in the preservation of existing religious communities and anxious about the potential dilution of Christianity. And while he ostensibly values religious pluralism, he embraces an evolutionary model of religious history according to which Judaism has lost its vitality and significance as a religion: “Judaism is long since a dead religion, and those who at present still bear its colors are actually sitting and mourning beside the undecaying mummy and weeping over its demise and its sad legacy.”¹⁶ Schleiermacher does not seem to believe in the possibility of new dynamic developments within Judaism. In Hegel, Jews cannot love; in Schleiermacher, they cannot develop. Both constructions effectively exclude Jews and Judaism from the new philosophies of love around 1800. They render Christian-Jewish love unthinkable even where—or perhaps especially where—their authors support Jewish emancipation and hail love as a secular principle of unification. In what follows, I suggest that the philosophy of love in *Lucinde* similarly hinges upon the negation of Judaism, or its transformation into an unspeakable difference.

Love as a Medium of Individuation: Friedrich Schlegel’s *Lucinde*

Lucinde is the Romantic love novel par excellence. A capricious mix of letters, dialogues, narratives, and aphorisms, the novel depicts the love experiences of its male protagonist, Julius, and the fulfillment he finds in his relationship with the artistic and free-spirited Lucinde. There are no explicit references to Jews and Judaism in *Lucinde*, and yet Schlegel would have realized that his readers were likely to import ideas about Judaism into the text. It was well known that Schlegel wrote *Lucinde* under the direct influence of his love affair with Dorothea Veit. Although he had had plans for a novel since 1794 (and at that time may have had an earlier lover in mind), he began writing *Lucinde* during a crucial stage of his love affair with Veit, while she was negotiating a divorce from her first husband.

Most contemporaries read this biographical background into *Lucinde*, and they had good reasons to do so. The late eighteenth century saw a change in the relationship between literature and life, a blurring of the boundary between them. As

15. Friedländer, Schleiermacher, and Teller, *A Debate on Jewish Emancipation*, 89.

16. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. and ed. Richard Crouter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114–15.

authors included personal elements in their works and used details recognizably culled from their own life, literature began to make plausible claims to the representation of real-life experience.¹⁷ The reception of *Lucinde* bears witness to this shift in literary conventions. The appearance of the novel caused a public scandal because it was thought to reveal intimate details from the author's life. Although the book can hardly be called pornographic, by either our standards or those of its time, its open discussion of intimacy challenged the established distinction between high literature and popular erotica. Even friends and supporters worried that *Lucinde* revealed too much about the couple's private life to the public. And Veit herself wrote to Schleiermacher: "With regard to *Lucinde*—yes, with regard to *Lucinde*!—Often my heart becomes hot and then cold again [when I consider] that the innermost will be turned outward—that which was once so sacred and homely [*heimlich*] to me will now be divulged to all the curious, all the haters."¹⁸

Veit does not seem to have worried that her Jewishness would be among the personal details to be exploited by the book's enemies. But this happened at least some of the time; reviews of *Lucinde* could take on a decidedly antisemitic tone. One critic who wrote derisively about the work's sensuality explicitly referred to "Madam Veit" as a member of the Jewish nation and a daughter of Moses Mendelssohn.¹⁹ The writer Johann Daniel Falk, who satirized the eroticism of both *Lucinde* and Schleiermacher's commentary on the novel, cast Jewish women as the most enthusiastic audience of these works.²⁰ As Ludwig Marcuse comments: "The impropriety of *Lucinde* was intensified by the fact that the anarchy of the bedroom included the mixing of the races; taking umbrage at sexuality and at Jewishness became one and the same thing."²¹ While Marcuse aptly sums up one strand of *Lucinde's* reception, I suggest that we take the couple's silence on the subject of Veit's Jewishness, and the absence of references to Judaism in *Lucinde*, seriously. This silence cannot be reduced to fear of antisemitic reverberations. It is more likely that Schlegel did not dwell on Jewishness because he sought to describe the development of individuality outside of social determinations, and because he segregated love from social identifiers other than gender.

For the early German Romantics love and marriage were mostly synonymous, and both were to be wrested away from social conventions and institutions. Schlegel belongs to the "metaphysicians of marriage," as Adrian Daub has aptly called the German Idealists and Romantics who collectively redefined marriage around

17. See Luhmann, *Love as Passion*, 135.

18. Dorothea Veit to Friedrich Schleiermacher, April 8, 1799, in *Friedrich Schlegel: Kritische Ausgabe seiner Werke*, ed. Ernst Behler, with the collaboration of Jean-Jacques Anstett and Hans Eichner (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1958–) 24:266. Hereafter cited as *KA*.

19. [Daniel Jenisch], *Diogenes Laterne*, published anonymously (Leipzig 1799), 374.

20. See Johann Daniel Falk, "Der Jahrmarkt zu Plundersweilern" (1800/01), in *Die ästhetische Prägeley: Streitschriften der antiromantischen Bewegung*, ed. Rainer Schmitz (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1992), 81–114, and the editor's commentary, 368–93.

21. Ludwig Marcuse, *Obszön: Geschichte einer Entrüstung* (Munich: Paul List, 1962), 70.

1800.²² Thinkers such as Fichte, Hegel, and Schleiermacher conceived of marriage as a union that is grounded in itself and structured in reference to itself and therefore requires no legitimization through tradition, state, or church. "Almost all marriages are simply concubinages," Schlegel writes in *Athenäum* fragment 34, implying that marriage is invalid without a deep spiritual and physical bond between the partners.²³ If such a bond exists, its confirmation through church or state is unnecessary.

In theory, a Christian-Jewish love affair could be a perfect illustration of this idea of marriage. Because interfaith liaisons were a social taboo, and interfaith marriages a legal impossibility, they could illustrate the powers of romantic love and bolster Schlegel's critique of the institution of marriage. Indeed, one of the very few times that Schlegel brings up Veit's Judaism in his letters is in the context of his critique of conventional marriage. He expresses relief that he cannot formally marry Veit because her family is opposed to baptism, which at the time would have been required for marriage.²⁴ In Schlegel's view, the lack of institutionalization in their relationship guarantees the authenticity and the freedom of their love. Of course, what is an accomplished fact in the novel—Lucinde is ostensibly free from familial or communal ties—was an ongoing drama in real life, in which Veit only gradually broke away from her husband, her family, and her religion. *Lucinde* glosses over any such process, creating the fiction of an individual who always already exists outside of conventions, institutions, and social structures.

Niklas Luhmann's theory about the function of love in modern society sheds further light on the process of individuation in *Lucinde*. According to Luhmann, modern societies are characterized by functional differentiation rather than hierarchical stratification. Whereas in premodern times a person's place in the social hierarchy defined most aspects of his or her life, in modernity people are presumed to have the ability to move between different social spheres and assume different roles within them. This leads to a certain chasm between impersonal relationships—in which one relates to the other in one's social role or function—and personal relationships—in which one relates to the other as an individual with a unique worldview and life experience. The simultaneous increase of social anonymity and personal intimacy endows love with new purposes and functions. In premodern times love was primarily a form of social solidarity; now it is a medium of individuation, a highly personal, unfathomable experience. Modern lovers define and

22. Adrian Daub, *Uncivil Unions: The Metaphysics of Marriage in German Idealism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

23. Friedrich Schlegel, *Friedrich Schlegel's "Lucinde" and the Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 34.

24. See Friedrich Schlegel to Novalis, December 17, 1798, in *KA* 24:215. In an earlier letter, Schlegel had already mentioned that formal marriage ("die verhaßte Ceremonie") with Veit is neither desirable nor possible, without giving an explicit reason. See his letter to Caroline Schlegel, November 27, 1798, in *KA* 24:202.

validate themselves through another person who shares their experience and perception of the world. That is why they are looking for a soul mate, someone who truly understands them rather than embodies merit, beauty, or virtue. In this way love counteracts social fragmentation and affords an experience of the self as whole, coherent, and authentic.

