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Existential Muck: Romantic Borderlessness and Dissolving Dualisms
in Schiller's *Die Räuber*

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The essay investigates Romantic tendencies in Schiller's inaugural drama, *Die Räuber* [The Robbers]. The play's overt discourse of dualism and exchange rests on a more viscous foundation of existential muck. Franz von Moor's "morastige Zirkel der menschlichen Bestimmung" [muckish cycle of human determination] is a cyclical solvent that engulfs the play's dualisms and dissolves opposition and exchange. Forms rise from the muck, taking on borders (dimensions, limits) and they descend back into the muck, becoming once more borderless. This may be the other side of an all-encompassing *Freude* [Joy], both originary and terminal, yet as "alle Menschen werden Brüder" [all people become brothers] we are reminded of what it means to be brothers in the Moor clan. As a belated product of the proto-Romanticism of the *Sturm und Drang*, Schiller's 1781 play is a specimen of retro-proto-Romanticism.

heaven	Joy, thou glorious spark of
	Daughter of Elysium
	We enter drunk with fire
	Your heavenly sanctuary
together	Thy enchantments bind
	What did custom's sword
divide	All people become brothers
	Where your gentle wing
abides	

Friedrich Schiller, alas, is best known internationally for a minor poem that Beethoven chose for the choral segment of his Ninth Symphony. The poem celebrates joy in its exalted musical context, but many have speculated that at the time of its composition in 1785, it might have been a drinking song. Lines like the following support this position: “Freude sprudelt in Pokalen,/ in der Traube gold’nem Blut/Trinken Sanftmut Kannibalen/Die Verzweiflung Heldenmut” [Joy bubbles in goblets,/ in the grape's golden blood/ Cannibals drink gentleness/ And despair drinks heroic courage] (l-250). Despite, or possibly because of, these and other clear references to alcohol consumption, the poem portrays Joy as a convivial unifier, a means for merging opposites (gentle cannibals), a universal solvent for a dualistic world. Even the gender-divided human race (“alle Menschen”) unifies in a mono-gendered brotherhood (“werden Brüder”). That young, pre-Kantian, Schiller often thought in these border-busting, Romantic-sounding terms will be the topic of this essay which proposes to place his earliest play, *Die Räuber* of 1781—4 years before “An die Freude” [Ode to Joy]—in line with the later literary, poetological, and philosophical writings of the early German Romantics.

Whereas the word, “Schiller,” may, on rare occasions, pop up in discussions of the literary aspects of European Romanticism, this is most likely because of its association with “Goethe,” whose *Die Leiden*

des jungen Werthers [The Sorrows of Young Werther] (1774/1787) inspired many prominent Romantic authors—Frankenstein’s wretch, for example, conspicuously reads it and weeps in Mary Shelley’s novel of 1818.¹ Thus it has come to pass that Goethe is often classified as a Romantic in the European canon, where Schiller is barely present, even though *Die Räuber*—his own *Werther* inasmuch as it was the piece that made his early reputation--was read by the same prominent European Romantics and was a special favorite of Shelly’s husband.² Nor is Schiller, or even Goethe for that matter, a *German* Romantic. Early German Romanticism (*Frühromantik*) of the late 1790s and early 1800s is widely understood as a deliberate and decisive turning away from the *now* neoclassical work of Goethe and Schiller.

Ultimately both Goethe and Schiller went on to write in a non-Romantic direction, though certain aspects of Schiller’s Idealist thinking seem to be compatible with Romantic philosophy, especially when he seeks to reconcile Kantian dualisms in the moral and aesthetic spheres.³ However, and here I tread carefully because literary historians argue from diverse bases on the application of stylistic labels, both giants of German literature, seemed, as young men, to be somewhat Romantically inclined, even in the German sense, inasmuch as the *Sturm und Drang* movement of the 1770s, from which the first version of *Werther* issued, has been generally understood as a forerunner of Romanticism, though the “Storm-and-

Stress” style was abandoned by most of its immediate practitioners and revived and transformed much later by their apparent successors. It will be the task of this essay to argue a deeper *Romantic* affinity for Schiller’s earliest drama, as it gropes its convoluted way toward an annihilation of difference and dualism.

