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Recommended Citation

Bonfiglio, Thomas P. *Achim Von Arnim's Novellensammlung 1812: Balance and Mediation*. New York: Peter Lang, 1987.

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Achim von Arnim's
Novellensammlung 1812

Balance and Mediation

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Introduction

A structural study of *Novellensammlung 1812* should determine its location in and significance for Arnim's opus, clarify Arnim's personal Romantic literary idiom, and identify his own brand of Romantic irony. An outline of two general findings in Arnim criticism points to their synthesis as a key to understanding Arnim's aesthetics and cosmology.

The body of Arnim criticism of the past several decades has stood in opposition to the reception that existed over the prior one and one-half centuries. The reproaches of the Brothers Grimm and of Goethe set the tone for a maligning of Arnim that was not to be abandoned until the modern post-war era. The point of departure for the critical misunderstanding of Arnim lies in his apparently incongruous, arbitrary, and fragmented narrative style, a style that has discouraged the audience from a painstaking reading. The positive inclination of recent Arnim criticism addresses the issue of apparent structural incongruity from new perspectives.

Perhaps the most significant step in the transition from a critical maligning of Arnim to an appreciative reception exists in the work of Wolfdietrich Rasch.¹ It was he who first attempted to account for the apparent structural dissonance in Arnim's work. He did this by aligning certain hallmarks of Arnimian style with some philosophical and aesthetic concerns of the Age of Goethe. The early Storm and Stress ideas of this period, which derive from Herder and the early Goethe, view spontaneous, undeliberate thought production as an expression of truth. Conversely, reasoned production of thought is held to be a distortion of intrinsic truth. Rasch relates these ideas to Arnim's narrative style and states that the spontaneity and caprice thereof, the leaps of logic, are signs of an oral narrative. The narrator is

effecting an apparently undeliberate rendition not out of whim, but for ideological reasons instead. This authorial mode is a closer approximation of truth than a reasoned sequence would be. It is Storm and Stress theory in narrative practice.

Rasch's discovery is important for the proper appreciation of Arnim. It applies, however, only to certain aspects of his work and philosophy while ignoring other aspects. There are definite didactic and philosophical aspects of Arnim's literary work that are not characteristic of the oral tradition.

Rasch has made some observations that have import for the construction of a holistic model. He says that within the wandering narrative every part is related to every other part in a kind of "Gewebe der Kunst."² He fails, however, to investigate the reasons for this interrelatedness. Why should there be a crisscrossing of metaphors in the text? Is the model of oral composition sufficient to account for this? He also notes an opposition between cause and effect that is not clearly related to the model of oral composition, although one could deduce this opposition from Arnim's dissatisfaction with logical empirical explanations from causality. Rasch also states that Arnim uses the fantastic to place an event "in ein scharfes Licht,"³ where that event becomes "blitzartig erhellt."⁴ The use of instantaneous illumination is indeed common in Arnim's work, and Rasch was among the first to notice this. In alluding to the tradition of oral composition, Rasch explains this by saying that a basic narrative device thereof is the sudden illumination that holds the attention of the physically present audience.

This otherwise viable explanation does not agree with certain textual antitheses that Rasch himself has uncovered. He sees an opposition between "ein Verwirrendes ... Zwielfichtiges .. Groteskes"⁵ on the

one hand, and "ein einhellig-festes ... männlich gediegenes Lebensernst"⁶ on the other. These are very significant antitheses for the understanding of the structure of Arnim's work, but the question also remains as to their relationship to Rasch's other findings, especially to the idea of oral composition. An integration of these findings is needed.

Another important step was taken by Helene Kastinger Riley, whose observations mark the transition from antitheses to syntheses in the study of structure in Arnim:

Die Antithetik ist aber nicht das Grundprinzip, wie vielfach in der Forschung angenommen, sondern sie ist Mittel zum Zweck, das Ganze in seinen Teilen zu veranschaulichen.⁷

Riley's study concerns the synthesis or reconciliation of opposites, to which she refers as *Konfiguration*. She does not, however, investigate the nature of these polarities themselves, nor does she offer a workable model for the relationships of part to whole. In addition, her study does not examine the forces that sustain these antitheses and that maintain the configurative synthesis in Arnim's fiction.

