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THE CONFLICTED ARTIST: AN ANALYSIS OF THE AESTHETICS OF GERMAN
IDEALISM IN E.T.A. HOFFMANN'S ARTIST

by

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Dedication

Dedicated to Lauren, my twin sister and lifelong friend. You have always provoked, supported, and enriched my intellectual and artistic pursuits. Thank you for inspiring me to strive towards an Ideal, no matter how distant and impossible it may be.

Abstract

This thesis will analyze the characteristics of the artist as an individual who attempts to attain an aesthetic Ideal in which he believes he will find fulfillment. In the works of E.T.A. Hoffmann, most notably *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* and *Rat Krespel*, the artists René Cardillac and Rat Krespel not only fall short of this ideal, but also limit themselves to the point that they cannot advance further without causing destruction in their own lives. The failure of these artists is not due to their imperfections, but rather to their strict adherence to German Idealist principles, which limit the artist in the manner by which he strives toward the Ideal. Such limitations are incompatible with the societies in which these artists live, resulting in the physical or metaphorical death of the artist. The arguments in this thesis intend to reveal the Romantic artist's condition as one of continuous striving toward an aesthetic Ideal with a conscious awareness that the Ideal can never be attained, thereby allowing the artist to progress in his journey in spite of conflict and error. This thesis aims to prove that the Romantic concept of *Unendlichkeit*, or the eternal acquisition of truth, should be the artist's goal. If the artist can accept *Unendlichkeit* as the aim of his artistic pursuits, then he will be able to find true fulfillment in the continuous change and progression of his condition.

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Introduction

„Nicht die Kunst und die Werke machen den Künstler, sondern der Sinn und die Begeisterung und der Trieb“ (Schlegel, „Lyceums-Fragmente“ 154). These words from Friedrich Schlegel’s *Lyceums-Fragmente* characterize the artist not purely by the art that he produces, but rather by the internal drive that results in the production of a work of art. Schlegel’s sentiment reflects the interest that German Romanticism took in the role of the artist within society. While the artist is a person who functions within society, he is led by his ideals, which do not necessarily align with society’s standards. This conflict between the artist and society is a theme that is often represented in the works of German Romanticism.

German Romanticism has its philosophical roots in German Idealism. German Idealism is the term used to describe the school of thought expressed primarily by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel based on their interpretations of Kant’s aesthetic and metaphysical principles in the 1790s. The term *aesthetics* comes from Greek, meaning “pertaining to the senses.” Kant focused on the concept of the beautiful as something that brings objective pleasure. This relationship to the beautiful, however, is only fused with the finite condition. The German Idealists, on the other hand, saw aesthetics as the infinite represented in finite form. Fichte attempted to fuse nature with consciousness into an “Absolute I” so that being would be a harmonization of subjective and objective parts (Bowie, *German Philosophy* 72). Fichte’s “Absolute I” consists of an I and a not-I, a conscious and objective world, respectively. Schelling develops Fichte’s ideas further

by maintaining that nature is not completely objective in that it is not in the absolute control of the subjective being. The subjectivity of nature allows the thinking subject to eventually come to a point of self-awareness in which it knows itself and can reflect back on its progression toward self-consciousness. Recounting the progression toward self-consciousness will result in the transcendental subject (Bowie, *German Philosophy* 75-76). Hegel explained self-consciousness as a state of being in which the subject becomes aware through its difference to the other (Bowie, *German Philosophy* 86). The Absolute is considered to be the result of the thinking subject's grasp of the truth that arises from his unity within himself (Bowie, *German Philosophy* 83). German Idealism ultimately views the Absolute as an ideal final destination by which all barriers between the subject and its other have been surpassed by the subject's efforts to understand itself and its other and to find harmony between the parts, allowing the subject to discover truth in its being.

German Romanticism was a philosophical, literary, and artistic movement that attempted to “combine within one critical gesture the dualism of the finite and the infinite” (Schulte-Sasse 158). German Romanticism was initiated by a group of friends who were based in Berlin and Jena between 1796 to about 1800. They included the brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, as well as authors Wilhelm Wackenroder, Ludwig Tieck, Novalis, and Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (Frank 27). Most of the early German Romantics were readers of Kant, and they were among the first thinkers to seriously consider the place of history and politics within philosophy.