To continue the literary historical narrative, *Die Räuber* of 1781,⁴ is classified as a late product of *Sturm und Drang* proto-Romanticism. Inasmuch as Schiller (1759-1805) was at least half a generation younger than Goethe (1749-1802) and other figures of the movement, *Die Räuber* is late enough to be a specimen—perhaps the only specimen—of retro-proto-Romanticism. The blustering and the bombast were indeed retro—and irritating to Goethe at a time when his stylistic clock was moving him toward the cleaner, more mature, forms of Classicism (*Klassik*) and tales of inimical brothers seemed to have been played out. After years of isolation in the *Hohe Karlsschule* military academy, Schiller may have been behind his time (retro) but I would like to dwell on the “proto” and point out the deep challenges the play presents to oppositional logic and binary thinking, its adoption of the notional indeterminacy that would later enable Romantic irony, and the ways in which it feeds on its own figuring of the coincidence of opposites, a concept that is foundational to so much German Idealist and Romantic thinking. Where the dramatic rhythms of the *Sturm und Drang* tended to yank the reader/spectator back and forth between

well-defined extremes (freedom and confinement, joy and despair, good and evil, love and hatred), reinforcing opposition, *Die Räuber* is more of a study in conceptual borderlessness.

Here I am referring to the play's awkward, but insistent, refusal of opposition and even of individuation, its effacement of any particular contrasts that would disturb the transcendental unity or "re-unity" promoted by German Romantics. This rejection is all the more deliberate and definitive for its awkwardness and I think the play embraces both a unity prior to any differentiation and the re-unity that has differentiation as its ground--in other words, it does it all. Some of the operative concepts are merged whereas others are pre-merged, their division revealed to be an illusion. I will argue that this play, though received by A.W. Schlegel as "wild und gräßlich" [wild and gruesome] (Schlegel 395), offers a foundation for a variety of Romantic experiments with conceptual non-difference or the identity of opposites.

The action of the play is both melodramatic and mind-boggling. Schiller, aspiring to Shakespearean *gravitas* and following to some extent the model of C.F.D. Schubart's "Zur Geschichte des menschlichen Herzens" [Toward a Story of the Human Heart] pits two brothers against each other as they struggle for their father's favor and his estate. Karl, who had gone off to study at the university, runs

afoul of town authorities and makes the not elegantly motivated choice to become a robber captain. He leads his band into and out of the Bohemian woods in a series of Robin Hood missions that result in much violence, arson and loss of life. Franz, who is the actual villain, stays home with his father and poisons his mind against the more noble Karl, gaining the succession, but failing to persuade Karl's beloved Amalia to transfer her affections to him. Franz wishes his father dead and old Graf von Moor faints rather frequently. Ultimately Franz puts him in a crypt to starve, though a faithful servant feeds the old man. Karl returns to the family home disguised as Graf von Brand, visits Amalia, discovers his father's condition, and sends the robbers to capture Franz, who, despairing of both escape and salvation, commits suicide before they arrive. Amalia and the robbers both lay claim to Karl and the latter, who cannot leave his comrades but cannot continue as one of them, kills Amalia (who pleads for death rather than abandonment) as a sacrifice to secure his release from his robber vows and a life of crime. Having lost his family, his beloved, and his robbers, Karl goes off to find a poor man with eleven children he has heard about. Karl plans to surrender to him so that he can collect a large bounty for turning in the notorious robber Moor. Karl exits the stage vowing to help the poor man. This is the plot of *Die Räuber*, but beyond the sequence of events, we also have a great deal of sporadic reflection on the meaning of life or existence, the nature of the universe, and matters

theological. It is in these reflections, along with elements of the action, that the play demonstrates its Romantic leanings.