Another study that deals with the question of configurative synthesis is that of Horst Meixner. Meixner investigates the problem of the myriad of images in Arnim and constructs a hall-of-mirrors metaphor thereof:

Die figurale Bedeutung der Hauptpersonen, das Exemplarische der Situationen, in die sie gestellt sind, und das Typische des Geschehens, in das sie verwoben sind, [werden] spiegel- oder gegenbildlich in anderen Personen, Situationen und Gescheh-

niszusammenhängen wiederholt und variiert.⁸

This is a useful description of the configurative process, but Meixner does not address the problem of the reasons for the myriad of images and mirrors. Of note is his use of *verwoben*, the loom image that will be subsequently addressed. Meixner also has struck upon the complex fabric of interplay when he speaks of a "Lebenstotalität, ... auf die das Individuelle nur verweist,"⁹ as well as when he claims: "Jedes Individuelle in seiner Erscheinung [ist] nur eine Variante des Allgemeinen."¹⁰ Again, one wonders about the dynamics of part-whole relationships and about the influences that act upon the fabric of interrelations.

A study that begins to examine the structural interplay of forces in a more general and widely applicable manner is Hans Steffen's investigation of light symbolism in Arnim. Steffen provides a model for the intricacy of interplay:

Aber es mag deutlich geworden sein, daß die Lichtzeichen wie ein Netz das Romanganze überziehen. In ihrem Strahl modellieren sich die Figuren und offenbaren die Dinge einen diesseitigen oder jenseitigen höheren Sinn. Dinge und Figuren stehen nebeneinander, gehen ineinander über und ineinander auf. So ist das Ganze durchwoben von der Symbolik des Lichtes, vielmehr, es mündet alles in sie hinein. Dinge und Figuren bespiegeln einander, im Zeichen des Lichtes scheint die Grenze zwischen Ding und Mensch aufgehoben.¹¹

Steffen's ideas present a program for understanding the complexity of configuration in Arnim. His idea of an interwoven net is an excellent image for configuration. This fabric of interrelations among images corresponds to Rasch's observation that every

part of the story is related to every other part. Again, what is absent is an awareness of the forces that precipitate the dispersion of light. Steffen has, however, unearthed some findings that put the structure of Arnim's works in a new perspective:

Antithetik und Symbolik gehen ineinander über. So kommt es zum Zusammenspiel aller Figuren, die sich wie die Fäden eines bunten Teppichs knüpfen, dessen Webmuster eben diese antithetische Grundfigur ist, die in den arabeskenhaften Formen und Verästelungen immer wieder auftaucht.¹²

This is a notion of reality as a loom creating a network of interrelations. What is needed is a study of the nature of the "loom" itself as well as of the intricacies of the weave. There is, however, a danger in concentrating heavily on the process of synthesis in Arnim. It can lead to ignoring the omnipresent antitheses that act to structure the work. Such was the danger at hand in the work of Paul Noack, who claims, "Arnim kennt keine Gegensätze nur die Ganzheit als Wirklichkeit."¹³ While relationship to the totality is of paramount importance in Arnim, this does not warrant exclusion of the dynamics of opposition. Indeed, the totality is a product of polarity, as was noted by Ludwig Völker, who sees Arnim's work existing in "der spannungsvollen Einheit widersprüchlicher Tendenzen."¹⁴ This idea of a somewhat fragmented unity was also noted by Lawrence Frye, who sees, "Ein eher mosaikartiges als organisches Bild der Vereinigung."¹⁵ The question remains as to the nature of these mosaic pieces and the structure of their interrelation. Frye shows that this seems to be an imperfect relation:

As in the opening to *Die Majoratsherren*, we are to see not the main figures and events of the time, but rather reflections in

miniature of its irregularities, peculiarities, and what the eye can only catch indirectly and with some distortion. Thus the relevance of a Chodowiecki: "Wir durchblättern eben einen älteren Kalender, dessen Kupferstiche manche Torheiten seiner Zeit abspiegeln."¹⁶

These are correspondences among networks of irregularities. It is necessary to isolate the constituents of these networks. Frye discusses "a spectrum of forces and tendencies rich and diverse enough to be refracted within the characters as if their own private worlds were the sole loci of such multi-dimensionality."¹⁷ The characters embody ideological perspectives, as has been noted by Lothar Ehrlich:

Die Charaktere sind selten plastisch und differenziert aufgebaut, sondern erweisen sich als vereinfachte, einseitige Figuren, die die poetische Idee demonstrieren.¹⁸