The love story in *Lucinde* is all about individuation thus understood. The relationship between Julius and Lucinde is a highly personal experience that occurs in a social vacuum. The lovers first meet outside of society and are free of external commitments. Although the novel goes into great details about Julius's life, we hear of no familial or social obligations on his part. Lucinde, too, "had renounced all ties and social rules daringly and decisively and lived a completely free and independent life."²⁵ Love in *Lucinde* is also self-referential in the way Luhmann theorizes. Julius hardly ever describes Lucinde's appearance or character. He is drawn to her not because of her qualities—such as being blond, smart, musical, and so on—but for the experience of love, for the ways in which she validates him and his view of the world. What first attracts Julius to Lucinde is the impression of "wonderful similarity [*Gleichheit*]" (98/53) between them. His love deepens as he realizes how similar they are in disposition, perception, and experience. The moment he tells her about his past life, this life comes together as a coherent story for the first time. When he talks to her about music, her responses seem to echo his own innermost thoughts. Their mutual mirroring culminates in moments of absolute, wordless understanding.

Luhmann observes that eighteenth-century literature untethers the individual from his social background and divests him of social attributes, thereby producing a "semantic void" around the individual.²⁶ This semantic void is only gradually filled over the course of the century. Early eighteenth-century literature already intimates that someone's social standing is less relevant for personal relationships such as love and friendship. Late eighteenth-century literature substantiates the abstract idea of the individual by depicting the development of personality through art, travel, education, and conversations. This observation offers one explanation for the narrow referential range in *Lucinde*: as a social attribute, Jewishness was so overdetermined that it would have been impossible to ignore if it appeared in the text. *Lucinde* shows that in the case of Christian-Jewish love relationships, the semantic void around the individual had to be rather forcefully created before it could be filled with new meaning.

25. Schlegel, "*Lucinde*" and the *Fragments*, 98. For the original German, see Schlegel, *Lucinde*, in *KA* 5:53. Further citations from these editions will be included parenthetically in the text, with the page number in the English translation followed by the page number in the German edition in italics, as here (98/53).

26. Luhmann, *Love as Passion*, 132. On the creation of this semantic void in *Lucinde*, see also Lezzi, "Liebe ist meine Religion!," 126–27.

The Sociopolitical Vision of *Lucinde*

The absence of social signifiers in *Lucinde* should not divert our attention from the social dimension of the novel, which describes the emergence of a new kind of community out of the lovers' dyad. While presenting his literary characters in relative isolation from their social environment, Schlegel projects a new model of social life based on love, an alternative to a society experienced as alienating and oppressive.

Love in *Lucinde* is first and foremost a dialectical process. Julius sums up the process of love as one in which every division leads to a higher unity, every estrangement to greater harmony: "Let men or words try to bring misunderstanding between us! That deep pain would quickly ebb and soon resolve itself into a more perfect harmony" (49/12). By depicting love as learned behavior, part of a longer developmental process that requires a measure of distance and reflection, Schlegel opens the door for expanding love into a model of society. Lucinde is not Julius's first love but the culmination of all his previous experiences with love. Similarly, he does not instantaneously fall in love with Lucinde but discovers his affection for her gradually over a period of time. In this process, misunderstandings and periods of estrangement eventually draw the lovers closer together. The discussion of jealousy in the section "Fidelity and Playfulness" ("Treue und Scherz") provides an example of this. Julius recounts how on the night before he felt awkward and inadequate at a social event and began a flirtatious conversation with another woman, thereby making Lucinde jealous. However, her jealousy dissipates when he launches on a series of philosophical reflections on the origins and the groundlessness of her feeling. He maintains that in a true marriage infidelity is impossible because one loves a unique individual rather than an exchangeable type, and that a man who playfully loves other women by flirting with them brings form to the chaos of society.

Whenever Schlegel turns love into a model or metaphor of society, he tends to elide differences of class, nationality, or religion in favor of the sexual opposition between the lovers. Initially conceived as pure individuals, Julius and Lucinde increasingly become representatives of their genders and trigger reflections on the character and roles of men and women. Feminist critics have long argued that *Lucinde*'s theory of gender is not as protofeminist as once believed.²⁷ While the novel presents woman as man's equal partner, it also delimits gender roles and reinstates male dominance. Subscribing to the idea of gender complementarity that became

27. See especially Sigrid Weigel, "Wider die romantische Mode: Zur ästhetischen Funktion des Weiblichen in Friedrich Schlegels *Lucinde*," in *Die verborgene Frau: Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft* (Berlin: Argument, 1983), 67–82; and Barbara Becker-Cantarino, "'Feminismus' und 'Emanzipation'? Zum Geschlechterdiskurs der deutschen Romantik am Beispiel der *Lucinde* und ihrer Rezeption," in *Salons der Romantik: Beiträge eines Wiepersdorfer Kolloquiums zu Theorie und Geschichte des Salons*, ed. Hartwig Schultze (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 22–44. On the history of the idea of gender complementarity, see also Stefani Engelstein, "The Allure of Wholeness: The Eighteenth-Century Organism and the Same-Sex Marriage Debate," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 754–76.

dominant during the late eighteenth century, Schlegel defines masculinity as searching activity and femininity as plant-like passivity. This essentialist theory of gender allows Schlegel to conceptualize love as a dialectical process that progressively joins opposites into more complex unities. Dialectical thinking requires that difference be understood as opposition, and Schlegel's conception of male and female sexual characteristics establishes just such an opposition. This opposition is dynamic rather than static—sexual role reversals and Julius's confusion about his sexual orientation repeatedly blur the boundaries between the sexes—which is why the dialectical process can continue.²⁸ In this process other differences of class, religion, and so on are collapsed into the sexual opposition. Love in *Lucinde* is the androgynous union of sexual opposites whose polarity is maintained because gender is depicted as the main, perhaps the only, source of difference between Julius and Lucinde.

Here a caveat is necessary. As many critics have pointed out, Schlegel is vacillating between two formative principles, those of dialectics and of *Kunstchaos*, or ordered chaos. This duality emerges most clearly in his conceptions of Romantic irony, famously defined as a "permanent parabasis" (KA 18:85) that disrupts artistic illusion through acts of literary self-reflection. Schlegel first advances a concept of irony as progressive movement and dialectical fusion of opposites, a concept that is linked to his ideal of Romantic poetry as "progressive, universal poetry."²⁹ But he also proposes a second concept according to which irony interrupts this progressive movement. This form of irony is linked to what he calls paradox or chaos; according to one critic, "Paradox involves a relation between elements that are different but not oppositional. . . . Paradox slips into the structureless concept of chaos precisely because, in the absence of opposition, there can be no dialectical synthesis of parts to give order and purpose to the difference between them."³⁰ As another critic put it, this kind of irony "says not so much the *opposite* to what is meant as something *other than* is stated."³¹ *Lucinde* repeatedly hints at the production of chaotic differences through Romantic irony. For instance, Julius recounts how a chance occurrence interrupted his attempt to write up his education to love and how he strived to integrate this *Zufall* into his writing in order to produce "the most beautiful chaos of sublime harmonies and fascinating pleasures" (45/9).³²

28. On allusions to homosexuality in *Lucinde*, see Martha B. Helfer, "'Confessions of an Improper Man': Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde*," in *Outing Goethe and His Age*, ed. Alice Kuzniar (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996) 174–93.