There are no widely accepted definitions of German Romanticism that feature any kind of precision and no precise definitions that are widely accepted. Literary and stylistic history are just that way and they are doubly so with Romanticism, a phenomenon that encompasses a variety of disciplines and national variations and which struggles on all fronts against the hard limitations of definitional clarity.⁵ It is both a reaction against and a continuation by other means of Enlightenment rationality, but the other means generally involve a dismantling of the walls or borders between concepts and values. As an experiment in thought and perception, German Romanticism moves toward synesthesia and merger; despite an emphasis on individual creativity and originality, there is an overwhelming drive toward mystic unity and the effacement of defining lines. In one example, Novalis's lyric subject in *Hymnen an die Nacht* [Hymns to the Night] (1800), suffers from a separation from his deceased beloved and yearns for death as a means of merging with her, erasing all barriers and achieving a kind of immediacy that transcends individuation. There are many other instances of figures merging with figures, humans with nature, ideas with their apparent opposites.

Attributing this kind of conceptual borderlessness and merger to *Die Räuber* will sound odd at first, because the play unfolds through a discourse of dualism and exchange, using figures of opposition, trade, and the balancing of clearly individuated terms as tropes for its world view. It is founded on the *opposition* of two very distinct brothers—described by Schiller himself as “sehr unähnlich” [very different] (II-293)—and it emphasizes the laws of exchange, staging at crucial points, for example, the expectation of fair recompense for quantities or services rendered. “Ist das Liebe für Liebe?” [Is that love for love?] laments Karl when he thinks that his conciliatory letter to his father has been answered with repudiation (II-44). This same father mistakes Franz’s self-interested attentions as heavenly compensation for Karl’s putative indifference: “Der Gott, der mir durch Karl Tränen zusendet wird sie durch dich, mein Franz, aus meinen Augen wischen” [The god who sends me tears through Karl will wipe them from my eyes through you, dear Franz] (II-24), thus clearly positing a deity who operates in terms of balance and reward and a cosmos that follows along. The robbers, whose profession tends to disrupt symmetrical economic exchange, also show a commitment to balance when they discover that Karl plans to leave them for Amalia: “Opfer um Opfer! Amalia für die Bande!” [Sacrifice for sacrifice! Amalia for the band!] (II-157), demands the robber chorus. Their claim on Karl is a claim which is based on the exchange of their battle scars for his vow to lead them.

Indeed they have even exchanged what must be wedding vows in the Bohemian woods: “So wahr meine Seele lebt, ich bin euer *Hauptmann!*” [Verily, by my living soul, I am your captain {main or major man/husband}] (II-45). This marriage contract is only invalidated when Karl slays the lovely Amalia, who falls victim to this apparently rigid discourse of exchange. If he is going to leave his scarred robber spouses, he must also invalidate his betrothal to her. Blood in, blood out.

Significantly, among the many pronounced examples of balance and symmetrical fairness, Franz Moor sets the entire drama in motion because he believes he is entitled to villainy as a consequence of the debt that nature owes him. He was born ugly and second to Karl, so he has license to avenge these wrongs on his family and his subjects. Vengeance, by the way, another instance of exchange or payback is Karl’s professed profession: “Rache ist mein Gewerbe” [Vengeance is my business] (II-88). And, of course, within this web of exchange, we follow the path of the brothers’ distinct differences: Karl is good, charismatic, ruled by spirit and emotion; Franz is bad, ugly, and a calculating, “wooden” personality. The “Wilde” [savage] and the “Barbar” [barbarian] of Schiller’s aesthetic education are adequately prefigured in these two men who collectively account for most known human personality or character traits, but whose differences are never synthesized or reconciled.⁶ Not only do they fail to reconcile, they are

kept completely apart, never once sharing the stage. It is tempting to think of one actor playing both roles and, given the many innovative stagings in German and in translation over the years, this has likely been done.⁷

The play trumpets its apparent dualisms and the plot's apparent reliance on exchange. Pastor Moser's evocation of the Christian symmetry between moral debt/credit and eternal reward/punishment hovers above Franz's theological speculation:

Sehet zu, das Schicksal der Menschen stehet unter sich in fürchterlich schönem Gleichgewicht. Die Waagschale dieses Lebens sinkend wird hoch steigen in jenem, steigend in diesem wird in jenem zu Boden fallen (II-147).