While German Romanticism has its foundation in German Idealism, it also made significant departures from Idealism. Like the Idealists, the Romantics acknowledged that art enabled the individual to contemplate his own self and his world in relation to an

other. The Romantics began to deviate from German Idealism by denying the authority of the Absolute I, which meant that anything done for the sake of an infinite purpose would inevitably remain incomplete. While the Idealists focused on the goal of transcendence, the Romantics focused more on the manner by which one strives toward transcendence. Transcendence is the goal of a striving subject, but the striving subject is a knowing subject, an empirical “I” that is conscious of its own surroundings. As a result, it is characterized by its split or lack of unity, rendering its incompleteness as its inherent condition. One of the Romantic thinkers, Friedrich Schlegel, understood aesthetics to be a creative impulse that consisted of combinatory experimentation. Combinatory experimentation is simply a creative mixing of various fields of knowledge, a concept that becomes a driving force in striving toward absolute knowledge. This methodology as the path toward absolute knowledge signifies the artist to be a pursuer of a higher, ideal truth. While the truth itself is a noble ideal, the artist must take care to focus on the process of striving rather than the point at which he will attain the state in which he will reach absolute knowledge. Since striving is a process, there are activities associated with that process. The German Romantics saw artistic representation as an integral part of the progression toward truth, making the artist, whether he is a visual, musical, or literary artist, to be the quintessential striving subject.

Friedrich Schlegel expresses the view „Wo die Philosophie aufhört, muß die Poesie anfangen“ (Schlegel, „Athenäums-Fragmente“ 261). These words emphasize the Romantic principle of art as the primary vehicle by which a person can progress as a self-knowing being. With this standard as the foundation of German Romanticism, it is no surprise that the era produced artists with a distinct consciousness of their ideals as

artists, but also with an awareness of their own limitations. One such artist was a man from Prussia named Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann. Hoffmann was born in the year 1776 in the town of Königsberg. Throughout the course of his life he actively engaged in various arts, including music, drawing, and writing. In his youth, Hoffmann studied and worked in the legal profession. This was followed by a period in which he was a free artist working as a composer, a director for a theater, and a set painter. Once he achieved recognition for his operatic and other musical contributions, he developed his literary career with stories that often had fantastical elements that seemed to surpass the limits of reality. These stories began to appear in print from 1814 until his death in 1822, around the time that German Idealism and the Romantic response to it were already well under way.

Hoffmann's basic biographical information indicates the conflicted condition of a man who had to deal with the opposing realities of his two vocations, the legal profession and art. Hoffmann's education and first chosen career suggest that he tried to be a rational, responsible citizen who must financially support himself. His artistic side, on the other hand, implies a love for uncertainty and chaos to the point that his writings reflect a partial break from the realities of everyday life. Hoffmann also placed emphasis on the artist as a character in many of his stories. Hoffmann's artists are men who are autonomous individuals, possess a dual character, and are conflicted in their impulses in relation to the societies in which they live. For this reason, they are outsiders who have a perception of truth that differs from that of society. Considering that Hoffmann had exposure to Kant, German Idealism, and German Romanticism during his formative

years, it is not surprising that Hoffmann chose to focus on the artist as an idealistic being whose expectations of realizing the Absolute have tragic consequences.

The purpose of this thesis is to prove how Hoffmann's portrayal of the striving artist with uncompromising Idealist goals ultimately fails under German Romanticism, and how this failure advocates the artist as a figure who must embrace his ideals as well as his flaws. The artist figures portrayed in the novellas *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* (1819) and *Rat Krespel* (1818) both strive toward the Absolute through their art, but make the error of allowing the extreme needs of their idealist views of art to get in the way of the reality of their finite human condition, thereby disrupting the balance that German Idealism claims must be maintained within the individual in order to achieve a state of fulfillment. As a result, disaster occurs.