29. Schlegel, "*Lucinde*" and the *Fragments*, 175.

30. Kari Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 45–46. Weil builds here on Peter Szondi's and Paul de Man's different conceptions of Romantic irony. See Peter Szondi, "Friedrich Schlegel and Romantic Irony, with Some Remarks on Tieck's Comedies," in *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 57–73; and Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 187–228.

31. Lilian R. Furst, *Fictions of Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 12; Furst's emphasis.

32. On the Romantic concept of chaos, see also Jocelyn Holland, "*Lucinde*: The Novel from 'Nothing' as Epideictic Literature," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 54, no. 2 (2004): 163–76, esp. 166;

Love, too, may produce differences that are chaotic rather than dialectic. While the love between Julius und Lucinde creates an androgynous union of sexual opposites, it also generates new differences between the lovers: "At the beginning, nothing had attracted him so much and struck him so powerfully as the realization that Lucinde was of a similar, or even of the same mind and spirit as he was; and now he was forced to discover new differences every day. To be sure [*zwar*], even these differences were based on a fundamental similarity, and the more richly her character revealed itself, the more various and intimate did their communion become" (101/56). Are these newly discovered differences opposites that can be sublated in synthesis? Or are they more elusive differences that are given expression without being integrated into a new whole? The qualifying *zwar* (to be sure) at the beginning of the second sentence, which describes a dialectical process in which differentiation leads to a higher unity, introduces a certain ambiguity. *Zwar* has historically been used to affirm an assertion, especially when placed at the beginning of a sentence. However, since the seventeenth century *zwar* more frequently expresses a concession or exception; it is usually followed by a phrase containing *doch* or *aber* (but) that points beyond the exception.³³ This second meaning resonates in the passage above, in which *zwar* raises the expectation that the differences will persist in some way. While Schlegel hints at the presence of chaotic differences, however, he never names or elucidates them.

A remainder of chaotic difference continues to inhabit the text in the form of the *Fremdes* (foreign) that disrupts the union of the lovers and that, as I will argue, can be read as an allusion to Judaism. Initially, society itself is the main source of the *Fremdes*. The first perfect union between Lucinde and Julius, the moment in which their minds and bodies merge effortlessly, ends abruptly when other members of their party enter the room: "Softly he said 'magnificent woman!'"—and just then some accursed guests came into the room" (98/54). The German original contains some interesting ambiguities that are not easily reproduced in English: "Leise sagte er *herrliche Frau!* als die fatale Gesellschaft unerwartet hereintrat." Schlegel draws here on the double meaning of *Gesellschaft* as "party" or "society" to indicate how society disrupts the harmony between the lovers. Among other things, the sudden intrusion of *Gesellschaft* undoes the linguistic synthesis of femininity and masculinity in the locution "*herrliche Frau*," which, if broken down into syllables, is a chiasmic structure. Externalized as law or internalized as prejudice, society figures in *Lucinde* as the main source of heteronomy, or the inability of people to posit their own moral laws. In the narrative middle section "Apprenticeship for Manhood" ("Lehrjahre der Männlichkeit"), we learn that Julius's first love was a young girl who resisted his attempts at seduction "more

and Bianca Theisen's entry "Chaos—Ordnung," in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe: Historisches Wörterbuch in sieben Bänden*, ed. K. H. Barck (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), 751–71.

33. See Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854–1961) 16:949–54. (For the URLs for *Deutsches Wörterbuch* and a few other older sources used in this book, see the bibliography.)

out of a belief in some foreign [*fremdes*] law than out of a feeling on her own part” (79/38).³⁴ The girl’s deference to a law that is foreign to her indicates her lack of maturity, which is why Julius’s brief relationship with her is only the first step on his Romantic ladder of love.

The association of the *Fremdes* with law and society, with external commands rather than internal feelings, evokes the stereotypical distinction between Judaic law and Christian love. As we have seen in the example of Hegel, the new philosophies of love around 1800 revived and secularized this distinction. I would argue that this association is also present in *Lucinde*, if only in an indirect, supplemental manner. In a crucial passage of *Lucinde*, Schlegel associates the social law with India, a country that would soon occupy a central place in his thought. In 1808 he published *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* (*Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Inder*), a book that effectively substitutes Sanskrit for Hebrew as the primal language of mankind and the foundation of European culture. Already at the time that he wrote *Lucinde*, India had mostly positive connotations for Schlegel, who liked to picture Veit as an Oriental woman of Indian origins, and India itself, in *Lucinde*, as a place conducive to sweet passivity (66/27). But the association of India with the social law is more complicated and more ambivalent. Schlegel first establishes it in a letter to Novalis, in which he speculates that after his death Veit would follow him just as Indian widows do, a custom he cites approvingly as an example of intuitive religiosity:

If [Dorothea] lost me, she would *follow the Indian custom*, out of true religiosity and without sensing that it is extraordinary or even that it is right. . . . The religiosity of her feeling is all the more decisive due to the fact that her reason is still numb from sorrow and she has no conceptions.³⁵

In *Lucinde*, Schlegel elaborates this thought when he has Julius describe how a true marriage culminates in the couple’s wish to die together and how Lucinde would follow him into death if he were to die before her. He again cites the Indian custom, but this time only as a contrast to a suicide imagined as voluntary and redemptive:

I know that you wouldn’t want to outlive me either. You too would follow your rash husband into the grave, and willingly and lovingly descend into the flaming abyss

34. Trans. modified. Other examples of an internalized social law are Julius’s “distrust” (86/43) and “prejudices of society” (87/44) that prevent him from finding fulfillment in one of his earlier love relationships.

35. *KA* 24:215 (my emphasis). The letter is from December 17, 1798. The mention of Veit’s “religiosity” is all the more interesting since this is one of the very few letters in which Schlegel mentions Veit’s Jewishness, i.e., the fact that she is the daughter of Mendelssohn and that Schlegel cannot marry her because Veit’s baptism would be an insult to her family.

into which *an insane law forces Indian women* and, by its rude intention and command, desecrates and destroys freedom's most delicate shrines

(48/11; my emphasis)

In Schlegel's letter to Novalis, the Indian custom stands for intuitive religious feeling; in *Lucinde*, it stands for a particularly stringent religious law. The positive vision of a woman's unification with her dead husband is now supplemented by a reference to the "insane" law that "forces" Indian widows into death. Schlegel further shifts from *Gebrauch* (custom) to *Gesetz* (law), thus pitting the habit-forming power of tradition against the abstract force of law. The formulation in *Lucinde* is in fact reminiscent of Hegel's attack on Jewish heteronomy in "The Spirit of Christianity," in which he claims that the Jews' dependency on strict external laws makes "their action . . . the most impious fury, the wildest fanaticism" (204). The mania of fanaticism that describes Jewish law in Hegel is applied to India by Schlegel, at a time when he was beginning to project Indian culture into the place of origin once reserved for Judaism. The veiled allusion in *Lucinde* is symptomatic of Schlegel's treatment of Judaism, its transformation into an unspeakable difference that remains outside of the dialectical play of opposites.

