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"The Specular Moment" in Goethe's "Willkommen und Abschied": David Wellbery's Interpretation

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Stephen Franklin Poe entitled ""The Specular Moment" in Goethe's "Willkommen und Abschied": David Wellbery's Interpretation." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in German.

David E. Lee, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Peter Hoyng, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Hiram Maxim

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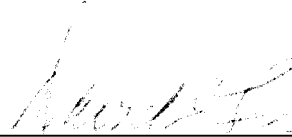
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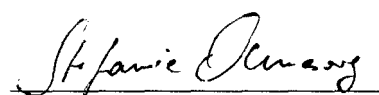
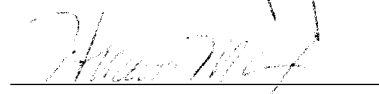
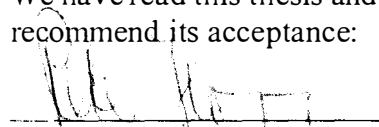
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Interim Vice Provost
Dean of the Graduate School

“The Specular Moment” in Goethe’s “Willkommen und Abschied”:

David Wellbery’s Interpretation

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee

Stephen Franklin Poe

May 2001

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Dedications

I dedicate this thesis to my parents James Franklin Poe Jr. and Betty Jane Poe for their constant love, support and encouragement throughout my studies at the University of Tennessee. Their contribution is immeasurable. I also thank my best friend, Elena Kubikova, for her advice, support and encouragement.

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I would like foremost to thank my major professor, Dr. David Lee, for suggesting a previous contribution in a German course taken at the University of Tennessee as a thesis topic. Furthermore I would like to thank him for his ongoing patience and support throughout my studies. I would like also to thank my committee members, Dr. Peter Höyng, Dr. Stefanie Ohnesorg, and Dr. Hiram Maxim for help in sharpening my critical skills and for their professional criticisms of my thesis.

Abstract

In “The Specular Moment” David Wellbery highlights the structure of Goethe’s poem “Willkommen und Abschied.” His major interpretation is twofold: Firstly, the particular use of the verb “sehen” creates a referential structure that is the true focus of the poem and Wellbery points to the fissure of the subject from its organic unity that is expressed through the use of “sehen.” Secondly, “Willkommen und Abschied” is a poem about art and art’s ability to heal this rupture. Chapter one examines Wellbery’s interpretation of “Willkommen und Abschied” in his two publications entitled “The Specular Moment.” Chapter two is an account of previous scholarship on “Willkommen und Abschied” and of Wellbery’s relation to various theorists. Chapter three includes reactions to Wellbery’s interpretation, including extensive feminist criticisms. Chapter four presents the text history of “Willkommen und Abschied” and discusses Wellbery’s argument for choosing an unauthorized variant of the text that best suits his interpretation. The conclusion underscores the great contribution made by Wellbery’s structuralist approach while acknowledging that he does not adequately reveal the Lacanian foundations of his argument, that his introduction of the “Source,” an essentially religious and extra-textual concept, contradicts his intent to depend solely on the text for his interpretation, and that his justification for using an unauthorized version of the text lacks credibility.

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Introduction

I originally chose David Wellbery's interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" as a paper topic for German 552, "Aufklärung, Rokoko, Sturm und Drang," during Spring Semester 1999 in order to pursue my interest in German Romanticism and because I considered Wellbery's interpretation to be a springboard into another more general interest, modern critical theory and its application to literature. Additionally, German 560, "German Literary Theory and Criticism," taken during Spring Semester 2000 contributed to my understanding and application of modern literary theory.

David Wellbery is William Kurrelmeyer Professor at Johns Hopkins University and the author of various books and articles on German literature, including The Specular Moment: Goethe's Early Lyric and the Beginnings of Romanticism, Nietzsche-Art-Postmodernism: A Reply to Jürgen Habermas, and Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason. He is also an editor of the Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte.

Wellbery's first interpretation of Goethe's "Willkommen und Abschied" was the article "The Specular Moment: Construction of Meaning in a Poem by Goethe," published in the inaugural number of the Goethe Yearbook (1982). In this essay he describes his interpretive methodology as "semiotics and structural analysis" and reports he was guided by the work of critics such as Eco (1982: 39-

41). The article was presented as a chapter in a planned broader study of Goethe's lyric poetry, and in 1996 Wellbery made good on his promise. In the The Specular Moment (1996), Wellbery acknowledges that he relies heavily on the theories of Foucault, Freud, and Derrida, and his second chapter, entitled "The Crisis of Vision," is a revised version of his article in the Goethe Yearbook.

In chapter 1 of this thesis I compare Wellbery's two versions of "The Specular Moment" and his interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied." According to Wellbery, "Willkommen und Abschied" is a poem about poetry/art talking about art. For Wellbery the declination of the verb "sehen" creates a self-referential structure that is the true focus of the poem.

In chapter 2 I show how Wellbery's first publication, "The Specular Moment: Construction of Meaning in a Poem by Goethe" (1982), deals with traditional scholarship, and how it differs from traditional scholarship. I also look at an interpretation by Marianne Wünsch to which Wellbery says he is indebted. Then I discuss Wellbery's relationship to various theorists from different critical disciplines whom he cites.

Chapter 3 deals with reactions to Wellbery's interpretation. I draw on one critical analysis of Wellbery's journal article, nine book reviews of The Specular Moment, one of which talks about Wellbery's analysis of "Willkommen und Abschied" in detail, and a recent interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" that includes a criticism of Wellbery's approach.

Chapter 4 presents the text history of “Willkommen und Abschied” using the Frankfurter Ausgabe. I review the text history and I point out that most of traditional scholarship relies on an unauthorized version of “Willkommen und Abschied” and interprets the poem in light of Goethe’s account found in chapter 11 of his autobiography, Dichtung und Wahrheit. Then I show how “uncontaminated” earlier and later versions of “Willkommen und Abschied” open up interpretations different from Wellbery’s. I discuss some interpretations of “Willkommen und Abschied” that revolve around these textual variants. I also include my position on Wellbery’s argument that structural analysis justifies his use of unauthentic variants of the text. Then I show how earlier and later versions of “Willkommen und Abschied” cohere or do not cohere to Wellbery’s assertions about the declination of the verb “sehen” in light of Goethe’s authorized texts.

In the conclusion, 1) I summarize the limitations of Wellbery’s interpretation and 2) express my indebtedness to Wellbery.

Chapter 1

David Wellbery's Interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied"
in "The Specular Moment"

David Wellbery's journal article "The Specular Moment: Construction of Meaning in a Poem by Goethe" (1982) and "The Crisis of Vision," chapter 2 in his book The Specular Moment: Goethe's Early Lyric and the Beginnings of Romanticism (1996), offer an interpretation of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's poem "Willkommen und Abschied" (1775). Wellbery's interpretation remains essentially the same in both publications. He offers a critical approach to Goethe's lyric and the re-interpretation of Goethe's text that does not make use of biography or rely on a narrative approach (1982: 1-5). Wellbery uses the following version of "Willkommen und Abschied" in German in his journal article. (All subsequent English translations of this text are taken from the English version that Wellbery also prints in The Specular Moment [1996: 28-29].)

Willkommen und Abschied

1 Es schlug mein Herz. Geschwind zu Pferde!
 2 Und fort wild wie ein Held zur Schlacht.
 3 Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde.
 4 Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht.
 5 Schon stund im Nebelkleid die Eiche
 6 Wie ein getürmter Riese da,
 7 Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche
 8 Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

9 Der Mond von einem Wolkenhügel
10 Sah schläfrig aus dem Duft hervor,
11 Die Winde schwangen leise Flügel,
12 Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr.
13 Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer,
14 Doch tausendfacher war mein Mut,
15 Mein Geist war ein verzehrend Feuer
16 Mein ganzes Herz zerfloß in Glut.

17 Ich sah dich und die milde Freude
18 Floß aus dem süßen Blick auf mich.
19 Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite,
20 Und jeder Atemzug für dich.
21 Ein rosenfarbes Frühlingswetter
22 Lag auf dem lieblichen Gesicht
23 Und Zärtlichkeit für mich, ihr Götter,
24 Ich hofft' es, ich verdient' es nicht!

25 Der Abschied, wie bedrängt, wie trübe!
26 Aus deinen Blicken sprach dein Herz.
27 In deinen Küssen welche Liebe,
28 O welche Wonne, welcher Schmerz!
29 Du gingst, ich stund und sah zur Erden
30 Und sah dir nach mit nassem Blick.
31 Und doch, welch Glück, geliebt zu werden,
32 Und lieben, Götter, welch ein Glück!

(HA 27)

The following is a summary of Wellbery's approach. Wellbery divides "Willkommen und Abschied" into large-scale segments, or two symmetrical halves (section A, stanzas 1-2; and section B, stanzas 3-4). In addition, he recognizes a smaller scale segmentation within sections A and B (1996: 29). He says that sections A and B suggest themselves structurally for the following reasons. Firstly, section A opens with the phrase "Es schlug mein Herz" in line 1 and the word "Herz" is repeated in the last line of section A in line 16. Secondly, section B begins with "ich sah dich" in line 17 and ends in line 30 with "ich sah dir nach mit nassem Blick." Thirdly, "doch" appears near the end of section A line 14 and of section B line 31. Fourthly, "Herz" appears once in every stanza (lines 1, 16, 19, 26) as does "sah" (lines 8, 10, 17, 30). Wellbery also cites the occurrence of "Erde" and "stund" in lines 3 and 5 of the first stanza of section A, and in line 29 of fourth stanza in section B.

A chiasmic pattern of reverse phonological symmetry (a,b,c,d//d,c,b,a) in lines 1-4 and 13-16 also helps frame section A.

The chiasmus in lines 1-2 is:

- 1) a: *schlug* b: *Herz* c: *-schwind* d: *Pferde*
 2) d: *fort* c: *wild* b: *Held* a: *Schlacht*

in lines 3-4:

- 3) a: *Abend* b: *wiegte* c: *Erde*
 4) c: *Bergen* b: *hing* a: *Nacht*

in lines 13-14:

- 13) a: *Nacht* b: *tausend*
 14) b: *tausend-* a: *facher*

and in lines 15-16:

15) a: *Geist* b: *verzehrend*

16) b: *zerfloß* a: *Glut*

Lines 1-2 of the first stanza, “Es schlug mein Herz geschwind zu Pferde / Und fort, wild wie ein Held zur Schlacht!” Wellbery says, employ a coupling effect of the verb “schlagen” with the “phonological echo” of the word “Schlacht” in line 2 (1996: 33). According to Wellbery, this linkage 1) activates the word’s poetic etymology and 2) “Es schlug mein Herz” thus becomes a metaphor for emotional turbulence and turmoil. “Herz” in line 1 corresponds to and becomes a “Held” in line 2, which is defined by discord (1996: 33). Emotional turmoil, which arises out of lines 1-2, requires resolution and thus the inversion of the opening situation in line 2 is followed by the alleviation of discord (1996: 33).