While Ehrlich's notion of characterization in Arnim may be a bit one-sided in itself, he has nonetheless shown the symbolic value of character, although he does not recognize the diversification that Frye sees. Thus there is a notion, operating in Arnim's fiction, of character as symbol, image and metaphor alluding to other networks of meaning, both at the same and at higher levels. These networks are insufficient or ironized images of totality, as Frye shows:

This endless concatenation of symbols which approximates an absolute seems to be Arnim's version of the Schlegelian irony in which one must attempt to express the inexpressible, aware of the impossibility during the act itself and aware of the discrepancy between the word which expresses and what is

to be expressed. One must also leap the gap between the discontinuity of the form and the higher continuity, or unity which it signifies.¹⁹

The aberrant gives insight into the ideal norm. Rasch has shown that Arnim operates similarly to Schlegel; Rasch says, "Er steigert die Dissonanz. Nur dadurch kann für ihn der reine Klang, die ungebrochene Farbe schließlich hervortreten."²⁰ Thus there is a figurative constellation of symbols.

This concatenation of symbols transcends time, space and causality. This has been noted by other investigators, but it has not been expressed in these terms. Peter Horst Neumann perceived that there is not a temporal causal sequence between motivation and action in *Isabella*. Quite often motivation is stated *post facto*. This led Neumann to posit the structural principle of "retrospektive Motivierung."²¹ This is not really a structural principle but rather a product of the formation of the network described above. Thus there is a webbing of multivalent multidirectional interrelated metaphors in Arnim. This has also been seen on the linguistic level by Albert Béguin, who has noted that there is a network of word-play that connects words suprasyntactically.

Il a tenté d'en donner l'impression, en s'abandonnant lui-même à un automatisme, propre à l'écrivain: au jeu des syllabes, aux échos par lesquels les mots s'appellent et s'allient sans lien logique.²²

Thus there is an atemporal, acausal and aspatial network at play here. What then are the forces that hold this structure together? Perhaps the key lies in the following passage from Frye:

In both *Hollin* and the *Majoratsherren* magnetic contact reveals an inextricable bond between male and female, and radiating out from that bond a kind of life-web of unification through time and space. However, the construction of this unification image with real materials is another matter. Both works, after they grant brief physical contact to their respective pairs, separate the lovers and allow no direct, conscious, verbal communication to take place until the end.²³

Frye has indicated that this web exists in a magnetic field. Union is, in *Hollin* and *Die Majoratsherren*, not possible in the world of experience. In other works, such as *Die drei liebreichen Schwestern* and *Angelika*, union is possible. The nature and function of this force field that binds characters together will be illustrated. How do certain behavioral and environmental factors aid characters in experiencing and acting in accordance with this network? How does it permeate time and space? How does it relate characters to one another? In order to answer this, it is necessary to concentrate on the imperceptible bonds of this life-web. Could it not be possible that the incalculable intersections of the web are those masks and symbols discussed so far and that the entire structure is held in place in an imaginative structure that resembles a magnetic field? If so, what is the nature of this magnetic field?

Frye states that the mask-structures "are the forms in which the spirit has infused and animated the sense-world."²⁴ He goes on to say that the mask "is meant to be neither raw material nor a higher world but rather a construct mediating between the two. It is what Arnim calls variously an image or symbol."²⁵ Thus the image or symbol is held in place between two realities. Claude David has unearthed some findings

that illuminate this structure.

L'univers ambigu du fantastique suppose une cassure; c'est un monde que Dieu a déserté, mais sur lequel son ombre continue à peser, un monde tendu entre le ciel et l'enfer.²⁶

It is an oversimplification to reduce this structure to a world stretched between heaven and hell. It is, however, a useful point of departure for the purposes at hand. In his study of polarization in Arnim, Frye says: "das Erratische läßt sich noch spezifischer bestimmen als ein ständiges Hin und Her gegensätzlicher Anziehungskräfte."²⁷ If that which is erratic in Arnim can be explained by positing the existence of a polarized magnetic field, then this should have an effect upon the phenomena of symbol formation. It is plausible that symbols and images are the actual loci of polar harmony. This would correspond to Frye's statement that "Körper und Seele erreichen schon Momente der Ausgeglichenheit, dann wieder gewinnt das Eine das Übergewicht. Manchmal vermißt man sogar die "große" Seele in allem Anschein des Schönen."²⁸ Frye qualifies the potential of the classical aesthetic to fully comprehend the Arnimian modern person. The aesthetic union of body and soul is superseded by other forms of action. This situation where one of the forces dominates and then is dominated by the other force could correspond to the imbalance among images. Compare Frye:

Wichtig auch ist, daß die beschriebenen Zustände des ungestörten Gleichgewichts als entweder täuschend oder vorübergehend, als eine Fabel oder ein Erlebnis, von dem man wieder zurück zur Erde herunterkommt, angesehen werden.²⁹

The ideal situation would entail harmonious balance. In the ironized and realistic situation, however,

there is only imbalance. This imbalance would distort the aesthetic symmetry of the images (masks) that are held in its magnetic field. Frye argues that an aesthetic image renders the possibility of balance, not its realization, which is not a purely aesthetic form. It is, however, plausible to posit an ideal symmetrical aesthetic image, a product of harmonious balance, that reality tries to copy. As the sign is a trope of the signified, the real image that is the product of imbalance would be a warped reduction of the ideal. This helps explain the "why" of the irregular images at, for instance, the opening of the *Majoratsherren*. In distorting these images the relationship of image to image(s) would also be distorted, thus creating a warped reality.

The act of balancing requires a certain control of the forces of gravity. Elevated balance gives the impression of levity. Becoming lighter is becoming spirit, freeing oneself from the literalism of matter. This transubstantiative activity is a form of balance as well. This can also be applied to the activity of the narrator in so far as form reflects content. There is a certain levity in authorial activity as well. This aspect of Arnim was first noticed by Heinrich Henel in his study of *Die Majoratsherren*, where he says of Arnim "daß er alles Schwere in die Luft spielt wie Federbälle."³⁰ It was also touched upon by Ernst Schürer in his study of *Isabella*, where he says of Arnim "daß er sein Material aus der Überschau gewandt handhabte."³¹ The desired locus of the author is similar to the elevated locus of several characters in Arnim, including Francoer, Melück, Cosmus and, as shall be illustrated, the narrator in his introductory Alpine journey, in that they all perform a precarious balance. The study of the introductory pieces to the *Novellensammlung* will note that authorial levity and gravity are both at work in the poetic process.

It is possible to relate the phenomenon of balance to symbol formation and to state that the symbol is a multivalent image held in place in the electromagnetic field between matter and spirit. There are some characters, such as Isabella and, to some extent, Melück, who can, at times, perceive the forces at play in the generation of a phenomenal image. It is now necessary to articulate this model in such a way as to render it useful for application.

As most German intellectuals of his time, Arnim was exposed to the ideas of the philosopher F. W. Schelling, whom he mentions occasionally in his correspondence. A focused influence study of this would be distracting as well as problematic. Certain aspects of Schelling's nature philosophy, however, as set down in his *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (published in 1799), serve as an excellent model for viewing Arnim's use of polarities and images. It has special import for a study of antitheses of light and gravity as well as for a study of his use of metaphor.

Schelling sees the universe as existing in a state of tension between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, between that which is becoming and that which has become. Matter is for Schelling not a substance but a nexus of opposing forces that combine to produce "aus flüssigem in festen Zustand freiwillig gleichsam regelmäßige Gestalten."³² This is a tension between fluidity and stasis or expansion and contraction. Schelling believes that these polarities, call them A and B, can combine and recombine with their synthetic products. A and B combine to produce C, which in turn can exist in tension with either A or B. The new poles of A and C now produce a new synthesis D, which in turn can recombine with either A or C. This process of recombination is called epigenesis, the geometrically progressing proliferation of opposites. Schelling describes this

as "die beständige Fortdauer des Gegensatzes."³³ This produces a universe that is constructed like a geodesic dome or structure of adjacent equilateral triangles. Each corner of each triangle is a product of opposing forces and is related, however remotely, to the universal totality. Thus Schelling says "also ist die Natur in jedem Product noch unendlich, und in jedem liegt der Keim eines Universums."³⁴ Thus the general is embodied in the particular or, more correctly, the infinite is reflected in the finite.