Listen, the fate of man lies in a terrible and beautiful balance. The scale pan of this life sinking will rise in the next life and rising in this life will in the next fall to the ground.

Thus, even in the play's scale-based eschatology, we are working within a universe where debts are incurred and restitution or retribution is expected, where the overt movement is toward an equilibrium of separate items of equal weight/proportion or significance, with an emphasis on the separate. What I want to contemplate here is the conceptual liquidity beneath the discourse of opposition and exchange in *Die Räuber*, the merging, melting

tendencies that undermine the individual terms of exchange and efface the various instances of opposition, difference, and dualism—tendencies I am labeling proto-Romantic in spite of Schlegel's dismissal. *His* brother Friedrich, by the way, although no admirer of *Die Räuber*, was much kinder to Schiller's later work. (Safranski 61-69).

While *Die Räuber* features much talk of economic, political, and theological opposition and balance, rather than balancing opposing terms, the ever-inclusive Schiller binds together what did custom's sword divide and rather than bifurcating terms, offers them no ground for differentiation. As he writes of Joy, "Deine Zauber binden wieder" [Thy enchantments bind together] and here Schiller joins such clear oppositions as life and death, man and woman, I and Not-I. However, the "wieder" [once again], which, for metric reasons, does not emerge in the standard English translations of 'An die Freude,' will be a problematic term here. In many cases, it appears that there is a *prior* borderlessness and that individuation is merely an illusion—and thus no occasion for re-unity is needed. Did "der Mode Schwert" [] strictly separate that which was previously one and does "Freude" or joy melt these distinctions and join them once *again*? Here chickens and eggs vie with dancers and dances for analogical priority.⁸

A central instance of this kind of cyclical prior-and-post thinking is Franz's dark treatise on the question of human purpose. Whereas he

claims to be justified in his plans to have Karl/Graf von Brand killed, he nonetheless feels the need to develop and enunciate a justification. All of this emerges as he clues the audience in on his plans—much like Richard III who is his obvious ancestor. While merging life and death, birth and murder, Franz presents his argument for murder as the mere negation of birth, that is, an insignificant restoration of undifferentiated nonexistence:

Ist die Geburt des Menschen das Werk einer viehischen
Anwandlung, eines Ungefährs, wer sollte *wegen der Verneinung
seiner Geburt* sich einkommen lassen an ein bedeutendes etwas
zu denken? (II-115, emphasis mine)

Since man's birth is the work of animal caprice, of a vague
inclination, to whom should it occur to regard as significant *the
negation of his birth?*

The cosmic indifference toward the gestation of a human life or the cosmic accident that enables conception does not mandate a big fuss when that life ends—whatever the circumstances. Franz continues in pseudo-biblical tones to deny both the significance of life and the purpose of human endeavor with his scathing version of ashes-to-ashes, dust-to-dust:

[d]er Mensch entstehet aus Morast, und watet eine Weile in
Morast, und macht Morast, und gärt wieder zusammen in Morast,

bis er zuletzt an den Schuhsohlen seines Enkels unflätig anklebt.
Das ist das Ende vom Lied, der morastige Zirkel der
menschlichen Bestimmung. (II-115)

Man is created from muck, wades a while in muck, makes muck
and dissolves into the muck until he in the end sticks rudely to
the shoes of his descendant. That is the end of the song, the
muckish cycle of human determination.