The cause of conflict in the first stanza, nature or the “Nacht,” becomes clear as one reads lines 3-4. The words “Abend” in line 3 and “Nacht” in line 4 reveal a stretch of time or sequential events. “Erde” in line 3 refers to every visible object as far as one can see, and “Bergen” in line 4 refers to visible things beyond one’s periphery. Lines 3-4 reveal a logical relation of before and after; and “Abend” and “Nacht” also reveal visible space and what is at the periphery. “Abend” and “Nacht,” in lines 3-4 are antagonists of the poem’s subject.

A reversal at the phonological level occurs in lines 13-14. Line 13 is the last line of the antagonist subsection. In line 14 “doch” serves as the pivotal point, or a theme change, and introduces the protagonist frame. In lines 15-16 the anxiety introduced in line 1 is overcome and relaxation and release is introduced (1982:

17-18). Wellbery also says that “schlagen” in line 1 and “zerfließen,” in line 16, which refer to the heart’s activities, are opposed in meaning and that they too frame section A (1996: 37-38).

As previously demonstrated, the framing of sections A and B occur together. That means some elements that assist in the framing of section A can also be found in section B. However some structures frame section B independently of section A. Line 23 toward the end of stanza 3 and line 32 at the end of stanza 4 introduce the “Götter.”

At the narrative and thematic level, Wellbery contends, sections A and B are opposed in terms of separateness and unity (1996: 33). Wellbery cites the phonologically similar “wild” in the second line of section A, and “milde” in the first line of section B as opposite in meaning. He notes that the abrupt sounding “wild” occurs with “fort,” “Held,” and “Schlacht” in line 2, whereas a fluid sounding “milde” modifies “Freude” in line 16.

If non-vision and separateness are thematic in section A, then vision and togetherness are themes in section B. There is a chiasmus of seeing and reciprocity in the third stanza of section B. In the opening expression of section B, “Ich sah dich” in line 17, the speaker sees his beloved. But in lines 17-18, “und die milde Freude / Floß aus dem süßem Blick auf mich,” where the speaker is referred to again, the beloved looks back at the speaker. Line 19 begins with the speaker, who is introduced at the end of line 18. Lines 19-20 read “Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite. / Und jeder Atemzug für dich.” The beloved introduced at

the end of line 20 is described in lines 21-22, “Ein rosenfarbes Frühlingswetter /
Lag auf dem lieblichen Gesicht,” and (her or simply the) tenderness is
reciprocated back to the speaker in line 23, “Und Zärtlichkeit für mich ihr,
Götter!”

Stanzas 3 and 4 are separated thematically by the expression “Der Abschied”
in line 25. As previously mentioned, there is a milder crisis of vision in the fourth
stanza. In lines 29-31 there is a chiasmus of reciprocation between the speaker and
the beloved. Line 29 reads “Du gingst, ich stund, und sah zur Erden / Und sah dir
nach mit nassem Blick.” The seeing isn’t being reciprocated to the beloved in
lines 29-30, but rather the speaker or subject is looking after or towards the
beloved. But in lines 31 some reciprocation is indicated. It reads “Und doch,
welch Glück! geliebt zu werden” (1996: 48-49). Although there is dissonance in
the seeing, love is reciprocated nonetheless. Lastly Wellbery cites a chiasmus in
the order that “Glück” and variations of “lieben” appear in lines 31-32. The
structure of this chiasmus is ab/ba, or “Glück-geliebt” in line 31 and “lieben-
Glück” in line 32, and this chiasmus brings closure to section B and the fourth
stanza (1982: 29).

According to Wellbery, “Willkommen und Abschied” is a poem about poetry,
or art talking about art, and the declination of the verb “sehen” creates a new
meaning for the verb within the poem and creates the self-referential structure that
is the true focus of the poem. The argument is as follows.

In the last lines of the first stanza, 7-8, which read “Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche / Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah,” the verb “sehen” is used without a direct object, which means the seeing is an empty affair. This kind of seeing is not directed at any particular object or phenomenon. It represents perhaps a non-directed gazing, in which a phenomenon, the beloved for instance, is perceived, but there is no engagement/interaction between the phenomenon being seen/perceived and the subject that is seeing or gazing.

When Wellbery says that “Finsternis” is the object of the implied act of the speaker’s seeing, he means that what the speaker sees is invisible and undifferentiated. Wellbery also contrasts the power with which darkness sees-- “mit hundert schwarzen Augen” in lines 7-8 with the moon’s seeing--“schläfrig aus dem Duft hervor” in lines 9-10. He suggests that the moon’s metaphorical (one) eye is nearly closed. Wellbery states that we are forced to conclude that the negation of vision in stanzas 1 and 2 is a code of vision that is manipulated to cause the crisis of vision (1996: 42).

In section A, a crisis of vision is initiated during a night ride where the protagonist/speaker is introduced in the first line, “Mir schlug das Herz.” The antagonists the speaker encounters are a) “die Eiche im Nebelkleid,” in line 5, b) “Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche,” in line 7, c) a less threatening “Mond von einem Wolkenhügel,” and d) “Die Winde” in line 11.

The protagonist’s vision is deceived. He sees a) “Ein aufgetürmter Riese” in line 6, b) “hundert schwarze Augen” in line 8, c) the moon with a metaphorical

eye in lines 9-10 and d,) he feels the winds sigh in his ear in lines 11-12. The antagonist frame starts in line 3 with the expression “Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,” and ends in line 13, “die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer.” Also the words “Abend” and “Nacht” assist in framing section A.

A breaking point in the narrative of sections A and B occurs between in lines “Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer” in line 13, which sums up an antagonist frame in section A, and “Doch tausendfacher war mein Mut” in line 14 of the second stanza, which describes the actions of the protagonist. Wellbery says section A introduces a crisis of vision in the first stanza and it is continued into the second stanza. Section B represents a resolution of the crisis, with a return to vision in the third stanza, and another crisis of vision in the fourth stanza, but milder than what occurs in section A.

Wellbery breaks the declinations of the verb “sehen” into three classes, a, b and c. The class a declination of the verb “sehen” in stanzas 1 and 2 is the intransitive declination of “sehen.” This means the seeing has no direct object, as is the case with the “Finsternis” and “der Mond,” but the class b declination of the verb “sehen” in the third stanza is the opposite of class a, because the speaker, or the subject’s seeing is directed at something or somebody, i.e., the direct object. Furthermore, in the class b declination of “sehen” in the third stanza, the object of the speaker’s seeing sends a “süßen Blick” in line 18 back at the speaker. Transitive seeing is greeted by the object, and Wellbery says there is no “disunity of connection between the act and the object” (1996: 44).

The class c declination of the verb “sehen” in the fourth stanza represents a mild crisis of vision. The class c declination “sehen” in the third stanza is neither transitive nor intransitive. There is a prepositional phrase when the speaker sees “zur Erden” in line 29 and a dative object and prepositional prefix in line 30 “Und sah dir nach mit naßem Blick.” But rather than complete seeing, as is the case with class b, there is uncertainty in the seeing in class c. For instance, the speaker looks at the ground and gazes after, not at, his beloved with moist regard. In class c there is an act that is separated from its object, or a state of dissonance in the seeing that may not be reciprocated by the object. This means the beloved may not look back at the speaker (1982: 24).

In summary, Wellbery arranges the three classes of the verb “sehen” as class a, seeing without an object, in which internal disunity or discord is present in the poem subject; class c, seeing toward or after an object, where a discrepancy between the act and the object is possible, and class b, a “seeing of the object” that is a fulfilled, meaningful seeing reciprocated by the object in line 24. This is the specular moment that Wellbery refers to in his title. It means a mirrored seeing, or 1) seeing someone, 2) this person reciprocating, and then 3) seeing one’s self in the reciprocation. A similar event occurs when one sees one’s self (or the reflection of one’s self) in a mirror.

In Wellbery’s chapter “The Crisis of Vision” in his book there are no major changes in his thesis about the verb “sehen” when compared to the journal article. In his journal article, Wellbery gives a brief overview of what traditional

scholarship has previously done with “Willkommen und Abschied.” At the conclusion of the journal article, Wellbery offers a lengthy discussion about self-differentiation in Goethe’s poetic process. In the first chapter of Wellbery’s book, however, entitled “Idyllic and Lyric Intimacy,” there is a critical essay about Goethe’s poetic process in which Wellbery contrasts the idyllic form of Solomon Geßner with the lyric form of Goethe. Wellbery points out that Goethe’s poetic process is neither smooth nor spontaneous (1996: 9).

Wellbery treats several poems from the same period as “Willkommen und Abschied,” such as “Maifest” and “Ob ich dich liebe,” which lead up to Wellbery’s arguments in “The Crisis of Vision” and which are included in Wellbery’s treatment of “Willkommen und Abschied” in chapter two, “The Crisis of Vision.” At the close of “The Crisis of Vision,” Wellbery presents a much shorter but up-to-date argument about self-differentiation and self-reflection, also topics of Wellbery’s analysis. Interspersed throughout the rest of Wellbery’s book are the remaining points concerning the definition of specularity from the conclusion of Wellbery’s journal article.

In “The Crisis of Vision,” Wellbery says that lyric is an object. a project of critical construction that resists study, and by virtue of its associative discourse it represents a rupture in the world of continuous speech (1996: 27). Criticism however proceeds from premises to a conclusion, either in the form of a systematic argument or a narrative/historical linkage. Wellbery’s self-defined dilemma is to either respect the singularity of the text and abandon a narrative and

systematic synthesis or work toward this synthesis and neglect the self-differentiating qualities of the lyric text (1996: 27). Wellbery's concern is that an approach that does not ignore "contingency" is unscientific, and he wishes to accept this dilemma and stretch his discourse to embody a narrative and a critical argumentative discussion of "Willkommen und Abschied," and to arrive at his results by the use of technical precision (1996: 27).

Wellbery's approach is twofold. He first observes the linguistic structure of the lyric text and then interprets the lyric text in a way that coheres to its linguistic structure. In my discussion of his analysis, I focus more on the structure of "Willkommen und Abschied," which Wellbery discusses at length in both interpretations, and mention less about the meaning which follows from that structure than Wellbery does, because I wish to discuss and demonstrate primarily the method Wellbery uses to break down the text.

One of my criticisms with Wellbery's analysis is his discussion of meaning, specifically his introduction of the extra-textual concept of the Source. In the conclusion to his introduction in "The Crisis of Vision," Wellbery states that "Goethe's lyric derives from and transforms idyllic intimacy, constitutes a specifically lyric intimacy as the movement toward the Source of both poetry and subjectivity as the specular exchange with the beloved addressee, but in the very statement of this exchange fissures the originary unity with the difference internal to articulation" (1996: 27). The Source, as Wellbery uses the term, seems to be

essentially a religious concept and denotes a presence which is the fundament of all subjectivity.