Another incarnation of chaotic difference is the figure of the *Fremder* (stranger or foreigner) into which the *Fremdes* repeatedly morphs, especially when the lovers come into contact with others. The figure of the stranger in *Lucinde* crystallizes two kinds of ambiguities—namely, whether the misunderstandings between the lovers are of an internal or external nature, and whether the differences they generate can truly be integrated into a greater whole. Witness the discussion of jealousy, in which Julius blames his behavior on the presence of a stranger with whom Lucinde had a conversation Julius was too shy to interrupt. It remains ambiguous whether the stranger caused the estrangement or whether the estrangement originated within the lovers, who did not yet understand the totality of their union (71/32). The function of the foreigners in the social circle that forms around Julius and Lucinde is similarly ambiguous. The lovers' dyad keeps evolving, in part because of its inner formative principles and in part because of the influx of foreigners (*Ausländer*). Yet it is unclear whether the presence of foreigners is the cause or the effect of the circle's renewal. While the foreigners initially seem but a supplement to the innate principle of *Bildung* (cultural development) that propels the self-renewal of the community, the narrative focus is increasingly on them:

Gradually [Julius] attracted many excellent people to his side, and Lucinde united them and kept them going and in this way a free society came into being—or rather, a big family, which because of its cultural development [*Bildung*] never grew stale. Deserving foreigners also had access to the circle. Julius didn't speak to them often but Lucinde knew how to entertain them. She did it in a way that their grotesque universality [*groteske Allgemeinheit*] and cultivated commonality [*ausgebildete Gemeinheit*]

amused the others, so that there was never a pause or dissonance in the spiritual music whose beauty consisted precisely in its harmonious variety and change. In the social arts, besides the grand, ceremonious style, there should be a place too for merely charming mannerisms or passing fancies.

(102–3/57; trans. modified)

This a prime example of how the love relationship between Julius and Lucinde, originally a self-referential structure that develops in opposition to society, generates new forms of community. The foreigners, who have the potential to irritate but in fact amuse the community, remain without name or further specification. While the narrator does not elaborate on the nature of their difference, several of their features, including their status as insider-outsiders, invite an association with Jewishness. The foreigners are described as difficult for Julius to talk with, suggesting that there is a language difference, such as that between German and Judeo-German, or another source of cultural estrangement. They are also portrayed as grotesquely cosmopolitan, a common stereotype of the Jew, and simultaneously as completely parochial, an attribute often given to Jews following Dohm's indictment of Jewish "clannishness." This latter aspect is indicated by the word *Gemeinheit*, which around 1800 was mostly synonymous with *Gemeinde* (community) and was only beginning to acquire its modern meaning of "meanness" and "vulgarity." In some Northern German dialects, *Gemeinheit* also referred to the members of a specific community who did not belong to a guild or another professional association, a group of outsiders.³⁶ Lucinde seems to have a special affinity to the foreigners, as she weaves them into the harmonious whole of her and Julius's social circle, thereby creating an ordered chaos. The description of the foreigners is quite negative, and yet through Lucinde their difference becomes part of an aesthetic harmony. In other words, Lucinde is a bridge between the cultures. The whole passage exemplifies the neutralization of unsettling differences in the novel, both in the sense that they cease to have a negative impact and in the sense that they can no longer be named or specified.

In another crucial passage, Julius turns Lucinde herself into a stranger, or a carrier of unspeakable difference. This occurs in a letter in which he responds to the news of her pregnancy. While the letter promises an even closer bond between the lovers—a child—it also indicates their current separation, which leads Julius to reflections on the *Fremdes* that distances the lovers from each other:

Misunderstandings are good too in that they provide a chance to put what is holiest into words. The foreign [*Fremdes*] that now and then seems to come between us is not

36. See s.v. *Gemeinheit*, in Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* 4.1.2:3255–56; and Johann Christian Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart* (Vienna: Bauer, 1811), 3:561–52.

in us, in either of us. It is only between us and on the surface, and I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to drive it completely away from you and out of you.

(109–10/64; trans. modified)

Significantly, Julius first locates the *Fremdes* between the lovers and then *within* Lucinde. What has been hovering on the surface is now at the center of her being, defines her being. By transforming Lucinde into a stranger, Julius invests her with both the capacity and the responsibility to overcome that otherness that can never be clearly mapped onto an opposition. His hope that she will eventually succeed in driving the *Fremdes* out of herself indicates his attempt to elide any differences that cannot be accommodated by the model of sexual opposition. Julius's reassessment can also be read more psychologically, as a half-conscious acknowledgment of a disavowed truth. Julius tries to locate the difference first outside and only later inside Lucinde. He wants to expel the *Fremdes* but finds it so negative that he can only belatedly acknowledge its presence within her. Read in this way, the passage betrays a repressed hostility toward signs of Lucinde's Jewishness.

The attempt to elide differences other than gender difference culminates in a key passage toward the end of the novel. It has often been noted that the ending of *Lucinde* is politically surprisingly harmless, even reactionary. The novel begins with the ideal of free love and ends with the norm of the bourgeois nuclear family based on a gendered division of labor. A decisive moment in this conservative turn is Julius's vision of an ideal society organized on the model of marriage: "All mankind should really be divided into only two separate classes: the creative and the created, the male and the female; and in place of this artificial society there should be a great marriage between these two classes and a universal brotherhood of all individuals" (108–9/63). Julius combines here two ideas of society that are at odds with each other: the gendered model of marriage and the egalitarian ideal of fraternity. Tellingly, the latter appears to be a mere afterthought of the marriage model and its implied gender ideology. In Julius's view, the equality of individuals hinges upon the polarization and hierarchization of society. Individuals can meet eye to eye only once they have been divided into polar opposites—the masculine and the feminine—which also imply a hierarchy—the active versus the passive. The context of the passage is also significant. Julius invokes the marriage model of society after complaining about the depravity of the urban masses; he imagines better social relationships in the countryside, yet finds that these, too, are marked by *Gemeinheit*. (The word *Gemeinheit*, which Schlegel used earlier to describe the foreigners' communality, here takes on its more modern meaning of "vulgarity" and "meanness.") In other words, even though the passage quoted above echoes the fighting slogan of the French Revolution ("universal brotherhood"), it ultimately has a conciliatory purpose. It distracts from the sources of social unrest and helps suppress Julius's misgivings about class differences. This passage points to the limitations of the political vision in *Lucinde*. Rather than a democratic order in which

differences of class, religion, and ethnicity do not matter, Schlegel conjures a homogeneous society in which such differences can no longer be expressed.