Franz's primal or not-primal muck, this mixture of earth and human decay, is both anterior and posterior to human individuation. Forms rise from the muck, taking on borders (dimensions, limits) and they descend back into the muck and become once more borderless, merging with the nearly homogenized composite and sticking to the shoes of those currently enjoying borders, but re-connecting involuntarily with the muck. That this is a cycle and not a continuum, relativizes the before and after-ness of a particular moment. Life and death, origin and end, are not that distinct from one another—nothing is. Not only are thought, philosophy, and religion dissolving aspects of an all-encompassing ooze, but our very existence fails to distinguish itself adequately from non-existence and oblivion.

The word Franz uses, *Morast*, is also etymologically related to his own name. *Morast* drops the middle low German double o of *Moor*, the word for swamp, a meaning it also has in English. Here it refers to a

swampy family foundation and a lack of existential clarity, which brings us to the boys' father, who aggressively resists any identification as the bedrock of his clan.

Franz's conclusion about the missing significance of life and death and of their distinction is illustrated in terms of the drama by the condition or series of conditions of Old Graf von Moor. He is a minor figure in terms of his dialogue allotment but a major symbol for stability and its absence. As both father and Count of his realm, he stands for family and government in the familiar conjunction—as *Landesvater*[]. For the center to hold, it would be necessary for the central figure to exhibit some form of firmness or rootedness, but Old Moor's depiction is fraught with oscillation and mutability. He is alternately identified as strong and healthy and then weak and frail, but, more disturbingly, dead and alive. He dies apparently or is presumed dead several times, only to somehow return to life. His multiple deaths and resurrections are overtly acknowledged as Karl finally finishes him off with: "Stirb durch mich zum drittenmal" [Die for the third time because of me] (II-155). The existentially chameleon nature of Old Moor, his paternal wisdom and foolishness, his vitality and feebleness, culminates in his peculiar status as both dead and alive. The flickering father who anchors the Moor clan lacks a stable conceptual base and the absolute qualities of living or dead mingle in this figure, casting doubt on or even denying this fundamental

opposition. 'Dead or alive' becomes dead and alive, a borderless value encompassing all possible permutations of vitality or its absence. Has Schiller joined together states of existence or non-existence that only custom's sword divides? This may take us more deeply into the originary and terminal muck.

Another fundamental distinction that comes under attack (or submits to highway robbery) in *Die Räuber* is that of Self and Other, I and not I. The borders of the self yield repeatedly to other selves that are themselves unstable. Again and again, we see dramatic figures speculating on others that could have been self (Franz wants to be Karl; Karl wants to be one of Plutarch's subjects, etc.), an anti-liminal mode of thinking that undermines fixed identity. Franz at one point even muses that he could have been a woman: "wenn er ein Weib aus mir gemacht hätte?" [what if he had made a woman of me?] (II-30). Amalia beats him up, as if he were one and she were not. Additionally, there are so many doublings and triplings of figures in the parallel realities created by false representations such as Franz's story of Karl's transgressions and disguise, or Karl's return as Graf von Brand, that it literally becomes impossible to verify self. The most conspicuous instance of the instability of identity is the long conversation between Karl/Graf von Brand and Amalia in which she speaks glowingly of Karl but fails repeatedly to see that he *is* Karl. 'Who's Who?' has a special

resonance for this play that demolishes the clarity of its inaugural list of individuated dramatic “Personen ”[].

To continue, there are far too many robbers, to begin with and a major robber, Spiegelberg, notably, creates his own double to escape punishment. He describes a local doctor to authorities as the robber Spiegelberg—and he rejoices when this “Pseudo-Spiegelberg” is executed in his stead. Spiegelberg even goes to witness the event:

Ich musste nachher eine derbe Prise Tabak in die Nase reiben, als ich an den Galgen vorbeispazierte und den Pseudo-Spiegelberg in seiner Glorie da paradieren sah--und unterdessen, dass Spiegelberg hangt, schleicht sich Spiegelberg ganz sachte aus den Schlingen (70).

I had to rub a strong dose of tobacco in my nose when I walked by the gallows and saw Pseudo-Spiegelberg exhibited in all his glory--and while Spiegelberg was hanging, Spiegelberg slipped quietly out of the noose.