Wellbery says that the division between stanzas 3 and 4 in “Willkommen und Abschied” can be interpreted as the division between feeling and language, for instance in the oppositions established in the text between “floß” and “sprach” (1996: 47). In other words, unity is shattered when one speaks or writes, because language is an insufficient and difficult medium to convey feeling. It is a poetic wish to heal the unity ripped asunder by language.

According to Wellbery, Goethe’s poetic process was not spontaneous and the unity artficed in Goethe’s lyric was the accomplishment of a self-critical and a self-differential effort. That means in part that Goethe the lyricist is not identical with Goethe the person or with Goethe’s lyric. Wellbery’s position on the unity achieved in Goethe’s lyric is that human experience is not in a state of unity and that it therefore cannot be simply drawn from as a source in the poetic process, but that unity can only be artficed as the by-product of critical self-differentiation and reflection as achieved in poetry.

Geßner’s idyllic poetry on the other hand is a naive attempt to capture that unity according to Wellbery (1996: 15-18). Geßner believes idyllic intimacy exists as a veritable source within nature to be drawn upon. However, with Goethe one has to be prepared to talk about a lyrical intimacy that is achieved only by one’s movement towards the Source (1996: 18). The whole discussion on Goethe’s “path toward the Source” still presumes a presence, or for the sake of a

deconstructionist argument of Wellbery's analysis, a transcendental signified, i.e., a fundamental essence lying outside the text that is true for all times and places. Wellbery is still talking about a universal meaning which needs no further proof or explanation.

In the conclusion of Wellbery's "The Crisis of Vision," Wellbery explains his approach as giving heightened emphasis to the theme of "primordial seeing" (1996: 44), aka the specular moment, when he compares lines 17-18 of "Willkommen und Abschied" with segments of two other poems treated in his previous chapter, "Idyllic and Lyric Intimacy," -- "Ob ich dich liebe" and "Maifest." In these poems Wellbery cites lines 2-4 of "Ob ich dich liebe," "Seh ich nur einmal dein Gesicht / Seh Dir in's Auge nur einmal / Frei wird mein Herz von aller Qual"; and in lines 21-24 of "Maifest," "O Mädchen, Mädchen / Wie lieb ich dich! / Wie blinkt dein Auge! / Wie liebst du mich!" and compares them to lines 17-18 of "Willkommen und Abschied," "Ich sah dich und die milde Freude / Floß aus dem süßen Blick auf mich." This primordial seeing represents the "common dream," and "the focus of [this] poetic Wunsch," according to Wellbery, "is the specular moment" (1996: 51). I will later ask if this interpretation follows from Wellbery's approach, which he calls his narrative and argumentative synthesis.

Wellbery's interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" helps lay the foundation for a discussion of the evolution of Romanticism through Goethe's

work. One critic of Wellbery's book concisely summarizes the steps that Wellbery pursues in his book as the following:

It begins in part 1, with the specular moment, in which the self (always male) recognizes its own subjectivity by seeing itself reflected in the (female) other's loving glance, which is, in part 2, the originary donation of the mother. Maturation, genius, and poetry, however, arise only on separation of the mother, with the wounding of the subject, often figured as castration. In part 3 [also in the conclusion of Wellbery's journal article] the wound frees the genius of the (still male) poet to achieve primordial song and ultimately, in part 4, to generate humanity by knitting his readers into a community through his poetry. (Brown 352)

One problem arising from Wellbery's concept of Romanticism is its obvious gender bias, which Wellbery takes at face value. This discussion is taken up more fully in chapter 3 of this thesis.

Chapter 2

David Wellbery's Relation to Previous Scholarship and to various Schools of Interpretation

Wellbery's endeavor in his journal article "The Specular Moment" (1982) is to offer an interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" which coheres to the functioning of the language within the text. He is critical of "Erlebnis" critique, which says that a truly reliable interpretation of a text has an experiential base. In the opening arguments of his journal article, Wellbery reexamines and denigrates traditional scholarship on "Willkommen und Abschied," which considers 1) Goethe's early texts to be "Erlebnislyrik" and 2) "Willkommen und Abschied" to be the description of a visit. He proceeds as a structuralist would. He starts with the text and derives from it a generalization about a change in the structure of our psychology (the way we "see" things). Because Wellbery does not start with the generalization, he looks more closely at all parts of the text.

The part of Goethe's Dichtung und Wahrheit where traditional scholars make correlations to Goethe's "Willkommen und Abschied" is in the eleventh chapter where Goethe describes a night ride to Sesenheim/Strasbourg. He visits Friederike Brion (and her family). Traditional scholarship has additionally interpreted "Willkommen und Abschied" as a visit between lovers. This excerpt from Dichtung und Wahrheit reads:

Es waren unser eigentlich nur zwei, an welche diese Ermahnung gerichtet sein konnte; möge dem Andern dieses Rezept eben so

eingeleuchtet haben als mir! Ich glaubte eine Stimme vom Himmel zu hören, und eilte was ich konnte, ein Pferd zu bestellen und mich sauber herauszuputzen. Ich schickte nach Weyland, er war nicht zu finden. Dies hielt meinen Entschluß nicht auf, aber leider verzogen sich die Anstalten und ich kam nicht früh weg als ich gehofft hatte. So stark ich auch ritt, überfiel mich auch die Nacht. Der Weg war nicht zu verfehlen und der Mond beleuchtete mein leidenschaftliches Unternehmen. Die Nacht war windig und schauerlich, ich sprenge zu, um nicht bis morgen früh auf ihren Anblick warten zu müssen.

Es war schon spät, als ich in Sesenheim mein Pferd einstellte. Der Wirt, auf meine Frage, ob wohl in der Pfarre noch Licht sei, versicherte mich, die Frauenzimmer seien eben erst nach Hause gegangen; er glaubte gehört zu haben, daß sie noch einen Fremden erwarteten. Das war mir nicht recht; denn ich hätte gewünscht der einzige zu sein. (FA 14: 494-95)

Traditional scholars either 1) begin with a generalization about the text, then work towards the text or 2) treat the text in narrative, sequential order or 3) rely on Goethe's biographical information as an interpretive tool deciphering "Willkommen und Abschied." Wellbery cites various examples, a sampling of which are discussed here.

Wilhelm Scherer in Geschichte der deutschen Literatur (1885) compares the scenery at Strasbourg, where Goethe lived when he wrote "Willkommen und Abschied," with the scenery of the text "Willkommen und Abschied" (481-83).

He says, “man vergleiche das Leipziger Gedicht, worin er [Goethe] aus der ‘Hütte’ der Liebsten in den ausgestorbenen Wald, die Mondnacht tritt, mit dem berühmten Straßburger Liede ‘Es schlug mein Herz, Geschwind zu Pferde!’” (481). Here Scherer connects “Willkommen und Abschied” to Goethe’s previously cited biographical account in Dichtung und Wahrheit.

Another example is drawn from James Boyd’s Notes to Goethe’s Poems (1948). Boyd states that “though Düntzer believes that ‘Willkommen und Abschied’ was written ‘ohne persönliche Beziehung auf Friederike’, it was definitely addressed to her and probably based on a visit to her” (13). By calling “Willkommen und Abschied” a “concentration in one vivid picture of many impressions graven at various times on the mind of the young poet as he traveled to and fro, his thoughts ever dwelling on love and nature” (14), Boyd places Goethe’s text on equal footing with Goethe the poet who wrote “Willkommen und Abschied”; and he emphasizes “Erlebniskritik” as an interpretive approach in deciphering Goethe’s text.

Other critics, such as Kurt May in Form und Bedeutung (1957), talk about the environment in “Willkommen und Abschied” as specific to Strasbourg and add facts from Goethe’s biography but also try to incorporate structuralist elements. May stays very close to a narrative sequence to interpret the poem. Structural analysis for May is limited to intonation analysis, and there is none of the interplay of interpretation between the stanzas that Wellbery utilizes. May includes some psychological interpretation of “Willkommen und Abschied,” but it

is not individual psychology in the Freudian sense, and it does not rely on recent, modern critical approaches. May, for instance, refers to the “Landschaft” as describing “das Innere” (62) rather than the “Landschaft” around Strasbourg as other traditional scholars do, but his depiction of “das Innere” does not involve a radical juxtaposition of subject versus object as Wellbery’s interpretation does.

S. S. Praver in German Lyric Poetry (1965) relies on some structural analysis, as does Wellbery, but Praver does not compare and contrast individual stanzas outside of their sequential reading. Praver’s study of signs reflects the new-criticism of the 1950s that “focuses on a close reading of textual analysis of poetry rather than the mind and personality of the poet, the history of ideas and political and social implications” (New Criticism 582).

Works by Erich Trunz (1952) and Hermann Korff (1958) offer more examples of this tradition, but Wellbery also presents more recent examples to prove that this strain of interpretation lives on. In Hiltrud Gnüg’s discussion of “Willkommen und Abschied” in Entstehung und Krise lyrischer Subjektivität (1983), she writes, “Goethe antizipiert hier die Trennung von Friederike als notwendigen Entschluß; nicht äußere Verhältnisse, etwa Standesunterschiede, verhindern die Heirat, sondern die Heirat selbst als ein Vertrag, der die Liebe an die Ordnung bürgerlicher Rollenteile bindet, wird vom Subjekt als unvereinbar mit individueller Selbstverwirklichung empfunden” (66). Gnüg devotes some attention to the self-differentiating qualities in Goethe’s lyric. Self-differentiation in this context means that Goethe’s poetic process is not spontaneous. Gnüg says

“Natur als Seelenlandschaft, das bedeutet nicht nur Gefühlsharmonie des Ichs, das sein Empfinden in gleichgestimmter Natur wiederfindet, sondern schließt auch die Dissonanz ein” (63). This does not prevent Gnüg referring directly to Goethe’s biography. Gnüg continues, “Da Friederikes Familie in Goethe aufgrund seiner häufigen Besuche einen ernsthaften Bewerber sah, war ihm bewußt, verdrängte er nur” (68).

Wellbery also writes that Helmut Brandt’s “Goethes Sesenheimer Gedichte als lyrischer Neubeginn,” presented in the Goethe Jahrbuch (1991), as is the most recent published discussion of Goethe’s Sesenheim lyric and that despite a repudiation of the concept of “Erlebnis,” it “evinces the same tautological mode of explication” (1996: 405). In this publication Brandt, referring perhaps to Wellbery’s journal article, writes about Goethe’s early lyric, “Gedichte, die wie die Sesenheimer mit dem Leben ihres Autors derart sinnfällig verbunden sind, behaupten in unserem Gedächtnis allemal einen bevorzugten Platz. Selbst avancierte Ästhetiker, denen der biographische Zugang zum Werk fast schon der Weg zur Sünde ist, können sich einer solchen Erfahrung nicht leicht entziehen” (Brandt 31).