A Stranger to Love: Dorothea Veit's *Florentin*

Not long after the publication of Schlegel's *Lucinde*, Dorothea Veit wrote her own novel about the Romantic love ideal, titled *Florentin*. The composition of the novel happened at a time of personal transition. Although Veit seems to have experienced the divorce from her first husband as liberating, the postdivorce period led to struggles for recognition. She initially rented an apartment of her own in Berlin, but soon moved with Schlegel to Jena, where the couple shared a household with Friedrich's brother August Wilhelm and his wife, Caroline. Veit soon again felt like an outsider. Caroline Schlegel, the daughter of Johann David Michaelis, in his time one of the most outspoken opponents of Jewish emancipation, began to show condescension toward Veit. A dose of antisemitism seems to have been a matter of course for Caroline, who once described Veit as follows: "She has a . . . Jewish appearance, posture, etc. She does not appear pretty to me, her eyes are large and ardent, but the lower part of the face is too haggard, too strong."³⁷ Writing itself was a site of linguistic and cultural transition for Veit. She belonged to a generation of assimilating German Jews who were still exposed to Judeo-German (or Western Yiddish) at home. Although her father Moses Mendelssohn advocated the use of High German (his new translation of the Bible was, among other things, meant to instruct Jewish youth in proper German), the family employed the traditional vernacular in conversations and correspondence.³⁸ Veit's remark to Schleiermacher about an earlier draft of *Florentin*—"The devil always reigns in those places where the dative or the accusative should reign"³⁹—testifies to her occasional struggles with German grammar as well as her self-consciousness about these struggles.

At the time Veit was living with Friedrich Schlegel, unmarried and penniless, and sought to support her procrastinating lover financially by producing translations and easily marketable literature: "But I cannot push him and urge the artist down to the craftsman . . . what I can do lies within these limits: affording him peace and winning our bread myself, humbly as a craftswoman, until he is able to do so."⁴⁰ Like all of Veit's

37. Quoted in Liliane Weissberg, "Nachwort," in Dorothea Schlegel, *Florentin: Roman, Fragmente, Varianten*, ed. Liliane Weissberg (Berlin: Ullstein, 1987), 218.

38. David Sorkin has corrected the myth that Mendelssohn completely rejected the use of the Yiddish language. See Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 54, 175 n. 3.

39. Veit to Schleiermacher, August 1800, in *Dorothea v. Schlegel geb. Mendelssohn und deren Söhne Johannes und Philipp Veit: Briefwechsel*, ed. J. M. Raich (Mainz: Franz von Kirchheim, 1881), 45. On Veit's linguistic situation, see also Liliane Weissberg, "Schreiben als Selbstentwurf: Zu den Schriften Rahel Varnhagens und Dorothea Schlegels," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 47, no. 3 (1995): 231–53; here 251–52.

40. Veit to Schleiermacher, quoted in Dorothea Schlegel, *Florentin*, ed. Wolfgang Nehring (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1993), 303.

work, *Florentin* was published under the name of Friedrich Schlegel, who in this case was designated “editor” (the author was left anonymous). Veit’s self-effacing remarks and behavior helped create an image of her as a mere helpmeet to Schlegel, a submissive woman willing to give up her own aspirations for the man she loved. For Hannah Arendt, Veit’s life exemplifies the attempt on the part of so many Jewish women to assimilate through love, an attempt that muted every impulse to face the contradictions of Jewish existence and demand real social change.⁴¹ In recent years, however, feminist critics have rediscovered *Florentin* and read it as a critique or subversion of *Lucinde*, especially its construction of femininity and masculinity.⁴² In what follows, I will continue this line of thought and show that *Florentin* calls into question the Romantic love ideal enshrined in *Lucinde*. Veit uses set pieces of the Romantic code of love to expose it as a code, and to explore its workings and its failures. Out of this critique grows a sociopolitical vision quite different from Schlegel’s. Veit explicitly links the search for romantic love to the quest for sociopolitical integration, which would include a fatherland, and dramatizes the failures of both.

The Critique of Romantic Love

Florentin offers a critique of both the cultural ideal and the literary code of romantic love. The novel’s eponymous hero is a traveler, arriving seemingly out of nowhere in woody hills where he courageously rescues a count named Schwarzenberg and is invited to stay with the count’s family. He develops a friendship with the count’s daughter Juliane and her fiancé, Eduard—a relationship triangle that blurs the lines between love and friendship. Just as in *Lucinde*, the middle section of *Florentin* consists of a long narrative of the hero’s childhood and youth, but in this case the narrative poses more riddles than it solves. Florentin spent the first years of his life on an island in social isolation, interrupted only by occasional visits of two mysterious men and a woman whom he called mother. Later he was brought up to become a monk, a prospect he detested. At some point he learns that the girl he believed to be his sister is not his sister, and embarks on a series of journeys to Italy, England, and Germany. These journeys are a quest for his origin, destination, and

41. See Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 108.

42. See Inge Stephan, “Weibliche und männliche Autorschaft: Zum *Florentin* von Dorothea Schlegel und zur *Lucinde* von Friedrich Schlegel,” in *“Wen kümmert’s wer spricht”: Zur Literatur und Kulturgeschichte von Frauen aus Ost und West*, ed. Inge Stephan, Sigrid Weigel, and Kerstin Wilhelms (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991), 83–98; Martha B. Helfer, “Dorothea Veit-Schlegel’s *Florentin*: Constructing a Feminist Romantic Aesthetic,” *The German Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 144–60; Barbara Becker-Cantarino, “Die wärmste Liebe zu unsrer litterarischen Ehe’: Friedrich Schlegels *Lucinde* und Dorothea Veits *Florentin*,” in *Bi-Textualität: Inszenierungen des Paares*, ed. Annegret Heitmann et al. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2001), 131–41; Barbara Becker-Cantarino, “Dorothea Veit-Schlegel als Schriftstellerin und die Berliner Romantik,” in *Arnim und die Berliner Romantik: Kunst, Literatur und Politik*, ed. Walter Pape (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), 123–34; Elena Pnevmonidou, “Die Absage an das romantische Ich: Dorothea Schlegels *Florentin* als Umschrift von Friedrich Schlegels *Lucinde*,” *German Life and Letters* 58, no. 3 (July 2005): 271–92.

love alike. When pondering what might put an end to his restless vagabond existence, Florentin conjures the image of a female companion who will share with him a secluded life in the forest.⁴³ Later he describes his yearning for love to Eduard and Juliane in quintessentially romantic terms, such as love for love's sake and togetherness unto death:

You see, dear ones, I require little, you will probably not believe how little. But it seems to be a big demand, for I never found it fulfilled. Nothing but a lovable woman who loves me as I love her, who believes in me, who is mine simply for the sake of love and without any other purpose, who opposes no prejudice and no wicked habit to my happiness and wishes, who tolerates me as I am and does not succumb under the burden, who could bravely go through life with me, and if it must be, go to death with me.

(30–31/39–40)

Florentin's yearning for love is never fulfilled, at least not in the novel as published. Nor does romantic love work for anyone else in the novel. The plot is structured around Florentin's triangulation of a quintessentially romantic love relationship, that between Eduard and Juliane. Their encounters are replete with mutual gazes, the promise of permanence, and moments of wordless communication: "The blessedness of love closed their lips; they didn't speak and yet said everything to each other" (79/90). Florentin's arrival, however, brings out disharmonies and discontents between Eduard and Juliane, neither of whom is mature enough to marry. Juliane's aunt Clementina, the novel's authority on love and marriage, advises postponing the wedding, and her belated blessing of the union sounds more like a presentiment: "God bless you, my dear children! May you never experience the sorrows of love!" (147/153). In an unpublished addendum to the novel, titled "Dedication to the Publisher" ("Zueignung an den Herausgeber"), Veit is even clearer about the doom of this marriage. She explains why she did not choose a conventional ending such as the hero's marriage: "Married? Can we appease ourselves with that? Do we not see in Eduard and Juliane that all sorrow and all confusion often begins from that point on" (154/158). There are ample hints throughout the text that the marriage between Eduard and Juliane will at best delay their individual development and at worst make both of them unhappy.