In the last line Spiegelberg and Pseudo-Spiegelberg have merged even as the one hangs and the other gets away. The law makes no distinction between the original and the copy and neither does the original himself. Another robber, Roller, dies twice—once in the reports of the execution he narrowly escaped after Karl had offered to switch places with him and once apparently for real. Karl meets a parallel

figure in the young Kosinsky, who comes to join the robber band. His extended tale of woe seems to be a blow-by-blow recreation of many of the injustices done to Karl. Kosinsky's girlfriend is named Amalia; Graf von Brand also has an Amalia, as he explains to Karl's Amalia, as she continues to fail to recognize him, though she feels stirrings of love that seem to contradict her loyalty to Karl. Karl's return to the manor under disguise is not so exceptional, considering traditions of dramatic plotting, but the creation of Kosinsky is excessive with regard to the play's requirements (we have more than enough robbers and accomplices). He is another Karl with another Amalia and another challenge to the unique and distinct. Even the forms that rise from Franz's muck and differentiate themselves from it are not entirely individuals. They stick to one another and identity is generally fluid.

Instead of distinct and fully articulated figures, we have crowds and *Doppelgänger* and identity transitions via disguise, all of this clouding the depiction of self. The borders of self fray visibly and ultimately it is only Franz who emerges as a somewhat distinct individual—thanks largely to the Shakespearean asides that lend him some depth. It is highly ironic that the only figure to articulate a unified and stable personality is the abjected villain who questions the meaning of life and distinction. Franz may dissemble to the other figures but he is someone we know from his asides and overheard

monologues. Yet it is Franz who takes us into the muck with his questioning.

The liquidity or viscosity of the muck and the cyclical process of human history do recall or “precall” Romantic motifs of the journey and return or even Hegel’s process of spirit becoming conscious of itself. Something detaches or alienates from the primal undifferentiated mass, rises up and returns. The process is similar but with one important difference—Franz’s cycle is value-neutral, beyond or prior to value; the return is not an enhanced or elevated arrival at the point of departure but an indifferent process of decomposition that will lead to recomposition (or composition). The Romantic journey on the other hand, tends to follow the Christian story of salvation, with a significant improvement or gain in wisdom and grace accompanying the absence from starting point. Just as ejection from paradise engenders the life of effort and compliance that will lead back to a consciously attained paradise, the returning soul or pilgrim has grown through journeying and often brings the benefits of that journey back to those who remained at home. The Romantic return involves an upward movement, a gain. Similarly, the dialectical movement of history proceeds through a series of *Aufhebungen*[], wherein the opposed terms are canceled and preserved, but most importantly lifted up. Franz’s *Morast* [] does not ennoble; it merely engulfs, assimilates, and forms again. It denies distinction and elevation through effort, but it

does establish a cycle of returns, a motion that the Romantics will re-cycle away from senseless repetition toward an uplifting version of the journey.⁹

Die Räuber's repeated gesture of de-differentiation of the apparently distinct that is encapsulated in the universality of Franz's undifferentiated muck is a dark predecessor to much of the poetic and philosophical speculation of early German Romanticism. It is the fruit of a very young man's stolen evenings in the *Karlsschule's* infirmary where he had to hide his work from attendants who expected him to be studying. Even without any biographical knowledge, one can sense inexperience, excess ambition and hasty composition in the play, and thus much of that which undermines the play's presentation of exchange and dualism has been dismissed as flaws and inconsistencies. Having established a conceptual framework in his play in the contrasting and dualistic, Schiller is understood to have erred where his play moves away from these clear binary oppositions. Even Franz's rather well-developed muck-thinking can be dismissed as the villain's benightedness in light of the youthful bombast that conveys it.