Wellbery is right that Brandt relies on “Erlebnis.” In this particular publication Brandt does not acknowledge many self-differentiating qualities in Goethe’s early lyric. Brandt writes “die von dem leidenschaftlichen Reiter durchquerte Natur ist überall--wie die konkreten Signale besagen--auch die wirkliche Natur, und in der Brechung des wahrnehmenden Subjekts gewinnen beide, Subjekt und Natur, ihre

neue Gestalt” (40). Brandt also rejects the notion that the imagery in the first two stanzas of “Willkommen und Abschied” represents an internal instead of a literal landscape (40).

Wellbery treats “Willkommen und Abschied” as a self-containing system of signs which needs no referent outside the text (1982: 37). He claims that a significant substratum of meaning is overlooked when 1) either a narrative structure of interpretation is maintained or 2) Goethe’s biography is used as a backdrop to uncover meaning in Goethe’s texts.

Marianne Wünsch’s structuralist approach in her book Der Strukturwandel in der Lyrik Goethes (1975), which also deals with Goethe’s early lyric, is a predecessor to Wellbery’s later study, and she is one scholar to whom Wellbery says he is indebted (1982: 37). In Wünsch’s book she expands her study on a substratum of meaning in “Willkommen und Abschied” (110). Like Wellbery, Wünsch tries to find a code of meaning that underlies the narratives in the text. She observes that the “du”/ beloved is only mentioned through an act of seeing. The sequences of events that are described in stanzas 1 and 2 are inconsequential to the seeing. The phenomena exterior to the subject are perceived either through the act of seeing or metaphorical seeing in lines 8, 10, 17, 26, 29, 30; the winds sigh frightfully in the protagonist’s ear in lines 11-12; and in the kisses (or touch) the narrator/“ich” says there is love, joy, and pain (lines 27-28). Wünsch’s conclusion about “Willkommen und Abschied” is that “so ein zentrales Ich ist ein unbeweglicher Mittelpunkt der Welt” (113). This is one interpretation essentially

covered over in “Willkommen und Abschied” when the sequential narrative order of events is treated with greater purport than an underlying textual code, and here Wunsch and Wellbery agree in faulting traditional scholarship.

In addition, Wunsch is critical of how traditional scholarship equates Goethe’s lyric with Goethe the lyricist and how it emphasizes experience as a hermeneutic tool to decipher meaning in Goethe’s text. Wunsch and Wellbery both point out that 1) in the first stanza there is no mention of a rider’s intended destination; 2) in the third stanza the excerpt from line 17, “ich sah dich,” in no way indicates that an anticipated goal has been reached; 3) in stanzas 3 and 4 the act of seeing does not justify to assume a purposefully undertaken journey; and 4) in stanza 4, since the beloved and not the rider eventually departs, the treatment of this text as a visit is equally problematic (Wunsch 109-10; Wellbery 1982: 3).

One of the major aspects that makes Wellbery’s interpretation differ from traditional scholarship’s approach is Wellbery’s systematic application of recent modern theory to a text by Goethe. Wellbery either mentions directly or cites literature by numerous critics in his publications. These include 1) psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, as well as film theorist Christian Metz, who draws on Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis; 2) structuralists Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, and Michael Riffaterre. These two groups are primarily referenced in Wellbery’s journal article. Wellbery also cites post-structuralists/ deconstructionists Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Wellbery relies on them more in his book, whereas structuralism dominates in Wellbery’s journal article.

Wellbery says that in the Interpretation of Dreams Freud states that many dreams are immediately forgotten after one awakes because a dream sequence is often in a non-narrative sequence and one's waking life is often spent thinking in narrative sequential order (Freud 117, 550-54; Wellbery 1982: 10). In "The Imaginary Signifier" Christian Metz also cites Freud's Interpretation of Dreams and says that the narrative plot of a dream or "dream plot," which can only be regarded in the conscious awakened narrative thought sequence, has only been established by the images themselves, without which there would be no dreams (36-7). The difficulty, therefore, is transforming an unconscious coded message into conscious memory. Summarizing Metz's and Wellbery's view, we may say that traditional scholarship's problem with textual interpretation is arriving at any stratum of meaning in a lyric text when that meaning does not cohere to a sequential narrative order. It is like the awakened person, who only has the content of awakened memory to analyze.

Wellbery gives privileged status to the declination of the verb "sehen." The system Wellbery highlights in his approach is also discussed in some detail by Metz. Metz argues that in the analysis of scripts (or for the purposes of this thesis, texts), "the script is one aspect among others in the textual system"; and one "wishes to go further than the script itself, than what is called the 'plot pure and simple'" (36). Interpretation has its grounding not in a sequential narrative plot but in the disarray of images which need to be organized by a decoder. To ground one's interpretation in the "plot" is for Metz to treat the plot as a pure signified or

to treat some components of it as a pure signifier (37). In describing parts of or depictions of parts of the body in cinema photography, Metz says later that it is a “partial object, which makes the whole object loveable and desirable” (72).

Similarly, isolated images are worthy objects for study. The notion of a “whole” is a conclusion made hastily. Wellbery interprets “Willkommen und Abschied” in such a light; he examines its components.

Lacan is not quoted directly by Wellbery in his journal article. Reference is made to him in Wellbery’s book, which follows up on the arguments in the conclusion in Wellbery’s journal article (1996: 116, 219-20). Alice Kuzniar, who critiques Wellbery’s book, provides an explanation for why Wellbery remains tacit when citing Lacanian psychoanalysis. She writes,

The other mirroring surfacing in this book (itself ironically on the topic of specularity) concerns its Lacanian groundwork. In his discussion of specularity Wellbery masterfully appropriates and elaborates upon the Lacanian mirror stage, which maps the identity formation of the ego in the scopical regime, that is via its fragmentary, successive identifications with the visual image. Yet although the mirror stage is a hidden but prevalent subtext in The Specular Moment, Lacan receives mention in only two footnotes. While Lacanian terminology can easily and seductively overpower one’s own prose and Wellbery is perhaps wise to avoid introducing it for its potential of estranging certain readers, nonetheless

clear suppression of its presence does little to mitigate the prevalent suspicion against psychoanalytic paradigms in German studies. (98)

Some explanation of Lacanian theory is necessary in this study because it is the true source of Wellbery's concept of the term "Originary Unity," and Wellbery does not acknowledge this Lacan adequately (see also the criticisms by Toril Moi cited below, p. 42-43).

According to Lacan, a child in the womb exists in a state of originary unity. Terry Eagleton in Literary Theory: An Introduction describes this unity the following way: "In the pre-Oedipal state, the child lives a 'symbiotic' relation with its mother's body which blurs any sharp boundary between the two--" (164). A child severed from the womb, however, "who is still physically uncoordinated, finds reflected back to itself in the mirror a gratifyingly unified image of itself,--a blurring of subject and object still obtains--it has begun the process of constructing a center of self" (164).

In terms of the subjective I's gaze to the beloved and the beloved's gaze back to the subjective I in the third stanza of "Willkommen und Abschied," this gaze or mirror reflection represents, in my opinion, a Lacanian return to the dyadic structure where the I is reunited in originary unity with the mother, or the origin at the source, and where there is no longer the threat of castration in a triadic structure in which the father interrupts this harmonious scene (Eagleton 165). According to Wellbery's interpretation, in the third stanza of "Willkommen und

Abschied,” the subjective I finds itself in a seeing of itself, which is mirrored via the gaze of the beloved onto the subject, then reciprocated back to the beloved.

Another important component of Wellbery’s analysis is structuralism. As a structuralist, Wellbery would generally be “opposed to atomistic theories, which attempt to explain phenomenon individually” (Structuralism 1219). Language cannot be isolated and studied within in its individual components but rather as components within a system. All phenomena, cultural or social, a text for example, function as signs and are not handled as *events* (Structuralism 1219). His study is also is synchronic, in that looks at the interrelated elements of the text as an artifact given a particular time, disassociated from its referent in history.

Wellbery draws on one structuralist’s work, Umberto Eco’s The Role of the Reader (1982: 3). In this study Eco maintains that a work of art is an “object endowed with precise properties” that must be analytically isolated and that the entirety of those components defines a work (3). This approach insures that a text is treated as an *open* text. Eco also talks about codes that are shared by sender and addressee alike. Eco means that social and cultural underpinnings can be displayed by identifying the codes used in discourse.

Wellbery’s reservation about traditional scholarship’s approaches is that they presume upon and promote their own interpretation and presume to possess “privileged access to the truth” (1982: 1). Eco calls such presuppositions aberrant. A model reader, on the other hand, tries to work with the same “ensemble of codes” as the author does (7). This is according to Wellbery where traditional

scholarship on Goethe falls short. According to Eco, an otherwise open text becomes a closed one by means of an “inflexible project,” reflecting the tastes and social norms of the reader (8).

Two problematic areas for a reader are undercoding, that is, not venturing far enough into the text for an interpretation, or overcoding, not working closely enough with the text at hand. In Eco’s A Theory of Semiotics he talks about over- and undercoding, and Wellbery references this (1982: 12). Eco poses a well-known verse by Gertrude Stein: “A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose” (270). In terms of a rose being an image, it is connected to different reader subcodes, which open the expression up to a multitude of interpretations. One problem is that continual text interaction seems to open up an endless repertoire of semantic interpretation and in essence communicates nothing at all (270). This is called overcoding. An example of undercoding is interpreting a handshake or a *hello*, as a connotation of friendship. The intent might not be friendship, or friendship may not follow from that context (136). This “rough coding,” as Eco calls it, results from not studying “intertwined visual, verbal or corporal signs” (135).

Wellbery also utilizes structuralist Roland Barthes’ Image, Music, Text (1982: 3). In a chapter entitled “Structural Analysis of Narratives,” Barthes describes functionally independent episodes. Barthes says it is not permissible to put anything between a sequence of events when one sequence has closed off its narrative, or when an item does not fit into the homogeneous group of that narrative (101). By saying something about the intentionality of the poem subject

before riding a horse, traditional scholarship is inserting a non-homogeneous element inside a closed narrative. Traditional scholarship is essentially saying something about the sequence of the night ride that is not mentioned in the poem. Secondly, this approach is in essence trying to add something after the night ride sequence that ends abruptly in the second stanza. After the night ride sequence, the poem begins immediately with *its own* new narrative. The poem begins with a new, independently existing sequence at the beginning of the third stanza. According to Barthes, a “sequence opens when one of its terms has no solidary antecedent and closes when another of its terms has no consequent” (101). Traditional scholarship succumbs to a seduction of its own making by adding in a narrative where one does not fit.