Florentin features several relationships that bear one or more hallmarks of romantic love but turn out to be deficient or fail altogether. People fall in love against their parents' wishes (Manfredi) and against conventions (Betty), both

43. See Dorothea Mendelssohn Veit Schlegel, *Florentin: A Novel*, trans. Edwina Lawler and Ruth Richardson (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 2. For the original German, see Schlegel, *Florentin: Roman, Fragmente, Varianten*, 12. Further citations from these editions will be included parenthetically in the text, with the page number in the English translation followed by the page number in the German edition in italics, as here (2/12).

typically signs of individual choice, yet their love does not arise freely and spontaneously. Rather, Manfredi is talked into love by Florentin, who enlists his help in the rescue of his sister, and Betty feels morally bound to Walter, who evidently seduced her in pursuit of money. Even Count and Countess Schwarzenberg fail to persuade as a model of harmony in love. Their marriage at first appears to be an illustration of the Romantic theory of gender complementarity, as they form an androgynous whole. The external sign of such complementarity is the couple's estate, which blends the antique elements favored by the Count with the modern comforts cherished by the Countess, with the effect that "the serious will of the master of the house was tempered by the obliging inclination of its mistress" (8/17). However, the harmony between the old and the new in the manor is questionable, or at least not discernible to outsiders. As Eduard notes, the mixture of styles may actually deserve the mockery it receives: "Those who have not had the opportunity to know the interior find it strange and allow themselves much derision about the mixture of outmoded and modern taste. And it does look strange [*befremdend*] enough" (17/27). Although Eduard then assures Florentin that the furnishings are indeed well matched, they cannot persuasively represent marital harmony. They are at best unstable and unreliable signs of perfect love. By highlighting the difficulty of deciphering the signs of love, Veit exposes the new code of romantic love as a code, that is, a system of signs that may or may not be recognized.

Florentin draws attention to a contradiction at the heart of the Romantic love ideal—namely, its dual function as a social code and as a medium of individuation, only one of which it acknowledges. As Luhmann writes, romantic love is not "a feeling, but rather a code of communication, according to the rules of which one can express, form and simulate feelings, deny them, impute them to others, and be prepared to face up to all the consequences which enacting such a communication may bring with it" (20). However, romantic love has to disavow its own status as a social code because it promises the experience of individual uniqueness. This contradiction has implications for the literature of love. On the one hand, literary texts are the main vehicles of the new love code, as they model the intimate encounters people seek in real life. On the other hand, the Romantic love ideal poses a challenge for literature because it relies so much on indirect communication, on glances rather than words, and on a sense of preexisting understanding. Consequently, literary texts often mark the advent of love by silence; the breakdown of language comes to prove the authenticity of feelings. Many great literary works give expression to this duality. One of the founding texts of romantic love, Goethe's *The Sufferings of Young Werther* (*Die Leiden des jungen Werther*, 1774), dramatizes speechless moments of intimacy—as when Werther finally gets to kiss Lotte—while exposing the scripted character of love—as when Werther has a copy of Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* on his desk.

Florentin's narration of his past love experiences exposes this codification of love. When he makes mention of a "wife" in Rome, and Juliane and Eduard react

with incredulity, he evokes Schlegel's distinction between conventional and true marriage:

"The sums, which were completely sufficient for my modest way of life, were turned over to my wife."

"To your wife?" Juliane called in surprise; "probably just your housekeeper?"

"No, to my wife!"

"What? You're married? [*Wie? Sie sind verheiratet?*]"

"You really trusted yourself to marry? [*Wirklich getraut?*]" Eduard asked.

"She probably trusted [*traute*] me, and I trusted [*traute*] her too much."

(63/73)

Florentin plays here with the ambiguity of the German word *trauen*, which means either "to trust" another person or "to get married" in front of a priest or other authority. In the episode that follows he persistently refers to himself as a husband and to his companion as his wife even though they never formally married. This recalls the Romantic idea of "true marriage," which according to Schlegel is above formal rituals and speech acts such as wedding vows. A conventional marriage is an external bond cemented by the church; a true marriage is a union based on feelings of love. Florentin's pun captures this train of thought: if the partners trust (*trauen*) each other, they do not need to formally wed (*trauen*) each other. However, the optimistic belief that love can be founded on trust alone turns out to be wrong. Florentin is elated when his "wife" gets pregnant, but she aborts the baby because she fears losing her beauty and possibly Florentin along with it. This fear is not entirely unfounded, since it was her beauty that sparked Florentin's love. But, as we can infer from his later confession to Eduard and Juliane, he really wanted something else from her: by becoming a father, he sought to secure a home, an identity, a fatherland. The falling out between Florentin and his "wife" results from this misunderstanding regarding their expectations from love. The assumption that love can dispense with external scripts and rely on unspoken agreements turns out to be disastrous. The relationship built on trust rather than explicit agreement throws Florentin into disappointment, anger, even attempted murder.

Along with the idea of wordless concord between the lovers, *Florentin* dismantles the notion of circular self-validation through love. In *Lucinde*, the pieces of Julius's life finally come together when he recounts his life story to his beloved. In finding Lucinde, Julius ultimately finds himself. This self-affirmation may explain why Schlegel's novel, despite all its emphasis on fragmentation and progression, has such a centered form, with shorter prose pieces symmetrically arranged around the long narrative of Julius's education in love in the middle of the book. In other Romantic novels, such circularity is often figured as a journey that ultimately leads the protagonist back to his home and origins—and to a lover known from

childhood. The famous lines “Where are we really going? Always home” from Novalis’s *Henry of Ofterdingen* (*Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, 1800) come to mind, as does Ludwig Tieck’s *Franz Sternbald’s Wanderings* (*Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, 1798), the hero of which was supposed to end at his point of departure, the city of Nuremberg, and find the girl he first met as a six-year-old and whose image stayed with him ever since. A similarly circular structure informs *Florentin*, which aims at returning the protagonist to his family and at reestablishing an order that can be presaged from the beginning. Florentin’s intuitive knowledge about his future wife—“My eye has not yet seen her, but I know her” (2/12)—suggests such a hidden connection between his past and his future. He may have found this connection in Juliane, about whom he at one point exclaims half-seriously: “Of what help is it that I found everything that I want united in one person? She is the loving bride of the happy man over there!” (30/39). Raised by her aunt Clementina, who is possibly Florentin’s mother, Juliane is a sister figure for Florentin. *Florentin* thus gestures at structural sibling incest, a popular motif in Romantic literature.⁴⁴ The sibling relation creates the kind of similarity of situation and experience that draws couples such as Julius and Lucinde together. But unlike Lucinde, Juliane remains a one-dimensional character and Florentin’s love for her does not come to fruition. The novel ends rather abruptly with Florentin’s departure from the wedding of his friends: “Florentin was nowhere to be found” (147/153). This laconic ending, which hints at no possible continuation or closure, frustrates the Romantic desire for a love that returns us to our selves and our origin.