Is young Schiller a mixed-up binarist who could not sustain his dualisms as he later would fail to fully sustain the categories of his aesthetics and moral-philosophical work? Or is he a brave doubter who raises problems in order to reflect back on their artificial/contrived

ascendance from a vital pre-unity? Dare one say: both? *Die Räuber* has its slapdash aspects and a fair measure of overwrought plotting and dialogue but it presents a serious agenda for the transition from its clearly defined terms of exchange to a mode of inclusive merger that itself includes both the optimism of a border-busting Joy and the despair of meaning or any kind of definition. “Alle Menschen werden Brüder.[]” They may join together in universal brotherhood, but let us not forget what it means to be brothers in *Die Räuber*.

So I will conclude with the observation that Schiller’s *Die Räuber* has a number of affinities with German Romanticism. Already in 1782, he has considered and critiqued some of the central concerns of the German Romantic movement in this three-ring circus of a play that has it both ways and more. *Die Räuber*, for all its clumsiness, immaturity, and lack of a stable philosophical or ideological center, weakens the hold of exchange, dualism, and opposition as the conceptual foundation of the dramatic transaction and, in its reach for the past of Sturm und Drang, pre-figures the concerns of Romantic poets. It is both ahead of and behind its time, a perfect piece of retro-proto Romanticism.

¹ Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* also bears the mark of Schiller's influence inasmuch as the monster resembles the protagonist, Christian Wolff, of Schiller's 1786 tale, *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre*. For a very thorough study of the connection, see Conger. Regarding the differences between German and European Romanticism, see Bohm 35-36 for a succinct summary.

² Coleridge is the important exception to this rule. He read *Die Räuber* in 1794 and was so excited by it that he wrote a laudatory sonnet, "To the Author of the Robbers," and, in a letter to Southey, called him a "Convulsor of the Heart" (Thomas 140). Coleridge's *Remorse* attests to the influence of Schiller's play: Sophie Thomas deems it "a rewriting, indeed a reconceiving of Schiller's last two acts" (141).

³ See Hammermeister for a good account of Schiller's difficulties with Kant's *division* of na of nature and freedom (42-56); also especially the first two chapters of Beiser 2005; also Beiser 2003, 117-19 for affinities with Friedrich Schlegel.

⁴ There are four substantial versions of *Die Räuber* and the 1781 "Schauspiel" version, meant more for readers than spectators, is generally considered the standard. See von Stransky-Stranka-Greifenfels for a detailed summary of *Räuber* philology. He concludes that it is a "classical" play, though "anchored in the Baroque" (113).

⁵ There are lists of characteristics such as irony, organicism, dialectics, expansion, lyrical intensity, completion, and melancholy (Nemoianu 161), to which one can add continuation, nature worship, supernaturalism, Roman Catholicism, etc.

⁶ Richard Gray's take on the play is an interesting and well-developed example of a dualistic reading as he portrays the brothers as representatives of "competing semiologies" (110), Karl representing the "iconic" semiotic promoting the adequacy of signifier as a representation of its referent and Franz as the proponent of a "modern" discourse of arbitrary signs (111).

⁷ The play was also staged many times in the United States in the nineteenth century and popular, handsome actor, John Wilkes Booth, played the role of Karl to much acclaim two years before he shot Lincoln. There have been attempts to connect the experience of playing the freedom-loving Karl with his attack on the president. rarenewspapers.com notes the irony of a letter of Lincoln's published in the *Washington Daily Intelligencer* of 4 November 1863 alongside an announcement of Booth's appearance that evening in Ford's Theater as Karl: <http://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/588317?acl=806584566&imagelist=0>

⁸ Paul de Man's famous example of aporetic writing from Yeats is cited by Dennis McCort in the latter's fine book, *Going Beyond the Pairs*. McCort writes: [T]he last line of the poem, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?", is torn between contradictory meanings: the one, rhetorical, implies a unity of dancer and dance and, by extension, a transcendental cosmic unity (the "Romantic" reading); the other, literal, demands, perhaps with great urgency, a way to tell them apart."(11).

⁹ Stephanie Hammer compares the repetition in the play to the repeated killing of Abel by Cain as depicted by Neil Gaiman in his *Sandman* series in her extraordinary "Schiller, Time and Again" (155ff).

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