Wellbery wishes to proceed from the text outward towards an interpretation of the poem. Here he draws upon Riffaterre’s Semiotics of Poetry and the latter’s discussion of retroactive reading (1982: 6). Riffaterre says his basic principle is to “take into account only such facts as are accessible to the reader and are perceived in relation to the poem as a special finite context” (2). An indirection would be “displacing, distorting or creating meaning” (2). However a reader “progresses through the text, the reader remembers what he has just read and modifies his understanding of it in light of what he is now decoding” (5). Riffaterre says that the reader works from start to finish, revises as he/she reviews and then compares backwards. This he calls structural decoding.

As a critic who occasionally applies principles drawn from deconstructionism, Wellbery would say that there is disunity between feeling or even meaning and language in written and/or spoken discourse (1996: 47-8). Experience therefore has no grounding in Wellbery's interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied." In addition, language is no "transparent window to the world as it really is" (Deconstructionism 278). Wellbery applies this type of critique to Goethe's text and disassociates his interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" from an empirical study grounded in experience.

In the first chapter of Wellbery's book, entitled "Idyllic and Lyric Intimacy," he contrasts the discourse found in Solomon Geßner's Idyllen von dem Verfasser des Daphnis (1760) with excerpts from Goethe's early lyric. One of the quotations in Geßner's lyric by "Chloe," which is parodied in English by Wellbery, reads: "Oh! you called out--the gods are my witnesses!-- I love you! Oh! I said, I love you more than the bees love the flowers, more than the flowers love the morning dew" (1996: 3).

"Ob ich dich liebe," which is one of several examples of Goethe's early lyric, reads in Wellbery's translation:

Whether I love you I don't know:

If I see your face just once,

If I look into your eyes just once,

My heart becomes free of all torment;

God knows what so sweetly happens to me!

Whether I love you I don't know. (1996: 3-4)

Wellbery uses the comparison between Geßner and Goethe to reflect on a topic broached by Michael Foucault, the relationship between power and language. Wellbery tries to show that Geßner's discourse acquiesces to the social expectations of Geßner's era and that it does not represent authentic speech as does Goethe's discourse. Wellbery references the conclusion in Foucault's The Archaeology of Knowledge entitled "The Discourse on Language" (1996: 7). In this chapter Foucault says about discourse: "Inclination speaks out: I don't want to have to enter this risky world of discourse; I want nothing to do with it insofar as it is decisive and final; I would like to feel it all around me, calm and transparent, profound, indefinitely open, with others responding to my expectations, and truth emerging, one by one. All I want is to allow myself to be borne along, within it, and by it a happy wreck" (Foucault 215-16). Foucault continues, "In a society such as our own we all know the rules of exclusion. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns what is prohibited. We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything" (217).

At the conclusion of his journal article Wellbery begins a discussion that says Goethe's lyric was the byproduct of self-differential effort. Wellbery references Michael Foucault in the same discussion. Wellbery in his first chapter writes on

the same theme of power and language: “To his contemporaries, Geßner’s language seemed as natural and transparent as the spring water from which his shepherds and shepherdesses took their refreshment, a pure medium in which human sentiment could be exchanged without the deflections of artifice. The idyll, in Geßner and elsewhere, is a utopia of perfect communication. In Goethe’s reinterpretation, this utopia is absorbed into the very movement of lyric speech” (1996: 9). Wellbery poses a new question: “How does one achieve authentic speech?” (1996: 12).

In Foucauldian fashion Wellbery answers, “the reader of a Geßner idyll grasps the informational value of an individual utterance via expectations of appropriateness that have their source, on the one hand, in an antecedent knowledge of the social script being enacted and, on the other hand, in the internal sequence of the individual idyll. Interpretation, in other words, involves comparison with a tacitly mastered cultural program” (1996: 12). Wellbery does not extend a similar criticism toward Goethe’s “lyric intimacy,” but leaves it intact. Wellbery’s Foucauldian criticisms on discourse in the first chapter of the book apply only to Geßner’s discourse.

My criticism of Wellbery is how he can reject arguments external to those arising from narrative (a visit to the beloved) and fail to offer a deconstructive analysis of Goethe’s path toward the Source, which is, after all, Wellbery’s adopted notion, and does not proceed from the structure of the text. For the sake of a deconstructionist analysis of his concept of Source, Wellbery seems to waffle

between arguing for a presence in his analysis of Goethe's Source that need not be explained by other phenomena, or in the case of Geßner, arguing instead for non-presence, in essence a mythological presence. At some points Wellbery argues in favor of non-presence, and says that a notion of presence, what Geßner is accused of, is mythological. Wellbery utilizes the notion "movement toward the Source" in his first chapter when he deconstructs Geßner's idyllic form, or as gathered from chapter 1 of Wellbery's book, *Geßner's* effort to artifice a unity between the subject and nature instead of Goethe's (1996: 17).

In Wellbery's on the whole non-generalizing approach, that means not having an interpretation about a text prior to dealing with it, Wellbery tries to examine exclusively the functioning of the language within the text. The narrative-argumentative synthesis recognizes the narrative structure of a text while not limiting its discourse solely to it. In Wellbery's narrative-argumentative synthesis of "Willkommen und Abschied" he cites his own dilemma as being either respectful of the singularity (and with it, also, the meaning of a lyric text and "thereby abandoning the critical project of narrative-argumentative synthesis or working toward establishing such synthesis and thereby occluding the movement of self-differentiation that distinguishes every lyric text of merit" (1996: 27).

A question that remains for me then is, why should Goethe's "path" (1996: 24) or movement toward the Source (1996: 27) remain an end goal of Wellbery's interpretation? Wellbery criticizes traditional scholarship for 1) making generalizations about a text and 2) then proceeding toward the text. A discussion

on the Source does not follow from Wellbery's narrative-argumentative synthesis, which is supposed to be examining the functioning of the language within the text and restricting its discourse to the language found therein. Wellbery has to infer meaning from his narrative-argumentative synthesis. My main criticism is not necessarily that Wellbery talks about Goethe's path toward the Source, but rather that it does not follow from his narrative-argumentative synthesis. In spite of providing Wellbery a discipline to examine a text by, perhaps the narrative-argumentative synthesis is insufficient to talk about meaning.

One of the questions that still remains for me is whether or not Wellbery understands Goethe in his totality, even if Wellbery treats "Willkommen und Abschied" in its totality. I question whether epistemological uncertainty is a common theme in all of Goethe's early lyric. Texts and lyric texts written by later writers, such as Hölderlin and Rilke, consistently feature epistemological uncertainty as a central theme, whereas in Wellbery's publication on Goethe's poem, we are dealing with one text and not the totality of texts written by Goethe.

Chapter 3

Critical Reactions to Wellbery's The Specular Moment

Wellbery's approach in his book and journal article has caused considerable reaction and interest. One of the strengths cited is Wellbery's ability to work from the text outward. But there are also concerns that he sacrifices the meaning of the text and the spirit of Goethe because he is working with a general framework that restricts his view and that he only highlights the patterns that fit his interpretation.

Peter Utz is one critic who thinks Wellbery goes too far privileging the verb "sehen." Utz' discussion throughout his book Das Auge und Ohr im Text (1990) involves how sense can bridge the gap between subject and object. Utz' fifth chapter, entitled "Die Netzhaut der Sinnlichkeit: Goethes Auge," is a dialogue with Wellbery's 1982 journal article in which he essentially disagrees with Wellbery's major thesis on the verb "sehen." As stated before, the major interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" remains the same in both Wellbery publications. Wellbery references Utz' discussion in his book and says that Utz works with a "much more mimetic version of the text" than he does and that Utz does not discuss the "construction of the code of vision that provides the text with one of its major armatures" (1996: 411).

Utz claims that for Wellbery "das Innenleben" is a black box (103), "the place of an eternal battle between the self and its own anxiety" (Wellbery 1982: 15), or the boundary between the self and the unconscious (1982: 13). In Wellbery's analysis, according to Utz, where there is no seeing, there anxiety arises (105).

Utz points out that Goethe does not deal exclusively with seeing, as Wellbery does, but that Goethe in line 12 also introduces the ear as a means of sensing one's surroundings (104). Wellbery ignores lines 11-12 in his analysis of the night activities in the poem, which would open up a discussion on hearing (1982: 15-17). Utz also points out that in the third and fourth stanzas, the introduction of "Herz" is much more complex than Wellbery's discourse on the polarity of "sehen und nicht sehen" would indicate (105). According to Utz, whoever perceives solely by means of the senses or a sense cannot say "ich," which "Willkommen und Abschied" does in the third and fourth stanzas, but only "mein Herz, mein Geist" or "mein Mut," found in the second stanza (104).

Various book reviews of The Specular Moment (1996) have appeared. In Volume 5 of Choice (January 1997), W. Koepke writes "Wellbery offers new readings of some of Goethe's best-known poems from the 1770's, situating Goethe's poetry within the context of the European movement toward Romanticism. Though he explores often used concepts or myths from new angles, his main thrust is a new reading of the texts themselves" (801). He continues, "this reading is supported by theoretical considerations and informed by semiotics, Foucault, Freud, and sometimes Derrida" (801). Koepke sums up his commentary on The Specular Moment as "an important and provocative departure from a seemingly over-researched area" (801).

Martha Helfer in Seminar (September 1998) writes, "Wellbery is unparalleled as a close reader, and one of the great strengths of the study lies in his precise

analyses of the phonological, morphological, semiological, structural, and discursive details that animate Goethe's writings. Moreover the ease and erudition with which Wellbery draws on texts contemporaneous to Goethe, previous Goethe scholarship, and various strands of contemporary critical theory to advance his keen interpretation are remarkable: this is an intellectual tour de force" (311).

In Colloquia Germanica, (1998) Dennis Mahooney writes, "Wellbery consistently responds to the interpretive challenge he has set for himself by acute attention to the details of the individual poems--such as their word music, or the division and interrelationship of stanzas--while never losing sight of the overall direction of his argument" (81).

Peter Höyng's comments in his review of recent Goethe research, "Was seh ich? Welch ein himmlisch Bild zeigt sich," in Colloquia Germanica (1997) are on the whole favorable to The Specular Moment. He cites Wellbery's confrontation with the "längst überholt geglaubten Psychologismus" which conjoins Goethe's poetic process and the spontaneity of primary human experience (Höyng 183). Höyng does critique the fact that because the emphasis on the text is so strong, the reader never gains insight into why such a historical crisis of the subject should occur (186). He feels also that the high degree of abstraction underlying all the interpretations undermines the sense of peculiarity that is otherwise attributed to each poem (186).