In order to demonstrate the idea of reflection of the whole in the part Schelling uses the following anecdote:

Ein Reisender nach Italien macht die Bemerkung, daß an dem großen Obelisk zu Rom die ganze Weltgeschichte sich demonstrieren läßt; - so an jedem Naturproduct. Jeder Mineralkörper ist ein Fragment der Geschichtsbücher der Erde.³⁵

This is a crystalline model of the universe in which each facet gathers the light of the whole and is indeed structurally related to the whole. The crystal is a useful metaphor here because of its illuminative and geometric properties. Each facet thereof is determined by polarization: "die Bedingung aller Gestalten ist Dualität."³⁶ The nature of this polarity, in so far as it concerns the forms of matter, is electricity: "die elektrischen Erscheinungen sind das allgemeine Schema für die Construction der Materie überhaupt."³⁷ Elsewhere he says: "Alles, was für uns sensibel ist ... ist ohne Zweifel für uns sensibel nur durch Elektrizität, und das einzig unmittelbar Sensible möchte wohl die Elektrizität sein."³⁸ These passages serve to illustrate the immense importance placed upon electricity, perhaps the greatest discovery of the seventeenth century. It is used to explain all

phenomena and approaches the status of the life blood of the universe itself.

All bodies exist within the system of expansion and contraction of electrical energy. Thus Schelling asks, "Was sind denn die Körper selbst als verdichtete (gehemmte) Elektrizität?"³⁹. Incorporation is stasis of metamorphosis: "Organisationen ... gehen durch Metamorphosen aus dem einen Element ins andere über; und was scheint das Thier, dessen Lebensfunktionen fast alle in Contraktionen bestehen, anders zu seyn als ein solcher Sprung?"⁴⁰. Schelling means that an animal is an image created by the temporary reduction and concentration of energy in one place. Schelling sees this process of metamorphosis as the proper state between the poles of expansion and contraction:

Die Metamorphose wird nicht regellos geschehen können. Denn sie muß innerhalb des ursprünglichen Gegensatzes bleiben und ist dadurch in Grenzen eingeschlossen ... Daher, wo der Gegensatz aufgehoben oder verrückt wird, die Metamorphose unregelmäßig wird. - Denn was ist auch Krankheit als Metamorphose?⁴¹

Differentiation and change are the laws of existence and these laws are perceptible in every natural product. They are a sort of "Grundtypus, der allen zugrunde liegt - und den sie, unter mannichfaltigen Abweichungen zwar, aber doch alle ausdrücken."⁴² A disturbance in polarity creates an aberrant change.

The fundamental polarity is that of gravity and light. Light is defined by Schelling as "jenes allgemeine Aufheben der Indifferenz"⁴³ that "setzt den ganzen Körper in Lichtzustand."⁴⁴ Thus the return to metamorphosis is the reinstating of antitheses, and its product is light: "Wo daher der Gegensatz hergestellt wird, ist für uns Licht."⁴⁵ The product of

incorporation or stasis is a darkening, and its antithesis, the transition to metamorphosis, is light. Light stands in opposition to gravity: "die Aktion des Lichts muß mit der Aktion der Schwere, welche die Zentralkörper ausüben, in geheimem Zusammenhang stehen."⁴⁶ Thus light and gravity combine to generate matter. The preponderance of gravity acts as a delimiting force; the preponderance of light indicates metamorphosis. Electricity is basically metamorphosis, and gravity is the force that makes it rest in one place. When electricity is condensed by gravity, it forms an image. The importance of this is that it implies that the ideal image (assuming that light is desirable and darkness not) is one that is in some state of flux.

It is now appropriate to demonstrate Arnim's reception of these ideas. When he was eighteen years old, he published his *Versuch einer Theorie der elektrischen Erscheinungen*,⁴⁷ where he employed some of Schelling's ideas in arguing for a fluid theory of electricity:

Hr. Schelling stellt als ausgemacht auf:

I. daß die elektrische Materie ein zusammengesetztes Fluidum,

II. ein Produkt der Lichtmaterie und einer anderen für jetzt noch unbekanntem Materie sey, und

III. daß die beiden Elektrizitäten sich durch ihre ponderablen Basen reel unterscheiden, d.h durch das quantitative Verhältnis ihrer ponderablen Basen zum Licht.⁴⁸

Arnim does not adequately explain the *unbekannte Materie* in this essay, although he seems to relate it

to gravity. Arnim subsequently goes on to quote Schelling directly again:

I. Wie eine chemische Zersetzung der Lebensluft die Phänomene des Verbrennens bewirkt, so bewirkt eine mechanische Zerlegung derselben die Phänomene der Elektrizität.⁴⁹

By "Lebensluft" Arnim seems to be indicating atmosphere. A critical examination of this essay is not appropriate here. It suffices to demonstrate that Arnim received certain basic concepts from Schelling. The important concepts here are that electricity is a permeating and thus omnipresent fluid, and that it exists in quantitative proportion to light and gravity. In the paragraph above designated Roman numeral III, it is clear that a mechanics of electricity comes into play here. Thus an analysis of electric "fluid" with regard to the common designations used in that branch of physics called mechanics, produces a Newtonian model of electricity involving polarities and vectors.