The Quest for Sociopolitical Integration

Florentin reestablishes the connection between love and sociopolitical identity severed in other Romantic works of literature. Florentin, who in the first pages of the book is persistently referred to as “the traveler” or “the stranger,” is the outsider par excellence. Wherever he goes, he does not quite belong. In socioeconomic terms, Florentin moves within the upper classes, yet since his biological parents are unknown, his own class origins remain in question. When asked whether he is a “von Florentin”—that is, a member of the nobility—he asks to add the title Baron to his name because its original meaning is what he wishes to be—“a man” (25/34).⁴⁵ That is, he claims the title of a nobleman only to vacate its linguistic function as a marker of social class. Read against this backdrop, Florentin’s lack of clothes befitting his

44. Veit hints at this relationship between Clementine and Florentin in a manuscript that is now lost. See Weissberg, “Nachwort,” 226. On the literary motif of sibling incest and the fantasies about religious and cultural difference it expresses, see Stefani Engelstein, “Sibling Incest and Cultural Voyeurism in Günderode’s *Udohla* and Thomas Mann’s *Wälsungenblut*,” *The German Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 278–99.

45. Etymologically, the word *baron* can be traced back to the Frankish *baro*, which meant “man, free man.”

social status, which he cites as a cause for his abrupt departure from Eduard and Julianne's wedding, is not a marginal detail. Rather, his lack of insignia to signal his social status reveals the uncertainty about his class background. The same uncertainty characterizes Florentin's cultural affiliation. Although born and raised in Italy, Florentin seems to have a special affinity to things German, which attracts him to German artists in Rome (63/72) and to German friends who "claimed to find something completely German about me" (60/70). Oddly enough, he evidently learned the German language twice: first from the German-born priest who oversees the education of the young boy (39/48), and later as a young man during a stay in Switzerland (71/82). This twofold beginning makes it difficult to locate his acquisition of German in time, thus enhancing the ambiguity of his relationship to German culture: has Florentin assimilated to German culture, or has he always belonged to it?

Critics disagree about whether the lack of a clearly defined social identity presents a problem for Florentin, and whether this lack identifies him as Jewish. Some argue that Florentin's social ostracism marks him as both Jewish and effeminate.⁴⁶ According to him, he has always been an outsider. Already in his youth, he was a freethinker and defied authorities. He also calls himself "the poor one, the lonely one, the ostracized one, the child of chance" (85/95) and speaks of a "curse" (115/124) that lies upon him. However, as Liliane Weissberg points out, Florentin does not seem to suffer much from his predicament. He is an outsider who is also an insider, a protean figure who belongs everywhere and nowhere. Unlike many assimilating Jews, he experiences neither language difficulties nor social prejudice. He fits into each new surrounding with an ease that contrasts with Veit's own struggle for social acceptance. Florentin is a cosmopolitan who encounters friendship and support wherever he goes, in part because he never travels far from the social class in which he was raised.⁴⁷ The question of whether Florentin's lack of a clearly defined identity is a problem, and whether it reflects Veit's own assimilation struggles, ultimately remains unanswerable. What matters is that this lack becomes the novel's major theme and, moreover, is tied up with the quest for love.

The notion that love can bestow any kind of social, cultural, or political identity goes against the understanding of love as a medium of individuation. According to Luhmann, love in the Romantic period validates an individual's unique perspective and experience of the world rather than establishing his or her social identity. In fact, the self that emerges in and through love defines itself in opposition to social classifications. Romantic literature promotes this process of individuation by stripping its characters of social attributes. In contrast, *Florentin* rejoins the quest for love to

46. See, e.g., Becker-Cantarino, "Die wärmste Liebe"; and Stephan, "Weibliche und männliche Autorschaft."

47. See Weissberg, "Schreiben als Selbstentwurf," 246. Weissberg suggests that the absence of social barriers in the novel may be read as wish fulfillment on Dorothea's part. Indeed, in one of her letters, Dorothea expresses the hope that her sons would become cosmopolitans.

questions of cultural, social, and political identity, primarily through Florentin's conspicuous lack of such an identity. The novel further raises the stakes of romantic love by calling attention to biological reproduction, and by linking reproduction to citizenship. In that regard, too, *Florentin* differs from other Romantic literature, which tends to stay focused on the lovers and to circumvent the question of their offspring. Indeed, it has been argued that early Romanticism favors mental over biological procreation, in part because a child is something too particular in its own right to serve as a proof of the lovers' union.⁴⁸ In *Lucinde*, for instance, actual children play hardly a role. In a letter to Lucinde, Julius greets the news of her pregnancy enthusiastically, regards the child as the completion of their marriage, and fantasizes about its future education. His next letter, however, mostly records his despondent reaction to news of her recent illness, raising the question of what may have happened to the fetus. There is vague talk about a child in the last section of the novel, "Dalliance of the Imagination" ("Tändeleyn der Fantasie"), a dreamlike scene that transfigures childhood play into artistic productivity. An earlier section of the novel describes at length the child Wilhelmine, but she is a mere allegory of literary wit and chaos.

Compared to *Lucinde*'s privileging of artistic production, *Florentin* is more concerned with biological reproduction. Florentin himself is preoccupied with his biological origins. Throughout the novel he is searching for the true relatives who would replace imposed relatives, including the woman whom he "had to call . . . mother" (34/42) in this childhood. His wish to father a child—that is, to replace his family of origin with a family of his own—explains his terrified reaction to the abortion undergone by his Roman lover. In a discussion of his plans to emigrate to the American colonies, Florentin expresses his hope that fatherhood will secure him a fatherland. We may recall here how fraught questions of marriage, procreation, and intergenerational transmission were for Jews at the time. Veit's father, Moses Mendelssohn, one of the most famous philosophers of his time, never held a legal status high enough to transmit his right of residence to his children. This was one of the reasons he married his daughter off at the age of nineteen to a suitable man: a successful banker and, perhaps even more important, a Prussian Jew in possession of a writ of protection. And while her divorce evidently did not endanger Veit's residence status, she was still considered a foreigner and forced to pay a special "Jew toll" when crossing one of the many borders separating the German states.⁴⁹ Florentin's plan to become naturalized by becoming a father is thus highly resonant:

"To America?" called Eduard.

"Your fatherland doesn't hold you?" the Count asked.

48. See Daub, *Uncivil Unions*, 157–70.

49. The issue of a special pass for Veit and the costs associated with it came up in 1800, when Schlegel and Veit made plans to visit Schlegel's sister in Dresden. See the letters by Schlegel, Veit, and Schleiermacher, as well as the editor's endnotes, in *KA* 25:105, 132, 139, 472, 476, 481.

"Where is my fatherland?" Florentin called in a sadly bitter tone, then immediately said half jokingly, "as far back as I can remember, I was an orphan and a stranger on earth, and thus I intend to call the land where I will first be called father my fatherland."