Robert Atkins, whose book review appears in the March 1998 edition of Notes and Queries, writes that the strength of Wellbery's study is:

the sophistication of his analysis of the texture of the poems--their textual and rhetorical structure, phonological and semantic ambiguities and associative suggestion, and play of inter-textualities between the poems--enabling him to demonstrate underlying networks of images and ideas, a systematic coherence that traditional biographical interpretations have occluded. His method is not without risk: the attribution of significance to textual patterns, especially patterns of sounds, may occasionally seem arbitrary (not the least where Goethe's later textual emendations overturn them) (143).

Tim Menke comments in Germanic Notes and Reviews, (1997) "I'm afraid this epochal study of a brilliant neo-conservative 'Geisteswissenschaftler' will not receive the attention it rightly deserves in our country due to the diminishing interest in German literature" (178).

In Volume 22 of Michigan Germanic Studies (1996) Alice Kuzniar's writes, "As scholarship could profit from more investigation of Romantic lyricism beyond Hölderlin and the desperate attempts at authentication of voice in the nineteenth century in general, The Specular Moment could be predicted to inspire future work in this area" (96). Kuzniar continues, "Wellbery is often breathtaking in his reconceptualization of late-eighteenth-century poetic and cultural paradigms" (97). In her conclusion she writes, "At the very least, Wellbery will have reinvigorated our classroom readings of Goethe's early poetry and chastised any one of us who would teach it without concern for the archeology or genealogy

of the subject and the crucial, complex paradigm shift operative in the consciousness of self at the end of the eighteenth century” (99). Kuzniar also says:

My reservations about Wellbery’s co-optation of Romanticism under the aegis of Goethe, however, lies in the fact that many Romantics strongly object to the dissimulative yet ingenious ploy of specularity, not solely in their acknowledgment of the noncoalescence of signifier and signified (as in the early fragments of Novalis that Wellbery does discuss) but also in the very metaphors of vision they select. (99)

Jane Brown’s review in Modern Language Quarterly September (1997) is the most extensive and the most critical of The Specular Moment. However Brown agrees with Wellbery that many myths have circulated about Goethe and been accepted by scholars and schoolchildren alike (Brown 351). One such myth says that the immense creative genius of the young poet was confined to the conventions of his neo-classical upbringing (351). The myth continues that in Strasbourg in the winter of 1770-71, Johann Gottfried Herder introduced Goethe to the glories of Shakespeare and European folk song, and Goethe’s genius burst forth in a torrent of songs and free verse hymns (351). After Goethe’s move to Weimar in 1775, Charlotte von Stein tamed his raging genius into the disciplined balance of German classicism. Many of these myths go hand in hand with important editions of Goethe’s work and with biographical research that still continues (351).

Brown's criticism is directed at Wellbery's chapter 2, "The Crisis of Vision." Brown says that the psychoanalytical aspects of Wellbery's interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied" seem predictable and forced (Brown 353). Brown mentions that the final authorized versions of Goethe's poems, including "Willkommen und Abschied," are consistently avoided since Wellbery is focusing only on Goethe's early lyric. Brown's criticism of "The Crisis of Vision" targets the point where the specular moment is introduced in "Willkommen und Abschied" and the resulting claim that the line "ich sah dich" is followed by a paraphrase of the reverse statement "du sahst mich" (353). Brown argues that paraphrase referred to--"und die milde Freude / floß aus dem süßen Blick auf mich"--does not assert that the beloved looks back into the speaker's eyes, and this seeing, Brown says, does not suggest specularity. Brown is critical of Wellbery's devotion to theory and thinks he does so at the expense of understanding "Willkommen und Abschied" in its completeness (354).

Brown writes, "since Wellbery is a structuralist, his myth has an array of motifs rather than an ordered biographical plot. They begin in part 1 with the specular moment, in which the self (always male) recognizes its own subjectivity by seeing itself reflected in the (female) other's loving glance, which is in part 2 the originary donation of the mother" (352). At this juncture Brown criticizes Wellbery's methodology. Brown continues "Wellbery's portrait of the Goethe of the 1770's as the founder of Romanticism and his new myth of the male poet dependent for identity and inspiration on the loving glance of the maternal

beloved evoke the outlines of the old myth” (355). In other words, for all its detail and its attempt to distance itself from older approaches, the end result has a striking resemblance to the old myth.

Besides Utz’ remarks the strongest objections to Wellbery’s interpretation are the feminist arguments raised by Brown and Harriet Murphy in Modern Language Review (1998). Murphy complains, Wellbery’s “romanticization of Romanticism is most obvious in the way in which the incipient feminist criticism, contained in the observation of the Woman as always silent, always equated with the Origin, and rarely corporeal, is never taken up fully. This leads to another disappointment: the title’s claim to a discussion of the link between Goethe’s early lyric and the beginnings of Romanticism is misleading” (1162). Murphy writes as well, “Wellbery does little to advance understanding of the debate at the heart of Romanticism” (1162). She is critical that Wellbery takes the subjective Angst and narcissism of Romantic poetry at face value and does not re-evaluate phallographic discourse contemporary to Goethe’s time period.

One of my criticisms of The Specular Moment which Murphy also points out that he does not pursue even a short discussion on, or make any reference to Luce Irigaray’s Speculum of the other Woman (original French edition 1974; English translation 1985). In a chapter of Sexual, Textual Politics entitled “Patriarchal reflections: Luce Irigaray’s Looking Glass,” Toril Moi provides a brief summary of the feminist dialogue on Irigaray’s Speculum of the other Woman. She writes that neither Freud nor Lacan, along with other theorists, provide an adequate

model for how women relate to phallographic discourse (129-42). In a previous chapter that includes a summation of Lacan's The Mirror Stage, Moi also writes:

To enter into the Symbolic Order means to accept the phallus as the representation of the Law of the Father. All human culture and all life in society is dominated by the Symbolic Order, and thus by the phallus as the sign of lack. The subject may or may not like this order of things, but it has no choice: to remain in the Imaginary is equivalent to becoming psychotic and incapable of living in human society. (Moi 100)

Wellbery does not subject his reliance on Lacanian analysis to scrutiny, but buries his reference to Lacan by not citing him formally in the chapters which include an interpretation of "Willkommen und Abschied." Feminist critics in particular are critical of Lacanian analysis.

I would also like to consider another treatment of "Willkommen und Abschied" that Wellbery mentions but does not expound on because he is dealing with the language within "Willkommen und Abschied" as a self-containing system; and he therefore does not point to any referent outside the text in history.

Without elaboration Wellbery notes in The Specular Moment that since his initial journal article in the Goethe Yearbook one publication by Eckhardt Meyer-Krentler entitled "Willkomm und Abschied"--Herzschlag und Peitschenhieb (1987) is noteworthy (1996: 410). Meyer-Krentler's book is a socio-historical study that treats Goethe's first version of the poem, but his major thesis surrounds a later version entitled "Willkomm und Abschied."

Meyer-Krentler deals with “Willkommen und Abschied” outside of the language system found in Goethe’s text. He is not a strict structuralist in his approach, as is Wellbery. He comments: “ohne den biographischen Kontext stimmen Titel und Text nicht zusammen; dies gezeigt zu haben ist ein Verdienst der strukturanalytischen Untersuchungen Wünsches und Wellberys” (101). One of Meyer-Krentler’s criticisms of Wellbery is that he, too, among other scholars interprets “Willkommen und Abschied” as a “Welcome and Farewell” (100). Meyer-Krentler’s position is that Wellbery’s approach has certain limitations. Meyer-Krentler’s socio-historical approach, however, has its referent outside of the text.

The phrase “Willkomm und Abschied” was used to connote public flogging, particularly for sexual behavior deemed immoral by contemporaries in Goethe’s era. Meyer-Krentler’s points out numerous instances in German literature where the term is used with this association. In the Deutsches Wörterbuch, the phrase “Willkomm und Abschied” is used in this context (Meyer-Krentler 23), and in the 1960 edition, one definition reads: “*von den prügeln, die sträflingen bei ihrer einlieferung in das gefängnis verabreicht wurden: am liebsten sich (die verbrecher) da abfangen lieszen, wo eine miszverständene humanität ihnen den willkomm und abschied ersparte* GUTZKOW werke 5, 383” (193).

Meyer-Krentler relies not only on passages from Dichtung und Wahrheit but also on traditional as well as non-traditional scholarship in developing his interpretation of “Willkommen und Abschied.” He cites, for example, James R.

McWilliams' biographically oriented interpretation in "A New Reading of 'Willkommen und Abschied.'" In McWilliams' article, he says that in the first version the "nightmarish imagery in the first half [of the poem] is a reflection of the narrator's selfish love [and] has everything to do with the union of the lovers in the second [half]" (294). McWilliams continues, "why should the landscape be invested with such frightening and threatening apparitions at all, when the hero finds himself in a positive state of rapture in anticipation of his beloved's welcome. Such apparitions are totally inappropriate to a heart filled with love" (195).

McWilliams points out that two other examples of early Goethe lyric, "Maifest" and "Ein grauer, trüber Morgen," show how closely "nature mirrors the mood of the poet involved with his beloved" (195). The thousand eyes which loom over the poem subject in the first half of the poem, according to McWilliams, attest to the poem subject's guilt in resolving never to see his beloved again (295) and thus to break his beloved's heart (298).

Meyer-Krentler says that Goethe's reworking of the second version, along with its suggestive title "Willkomm und Abschied," is an admission of the guilt, from which the poem subject in the first version selfishly distances himself (Meyer-Krentler 105). As McWilliams writes, the poem subject's "fears are psychologically motivated because there exists a conflict between his own pleasure and his feelings for the woman involved" (298). He shifts his focus more

to an emotive aspect of Goethe's language that remains untouched in Wellbery's structural analysis.

Chapter 4

The Text History of “Willkommen und Abschied” and its Implementation for the Interpretation of the Poem

The final point of my discussion on Wellbery’s interpretation is a philological concern. An authorized text has been sanctioned in some way by the author. Several variants of “Willkommen und Abschied” exist, some of which are authorized, others of which are not. One unauthorized version exists which is of considerable concern to philologists because it was and is widely used. David Wellbery works with this version in his publications.

The version of “Willkommen und Abschied” that Wellbery treats in “The Specular Moment” (1982) and which I cited in chapter 1 of this thesis is an unauthorized version found in the Hamburger Ausgabe (HA) entitled “Es schlug mein Herz.” I also wish to focus attention on the versions of the text treated in the Frankfurter Ausgabe (FA), which treats only authorized texts, and then show how these versions open up other possibilities of interpretation.

The first authorized version of “Willkommen und Abschied” appeared in the March 1775 edition of the periodical Iris, edited by Friedrich Jacobi. It had no title and was simply referred to by its first line: “Mir schlug das Herz.”