It is now necessary to summarize the points listed here that have import for the discussion of Arnim:

- The universe exists between the polar possibilities of expansion and contraction.
- The poles recombine with their products *ad infinitum*.
- The recombination of polarities creates a structure of adjacent triangles.
- The products at each intersection of the geodesic structure embody and reflect the universal structure.

-Matter is the synthetic product of light and gravity.

-Light is produced from the reinstating of polarities.

Each image in Arnim has two basic aspects that are interrelated. The first of these is its determination by larger polar forces; the second its relationship to other images. Each is a synthesis of antitheses and a synecdochic part of a totality. A change in polar forces alters the image. The result is that the new image has a different relationship to the whole.

It will be demonstrated that the following implicit points organize *Novellensammlung 1812*:

-Textual images are syntheses of polar forces.

-Each image embodies and reflects the totality.

-The basic poles are gravity and light.

-The ideal image mediates between matter and spirit and is both reflective and illuminative.

The poetic metaphors that Arnim employs for these scientific-philosophical points will be focused upon; a description via technical vocabulary will be refrained from. There are two tropes that serve to describe the literary realization of these relationships. They are metonymy and synecdoche. Heinrich Lausberg describes the former as a difference of quality, the latter of quantity:

Die realen Beziehungen zwischen dem

metonymisch verwendeten Wort und der gemeinten Bedeutung sind qualitativer Art.⁵⁰

Die Metonymie quantitativer Beziehung zwischen dem verwendeten Wort und der gemeinten Bedeutung heißt Synecdoche.⁵¹

Kenneth Burke makes use of the same distinction in demonstrating that there is no distortion in synecdochic representation:

The "noblest synecdoche," the perfect paradigm or prototype for all lesser usages, is found in metaphysical doctrines proclaiming the identity of "microcosm" and "macrocosm." In such doctrines, where the individual is treated as a replica of the universe, and vice versa, we have the ideal synecdoche, since microcosm is related to macrocosm as part to whole, and either the whole can represent the part or the part can represent the whole.⁵²

In Harold Bloom's application of Burke's rhetorical distinctions, it becomes evident that synecdoche is an ideal, almost transcendent relationship that is never attained in practice, but that serves as a model. In the ironized or real situation, however, the representational relationship is imperfect or metonymic, i.e. qualitative as opposed to quantitative:

I follow Kenneth Burke in seeing that the fundamental dichotomy is between irony and synecdoche ... In lyric poetry there is a crucial gap between reduction or metonymy and the part-for-whole representation of synecdoche ... The topoi associated with metonymy are adjuncts, characteristics, and notation, all of them namings through supposed cause-and-effect. A metonymy names,

but a synecdoche begins a process that leads to an un-naming.⁵³

Because of the problematic relationship between the sign and the signified, the process of un-naming can never occur. The name is a trope and the trope is metonymic. The part is a trope of the whole and gives a distorted reduction of the whole.

This supplies an interesting relationship between the ideal and the real. Real or distorted representation is based upon some notion of what the ideal relationship might be. The encountering of insufficiency leads one to seek the perfectly proportioned *pars pro toto*. This is impossible, and one is left with the irony of discrepancy.

Each textual image in Arnim is a product of universal polarity and a microcosm, however distorted, of the totality. This necessitates an investigation of the synecdochic and metonymic nature of these images and their import for an understanding of Arnim's Romantic irony. In order to do so, a focusing upon each image is required. This calls for a study that is essentially a continuous sequence of close readings that demonstrate the multivalent use of images. The *Novellensammlung 1812* lends itself well to these purposes. That is, it deals with cosmologic, existential and historical problems and uses images to capture and reflect these issues and synthesize them in a geodesic webbing stretched in polar tension.