(6/16)

At a time when the struggle for Jewish civil rights gained traction and was accompanied by warnings against those Jews "who do not view the state as their fatherland,"⁵⁰ Florentin's view can only be politically provocative. If Romantic writers appropriated the birth metaphor to describe their own artistic production, Florentin suggests that he can create his own sociopolitical identity by fathering a child. This process of creation, however, is not within anyone's control, not even Florentin's. Although Florentin can actively pursue integration—by seeking a woman and begetting a child with her—there is a moment of unpredictability: he will have to wait for his child to call him "father" before he can call a country "fatherland." The reversal of the normal temporal sequence emphasizes the newness of the political order that can accommodate Florentin. A fatherland is usually something one inherits from one's father, and indicates a tie to the past, rather than something conferred by one's child that indicates a tie to the future. It can also be both of these things at the same time, indicating continuity over generations, but here it is an indicator of change. For Florentin, the rights associated with a fatherland do not derive from an existing order but from something yet to be created.

Florentin's quest for sociopolitical integration through love and procreation remains unfulfilled, at least within the novel as published. In Schlegel's *Lucinde*, love is a medium of infinite progression, yet there is also a sense of closure; Julius has found himself in *Lucinde* and completed his education toward love. The circular form of the novel, which groups letters, fantasies, and other manifestations of Julius's subjectivity around the narration of his development, is a stylistic expression of closure. In contrast, *Florentin* is more fundamentally fragmentary and open-ended. As Inge Stephan notes, Veit's novel is an unfinished *Bildungsroman* in reverse, one that leads back to the hero's origins but never reaches its destination.⁵¹ While love in *Lucinde* founds the possibility of the protagonist's further development and constant expansion of his social circle, Florentin remains without love, a wandering stranger suspended between an unknown past and an indeterminate future. He never begets the child he expects to bestow on him a fatherland. In the unpublished "Dedication to the Publisher," Veit hints that Florentin will eventually found a family and a new nation in the American colonies. Yet the "Dedication" also suggests that the open-endedness of the novel is indeed programmatic;

50. Friedländer, Schleiermacher, and Teller, *A Debate on Jewish Emancipation*, 104. Schleiermacher demands that the Jews give up their messianism in order to recognize their new fatherland.

51. See Stephan, "Weibliche und männliche Autorschaft," 94.

even here, national and political belonging remain a matter of uncertainty for Florentin—and a matter of conjecture for the narrator:

For me the book is finished here, for Florentin's influence doesn't extend any further. Furthermore, we know that, in fact, he no longer made merry with seriousness but truly executed his decision, that which was for him his destiny, scorned the advantages, the fineness of culture, and *returned* to his beloved wilds. He was the leader and the *first one* of an entire nation that honored him like a divinity. Once again the family saw him in its settlements as the delegate of his people. He proudly *returned* when they wanted to persuade him to stay. Since that time we know nothing more about him. Perhaps he is still living and tells his grandchildren about the disastrous miracles and brilliant misery of the Europeans.

(154/158–59; my emphasis)

This passage shows just how ambiguous Florentin's relationship to his new nation in the colonies is: Does he arrive at a new place or return home? Does he found a new nation or restore the unity of an existing one? His position as the "first one" of the tribe suggests that he founded the nation, as does the fact that his new compatriots revere him like a divinity. But the mention that Florentin "*returned* to his beloved wilds" creates the same ambiguity we noticed earlier with respect to his relationship to German culture, to which he may have assimilated or always already belonged, and the Schwarzenberg family, to which he may be unknowingly related. Veit's comment that the end of the novel coincides with the end of Florentin's influence on the family only enhances this ambiguity. It suggests that Florentin is not the individual agent of a *Bildungsroman* but a mere catalyst of changes in the novel's social world. As such he recalls the figure of the Jew as a social catalyst we first encountered in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*. Florentin's position is as ambiguous as Nathan's; he may be on the outside or at the very center of the new social formations he helps create.⁵² Veit hints at Florentin's future life in the colonies, suggesting that he may ultimately have obtained the fatherhood and the fatherland he has been seeking. But she presents this as a conjecture on her part and refrains from *telling* the story of his marriage and procreation in the colonies—all the while insisting that *Florentin* is a history rather than a novel, that she reports upon rather than creates her characters. Taken together, these two assertions release Florentin from authorial control and make him *structurally unidentifiable*.

52. Jeffrey Librett observes that Florentin resembles both the traveler in Lessing's *Die Juden* and the Templar in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*. Interestingly, neither character can marry the girl he met through his rescue action, yet for opposite reasons: the Jewish traveler is too different from the Christian girl, and the Templar is too similar to his sister Recha. By alluding to Lessing, *Florentin* merges the figure of the stranger and the figure of the brother. See Jeffrey S. Librett, *The Rhetoric of Cultural Dialogue: Jews and Germans from Moses Mendelssohn to Richard Wagner and Beyond* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 187–88.

Eva Lezzi has argued that by shrouding Florentin's origins in enigmas, Veit ironically anticipates and strategically deploys the reader's desire to decipher the protagonist's identity. Rather than out her characters as Jewish, Veit playfully exposes the undecidability of all identity and the futility of any attempt to fixate identity.⁵³ While this is a pertinent reading, it does not address *Florentin*'s first decisive step, which is to rejoin the search for love and the quest for a social identity. By reestablishing this connection, Veit's novel goes beyond the Romantic paradigm of love as a medium of individuation. As we have seen, in Schlegel's *Lucinde*, class, religion, and nationality do not matter for the experience of love. The absence of social markers creates a semantic void around literary characters conceived as unique individuals. This semantic void may explain the scarcity of literary representations of Christian-Jewish love affairs around 1800, the social reverberations of which would be too difficult to ignore. *Florentin* does not fill this semantic void by restoring the markers of a social, cultural, or national identity. Rather, the novel conjoins the yearning for love and the quest for identity and dramatizes the failure of both.

Reading *Lucinde* and *Florentin* as commentaries on the process of Jewish emancipation and acculturation does not mean to restore the "missing" references to Jews and Judaism, but to attend to the modes of their absence. The novels represent two different modes of such absence. In Schlegel's *Lucinde*, the transformation of love into a model of society hinges upon the disavowal of differences, whether religious or socioeconomic. Love can serve as a model of society precisely because the protagonists have been divested of all social attributes. Lacking markers of a certain class, religion, or nationality, Julius and Lucinde become first individuals and then representatives of their gender, the opposition of which is projected onto an ideal society. In contrast, Veit invokes love as a medium of integration into an existing society, and as such has it fail conspicuously. While Florentin is in no way positively identified as a Jew, he is in the process of adapting to a new culture and society, just as Veit herself and many other Jews at the time were. The inconclusiveness of this process in *Florentin* can be read as a call to restore a similar open-endedness to the historical process of Jewish acculturation. Rather than instrumentalize love for a project of social integration, *Florentin* suggests that society itself has to change in ways that have yet to be determined. The political progressiveness of Veit's novel becomes especially clear when compared with the works of the younger generation of German Romantics, whose anti-Jewish attitudes are well known. As I will show in the next chapter, the later Romantic writer Achim von Arnim dramatizes failing Christian-Jewish love stories to a radically different end: to bolster his antisemitic view that Jews can never be integrated into German society.

53. See Eva Lezzi, "'... ewig rein wie die heilige Jungfrau . . .'" Zur Enthüllung des Jüdischen in der Rezeption von deutschsprachigen Romanen um 1800," in *Juden und Judentum in der deutschsprachigen Literatur*, ed. Willi Jasper, Eva Lezzi, Elke Liebs, and Helmut Peitsch (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 61–86.