A copy of the poem was found in Friederike Brion’s handwriting among the handwritten records of her estate, and this version is referred to as the “Sesenheimer Handschrift” or “Kruse Überlieferung.” It was first published in

Eugen Wolff's Der Junge Goethe (1907) with lines 11-32 of the Iris version (FA 837). The FA claims that Friederike's text was probably written down incorrectly from memory (838). The authorized Iris version is on the left, the unauthorized Sesenheimer version with its variations underscored is on the right:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | Mir schlug das Herz; geschwind zu Pferde, | <u>Es</u> schlug <u>mein</u> Herz. Geschwind, zu Pferde! |
| 2 | Und fort, wild, wie ein Held zur Schlacht! | Und fort, wild_ wie ein Held zur Schlacht_ |
| 3 | Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde, | Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde, |
| 4 | Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht; | Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht_ |
| 5 | Schon stund im Nebelkleid die Eiche, | Schon stund im Nebelkleid die Eiche_ |
| 6 | Ein aufgetürmter Riese da, | <u>Wie</u> ein _getürmter Riese da, |
| 7 | Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche | Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche |
| 8 | Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah. | Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah. |
| 9 | Der Mond von seinem Wolkenhügel, | Der Mond von _einem Wolkenhügel_ |
| 10 | Schien kläglich aus dem Duft hervor; | <u>Sah schläfrig</u> aus dem Duft hervor_ |
| 11 | Die Winde schwangen leise Flügel, | (FA 1: 128) |
| 12 | Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr; | |
| 13 | Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer-- | |
| 14 | Doch tausendfacher war mein Mut; | |
| 15 | Mein Geist war ein verzehrend Feuer, | |
| 16 | Mein ganzes Herz zerfloß in Glut. | |
| 17 | Ich sah dich, und die milde Freude | |
| 18 | Floß aus dem süßen Blick auf mich. | |
| 19 | Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite, | |
| 20 | Und jeder Atemzug für dich. | |
| 21 | Ein rosenfarbes Frühlings Wetter | |

22 Lag auf dem lieblichen Gesicht,
 23 Und Zärtlichkeit für mich, ihr Götter
 24 Und hoff't es, ich verdient es nicht.

25 Der Abschied, wie bedrängt, wie trübe!
 26 Aus deinen Blicken sprach dein Herz.
 27 In deinen Küssen, welche Liebe,
 28 O welche Wonne, welcher Schmerz!
 29 Du gingst, ich stund, und sah zur Erden,
 30 Und sah dir nach mit nassem Blick;
 31 Und doch, welch Glück! geliebt zu werden,
 32 Und lieben, Götter, welch ein Glück.

(FA 1: 128-9)

The HA “variant” of “Willkommen und Abschied,” as Wellbery refers to it, is also an unauthorized version of that text. It combines the first ten lines found in Friederike’s handwriting with stanzas 2-4 of the Iris version. The second and third stanzas, according to the FA, were possibly not composed during the Sesenheimer period, whereas the last stanza was likely composed later.

In Wellbery’s journal article he says the HA variant of “Willkommen und Abschied,” best realizes the code of vision, which is the emphasis of his interpretation, and which, according to Wellbery, underlies the other versions as well (1982: 37). He argues that his aim is not a philological reconstruction of an original text, but rather a structural analysis (1982: 36-7). He further claims that Claude Lévi-Strauss’ “The Structural Study of Myth” permits him to use other variants of a text in the field of structural analysis, even if this is not permitted in the field of philology (1982: 37). In this article Lévi-Strauss asserts that myths,

and for the purpose of Wellbery's article, texts, cannot be understood in their isolated components, but only in the way those isolated components are combined (104). He does not assert, however, that the variants of written texts can be combined at will.

Wellbery does not mention that the HA variant of "Willkommen und Abschied" is suspect. In The Specular Moment (1996) Wellbery claims that Karl Eibl is not justified in saying in the FA that the contamination of so called "earlier" with later versions is unsound (1996: 409-10). The version found in HA, which Wellbery interprets in his first publication, is dismissed by Eibl in the FA. It is also my opinion that Wellbery overlooks reasonable concerns about textual authenticity by choosing to treat the HA version of that text.

If the copy found in Friederike Brion's written records had indeed been in Goethe's handwriting, then I believe Wellbery could make a case for scripting this supposed earlier variant onto the later published version. As it stands, I contend that Wellbery is unjustified in his argument that Lévi-Strauss' structural discipline allows him to treat this particular version of a similar text. All variants of a myth produced by people are equal in value. Not all "variants" of a Goethe poem are equal in value, and only those attributable to Goethe himself can be used to draw valid generalizations about Goethe's poetry.

In the book version of Wellbery's interpretation he treats a version of "Willkommen und Abschied" which adheres more closely to the uncontaminated Iris text than the HA variant, with the exception of lines 9-10, "Der Mond von

einem Wolkenhügel / Sah schläfrig aus dem Duft hervor.” This displaces “Der Mond von seinem Wolkenhügel” in line 9 and “Schien kläglich aus dem Duft hervor” of line 10 in the Iris version. Wellbery argues that structural analysis often uses variants of myths, texts and genres as an aid in “developing hypothesis regarding patterns of signification, a procedure that, as it were, allows divergent formulations to illuminate one another” (1996: 409). He also says this time that Hans-Jost Frey’s Der unendliche Text permits him this liberty, even if Karl Eibl’s FA does not.

In a chapter entitled “Ändern: Textrevisionen by Hölderlin” in Frey’s Der unendliche Text, Frey states, 1) “Ändern ist nicht enden,” and 2) “Die Möglichkeit, anders zu sein, macht den Text unabschließbar. Die Unaufhörlichkeit der Textarbeit wird sichtbar, wenn der Text sich, wie es bei Hölderlin geschieht, tatsächlich ändert” (77). But Frey in every instance deals with revisions found in Hölderlin’s handwriting, not someone else’s. Once again Wellbery never addresses directly that the text with which he contaminates the authorized version was found in Friederike Brion’s and not Goethe’s handwriting. Wellbery still has no plausible argument for his particular choice of text variant.

Wellbery cites John Ellis’ “Goethe’s Revision of ‘Willkommen und Abschied’” as a noteworthy publication. Ellis notes in his publication that he is dealing only with the two authenticated versions of 1775 and 1806 (an additional, final version, which is referenced later) (15). Wellbery says that Ellis’ interpretation is “a somewhat different evaluation of these revisions” (1982: 37).

Ellis writes “it has usually been assumed that the fragment [Friederike’s text] is part of the very first version written, for two reasons: 1), that it was in Friederike’s possession, and it is in her handwriting; 2), that it contains some variants not found in the other two texts. For this reason many editors print the earliest available version, these ten lines, and then the rest from the version of 1775. Structurally, this putting two halves together is clearly unsound” (20). Ellis continues:

the assumption that the fragment is the original is also questionable. On the basis of the texts taken arithmetically, it is not possible to order the texts. The fragment has two variants “Wie ein getürmter” and “schläfrig”, which are not in the other two. This might point to a fragment coming first; but on the other hand the *Iris* version has “Mir schlug das Herz”, “von seinem Wolkenhügel” and “Schien kläglich”, where the fragment and the final version read the same. This might point to the fact that the *Iris* version came first. On the basis of the poems themselves it is therefore not possible to say which one is the original version, and the external evidence is not very helpful. It is not necessarily true that Friederike wrote down the fragment at the time of composition; and the *Iris* version, though it appeared in 1775, could have been written much sooner. Wolff suggests that the differences between the fragment and the *Iris* version were due to lapses of memory on Goethe’s part when he copied out the text for printing in the *Iris*. This seems inherently improbable; it seems likely that

Goethe could have retained a copy, or that after four years he would have remembered less and so changed more. What seems more likely is the hypothesis that Friederike wrote the fragment down from memory. This would explain why only ten lines are preserved: e.g. Friederike's memory was failing badly in lines 9 and 10, (three mistakes) and finally stopped at the eleventh line. A considered judgment on the fragment might therefore be as follows: it has no importance as a poetic structure, no importance for the genesis of the poem can be established, and the variants which it contains may be due entirely to Friederike, having therefore no significance whatsoever of Goethe's poetry. (Ellis 20-1)

Wellbery in his first publication refers however wholly to the HA variant in his interpretation. In Wellbery's second publication, he does adopt the first line of the first authenticated version which reads "Mir schlug das Herz geschwind zu Pferde," rather than "Es schlug mein Herz." The word "mir" is extremely important for Wellbery's second publication because he is connecting this sample of early Goethean lyric to the beginnings of German Romanticism since it centers on self-reflectiveness.

Within the context of Wellbery's argument about German Romanticism, "mir" serves an important role. First, it is placed at the beginning of the poem, which is without precedent. The lexem "mir" essentially makes this poem read "to me my heart was beating," rather than simply "my heart was beating," because Goethe begins with the perspective of the poem subject and explains even the events

external to the subject only in terms of the subject as it is perceived by means of the senses. This “mir” is also part of the self-reflexive dimension of poetry, which is thematic in Wellbery’s second publication.

Earlier lyric, such as Solomon Geßner’s poetry, explains the subject in terms of criteria external to subject and offers a unity and resolution through idyllic intimacy, that is, drawing on a rehearsed social dialogue, which stays within the confines of the social and cultural codes of Geßner’s era. Goethe was introducing something new with his application of the word “mir,” which leads Wellbery upon further insight to adopt the first line as it is read in its authenticated verse.

In Wellbery’s first publication, Goethe’s participation in early Romanticism is not the main thesis of that article, but Wellbery’s dual focus is rather that “Willkommen und Abschied” should not be interpreted in narrative sequential order, and that sequential order narration covers over a significant substratum of textual meaning. Secondly privileged status should be given to the verb “sehen,” which Wellbery says in his first publication that the HA variant best realizes. This is also taken up in Wellbery’s second publication.

Wellbery in his journal article says that Peter Michelsen’s “‘Willkomm und Abschied.’ Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu einem Gedicht des jungen Goethe” (1973) is an interesting reading of the poem, “which goes beyond the traditional recounting-plus-commentary and grasps fundamental structural relations but which sets the accents differently and employs a different repertoire of theoretical terms than [his] reading” (1982: 32). Wellbery and Michelsen’s

articles treat the HA variant of “Willkommen und Abschied,” and Michelsen’s article in particular talks about how that version of the poem opens up different interpretations.

Certain aspects of the HA variant do lend support to Wellbery’s interpretation of the verb “sehen.” Wellbery’s privileging of “sehen” does not allow the poem subject any knowledge of an object outside of the act of seeing. Sensory perception has for Wellbery, as Utz describes it, a black box effect (Utz 108). In HA, the adjective “einem” in the line “Der Mond von einem Wolkenhügel” in line 9 instead of “seinem”, as is found in the FA, eliminates a possibility that something might be known about the moon itself, which the adjective “seinem” makes possible. If one refers to a cloudy hill belonging to the moon and not simply it being a cloudy hill, then that suggests that knowledge can be acquired beforehand about the moon, outside of the act of seeing.

Secondly, in line 6, which refers to “die Eiche” in line 5, reads in HA, “Wie ein getürmter Riese da,” rather than “Ein aufgetürmter Riese da” as in FA. The word “getürmter” refers to a state of toweringness or giganticness as perceived by the subject at a given time. *Auffürmen*/towering however refers to a process that takes place during a space of time, *and* within the realms of the poem subject’s imagination outside of the act of seeing. The FA version might suggest that knowledge about a thing or event can take place outside of one’s immediate sensory perception.

The “wie ein” found in the HA is also significant. The “ein” found in the FA says that something might be known about “die Eiche,” even if contrived within the imagination of the poem subject. If knowledge takes place within the imagination of the subject, then that draws a limited amount of emphasis away from Wellbery’s privileging of the verb “sehen.” This also draws emphasis away from Wellbery’s thesis on specularly.

Thirdly, the verb and adverb “sah schläfrig/peered sleepily” found in the HA, instead of the “schien kläglich/shown pitifully” in FA, is used in Wellbery’s analysis. The declination of the verb “sehen” is a major component of Wellbery’s thesis in his first publication. Wellbery also retains “sah schläfrig” in his second publication. “Schien kläglich/shown pitifully” however has its referent in the sentiments of the poem subject; and for Goethe instead of Wellbery, perhaps truth can be found there too.

In Wellbery’s analysis however, there can be no knowledge of a phenomenon outside of the immediate act of seeing. The “schien kläglich/shown pitifully,” rather than simply “saw” or “peered sleepily” in FA, gives an animated quality to an otherwise inanimate object, the moon. One might imagine a being fighting off sleep. “Sah schläfrig” however refers exclusively to an eye, which might for that matter be inanimate like a camera’s eye. The main component of Wellbery’s thesis is vision and a knowledge that emanates from this sensory perception, exclusive of other forms. In my view Goethe was not exclusionary of these other

sources, as Utz points out, although Goethe does emphasize “sehen” above other sensory forms in “Willkommen und Abschied.”

Wünsch suggests that within the realms of traditional scholarship that the first or Iris version of “Willkommen und Abschied” has in fact been interpreted in light of a second version. Essentially, traditional scholarship interprets backwards. A second authorized version of the poem titled “Willkomm und Abschied” was published in the eighth volume of Goethe’s Schriften in 1789. This version, with its variations underscored, reads:

1 Es schlug mein Herz, geschwind zu Pferde!

2 Es war getan fast eh’ gedacht;

3 Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,

4 Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht;

5 Schon stand im Nebelkleid die Eiche,

6 Ein aufgetürmter Riese, da,

7 Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche

8 Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

9 Der Mond von einem Wolkenhügel _

10 Sah kläglich aus dem Duft hervor,

11 Die Winde schwangen leise Flügel,

12 Umsaus’ten schauerlich mein Ohr;

13 Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer;

14 Doch frisch und fröhlich war mein Mut;

15 In meinen Adern welches Feuer!

16 In meinem Herzen welche Glut!

17 Dich sah ich, und die milde Freude
 18 Floß von dem süßen Blick auf mich,
 19 Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite,
 20 Und jeder Atemzug für dich.
 21 Ein rosenfarbnes Frühlingwetter
 22 Umgeb das liebliche Gesicht,
 23 Und Zärtlichkeit für mich- Ihr Götter!
 24 Ich hofft' es, ich verdient' es nicht!

25 Doch ach! schon mit der Morgensonne
 26 Verengt der Abschied mir das Herz:
 27 In deinen Küssen, welche Wonne!
 28 In deinem Auge, welcher Schmerz!
 29 Ich ging, du standst und sahst zur Erden,
 30 Und sahst mir nach mit nassem Blick:
 31 Und doch, welch Glück geliebt zu werden!
 32 Und lieben, Götter, welch ein Glück!

(FA 2: 45)

Some of the major changes between version one from Iris, and version two are these following: In the first version in line 2, the expression “wie ein Held zur Schlacht” is according to FA 2 probably changed in the second version in order to erase a humorous exaggeration (838). Also in line 14 of the first version, the use of “tausendfacher” is changed in the second version for the same reason.

In version one, line 25, “Der Abschied, wie bedrängt, wie trübe! / Aus deinen Blicken sprach dein Herz,” is changed to “Doch ach! schon mit der Morgensonne / Verengt der Abschied mir das Herz.” The purpose is probably to generalize the typicality of the situation (FA 2: 838). In the Iris version, the time between

welcome and farewell is indefinite. In the second version however, the sequence is unambiguous. Arrival is in the evening, there is an intimate night, and departure is in the morning sun.

Lines 29-30 of the first version say, “Du gingst, ich stund, und sah zur Erden, / Und sah dir nach mit nassem Blick.” In the second version these lines read “Ich ging, du standst und sahst zur Erden, / Und sahst mir nach mit nassem Blick.” The early version provides that the lover comes and the beloved goes, and, as FA 2 suggests, an even more complicated but perhaps biographical poem, neither version one nor two, might read that the beloved escorts the separating/departing one part of the way, the departing one/he looks back at the beloved/her, and she then turns back toward her house. The second version in contrast asserts that the one left behind, /“du” looks back at the one leaving, /“ich.”

Some minor notes in FA 2 about both versions are that “Duft”/smell, in line 10 of both versions, frequently means “Dunst,” vapor or haze (838). Secondly, in line 30, “Blick” appears with a semicolon in the first version, and a colon in the second version. The colon is sometimes used as an announcement of direct speech, and here that would be the beloved’s speech. (By the same token, so could lines 27-28 of the second version.) However, the lines followed by the colon could also be an aphoristic summary on the part of the poem or first person narrator (FA 2: 839).

FA 2 also points out some of the minor changes made in the first line of a third and final version, this time entitled “Willkommen und Abschied” and

published in Goethe's Werke in 1810. In the first line of the third version "Es schlug mein Herz; geschwind zu Pferde!" the only difference syntactically between the 1789 and 1810 versions is the semicolon in place of the comma. It has been speculated, according to FA 2, that this slight variation is a misprint. However the semicolon of that time period often possesses the same function as today's colon (897).

Traditional scholarship has treated the first version as a visit in light of the second version as Wunsch suggests. The lines "Ich ging, du standst und sahst zur Erden / Und sahst mir nach mit nassem Blick," lines 29-30 in the second version, could in fact suggest a rider's departure after a visit. Also in line 17, the "dich" precedes the "ich" in the lines "Dich sah ich und die milde Freude." The language in the second version does not suggest the same central "Ich," which precedes phenomena exterior to itself according to Wunsch (113).

To Ellis, Goethe has broken down the structure of the original poem in revising it. Readers are essentially dealing with two different poems. Ellis says "that to speak of the revision as having been an improvement of the same poem is impossible" (18). It is also important to point out that the title "Willkommen und Abschied," a variation of the title "Willkomm und Abschied," was never given to the first or Iris version. Some scholars, as Meyer-Krentler suggests, have additionally interpreted this title, which did not exist, to mean "welcome and farewell," which opens up the interpretation of a visit.

In summary, other versions of “Willkommen und Abschied” draw a limited amount of focus away from Wellbery’s analysis about the declination of the verb “sehen.” 1) Consideration of the original Iris version indicates that Wellbery over-privileges the verb “sehen” in his approach and 2) a philological examination of the later authorized version reveals that Wellbery overlooks areas of research which would open up a socio-historical context of the poem’s title, which in turn illuminates themes of guilt and punishment in the poem text. Although the declination of the verb “sehen” in “Willkommen und Abschied” is a major theme for interpretation as is revealed in Wellbery’s study, he nonetheless excludes other important areas of research. These other approaches also offer varied interpretations of the same text.

Conclusion

My criticisms of Wellbery's treatment of "Willkommen und Abschied" are the following. 1) The "Source" is an idea drawn from outside of the functioning of the text, just as a visit is. According to Wellbery, an interpreter should limit his/her interpretation of a text to the functioning of the language within the text. Wellbery essentially has to abandon this model in order to talk about meaning. 2) Wellbery buries the "source" of his "Source," and does not subject it to the same kind of deconstructive analysis to which he subjects Geßner's use of the idea. In general Wellbery faces the same dilemma which lies at the heart of the Structuralist/Deconstructionist debate, how to identify refuges and strongholds where a notion of presence, a constructed, transcendental signified, takes hold of cultural and social phenomenon. The structure of oppositions itself, Wellbery's discussion of "floß" and "sprach" for instance, is one such transcendental signified. 3) The concept of the "Source" has a gender bias, and through ignoring it and not subjecting it to analysis, Wellbery skews the interpretation of Romanticism. 4) Wellbery adopts a vague and philologically unacceptable concept of the "literary variant" to excuse his use of an unauthenticated text, and he mixes variants to adopt those most suited to his interpretation. Wellbery is essentially using the same text that most traditional scholarship has been working with. I do think, however, that substituting an unauthorized version draws a certain amount of attention away from Wellbery's tightly interwoven thesis on the meaning of the verb "sehen," and of specularity. 5) "Willkommen und Abschied"

is one poem of many and neither represents the whole of Goethe's writings nor of Goethe's early lyric. Wellbery makes generalizations about "Willkommen und Abschied," a text that does not represent a broader cross-section of Goethe's writing.

A scholar of literary criticism might ask then, "Why should a student of literary theory read David Wellbery at all, when there are so many different inconsistencies in Wellbery's arguments?" In general I was awed by Wellbery's discussion. Until I read David Wellbery's publications I was disinterested in literary analysis. I thought that literary criticism or textual interpretation was in alignment with a scholar's cultural or social investment. Be that as it may, to the benefit of the reader, Wellbery lays bare his own approach for all to scrutinize. Wellbery writes extensively on "Willkommen und Abschied" using precise language, which naturally opens up ground for arguments for or against Wellbery's analysis. Although Wellbery's approach may contain certain areas of limitation, which theorists from other disciplines fully research, Meyer-Krentler for instance, Wellbery's treatment of "Willkommen und Abschied" is the most concise and definitive in its explanations. There is little wonder that Wellbery's publications have caused widespread reaction and interest.

In the words of Tim Menke, I hope that an effort will be made to translate Wellbery's publications in German, so the monumental undertaking in his publications can achieve a broader audience. David Wellbery's "The Specular Moment: Construction of Meaning in a Poem by Goethe" (1982) and his later

book (1996) are a worthy studies for students of literary theory and of German literature.

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Vita

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