In the first chapter, I will discuss Hoffmann's artist René Cardillac from the novella *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*. Cardillac is an artist who strives toward an idealistic end in which he achieves totality by becoming the sole possessor of his works of art. A goldsmith by profession, his main problem is that the art he creates is by commission, and he is obligated to allow his customers to walk away with his pieces of jewelry since he must make a living from his art. Unable to cope with the idea that another person will be in possession of one of his creations, Cardillac believes he is driven to the act of murder in order to retrieve his art from its owners and to make himself whole once more. Possessing a double-nature which compels him to kill while simultaneously living out his life as a virtuous citizen, Cardillac believes that his behavior is ruled by an evil star and that he has no control over his destructive impulses. By refusing to acknowledge control over his actions, Cardillac does not see his predicament as ironic, and is therefore unable

to maintain a balance between his creative and his destructive drives. Without this balance, the destructive drive overpowers Cardillac's conflicted condition, resulting in his death. Cardillac's pursuit of totality and rejection of irony in his artistic life, both Idealist aims, ultimately result in his destruction.

The second chapter will focus on the titular character from *Rat Krespel*. Krespel, a man who is legal counselor by profession and a violinist and violin builder by hobby, appears to be a man of opposing natures. He is grounded in reason, but also possesses a creative side. Krespel's creative nature inspires him to incorporate art into his everyday life. His art is made most clearly manifest in the violins he builds from deconstructed pieces of old violins. Like Cardillac, Krespel creates objects that are not usually considered to be works of art. Cardillac's personal attachment to his jewelry and Krespel's to his violins allow both of their creations to rise to the level of art. This fact implies that the artist lives through his creations, while individuals who do not are craftsmen at best. Krespel's artistic activity acts as a way for him to suppress the malicious side of his nature, a side which is revealed in his treatment of his wife when she interrupts his attempts to creatively transcend his present situation. Later in life, Krespel finally gets glimpse of the Absolute, but attempts to restrain it. When it cannot be restrained, Krespel is forced to accept the Absolute in the form of a transcendental experience. Krespel's true failure results from his denial of the Other in art, which disrupts the balance he is supposed to maintain between the finite and the infinite. This causes Krespel to view a transcendental experience as an end-all for himself. By believing that he has reached the end point in all of his artistic striving, Krespel falls into a state of apathy in which he feels no need to discover truth via the creation of new

violins. In a way, he is resigning himself to a living death and denying the possibility of progressing further.

In addition to the aforementioned Hoffmann novellas, other sources that will aid in the discussion of this topic include many of the philosophical works of the German Idealist and German Romantic eras. Hegel's *Ästhetik* is a collective work of Hegel's academic lectures in Heidelberg in 1818 and Berlin from 1820-1821, 1823, 1826 and 1828-1829. His 1821 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* will also be consulted for additional principles on the concept of freedom within the finite world. Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, published in 1800, will be used to describe transcendence from an Idealist perspective. Since German Idealism attempts to explain Kant's philosophy in terms of aesthetics within both the finite and infinite states of being, Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* will only be minimally discussed for basic aesthetic principles rather than a complete view on Kant's philosophy in relation to the artist. Friedrich Schiller's 1795 *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen: in einer Reihe von Briefen* is one of the first responses to Kant and it subsequently applies the Kantian principles of aesthetics to the human condition.

Works written on the philosophy and literature of German Romanticism include Manfred Frank's *The Philosophical Foundation of Early German Romanticism*, which discusses the development of German Romanticism in relation to Kantian philosophy and German Idealism, with a focus on Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel's contributions. Andrew Bowie's *An Introduction to German Philosophy* discusses German Idealism with a focus on Fichte's, Schelling's, and Hegel's interpretations of Kantian philosophy. Bowie's work additionally attempts to draw conclusions concerning the manner in which

early German Romanticism made departures from German Idealism, and how the concept of the Absolute was eventually acknowledged as a nullification of what is possible in the finite world. Jochen Schulte-Sasse's *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings* gives a summary of the theories of various Romantic philosophers in relation to how they interpreted the Idealists and one another.

Through the analysis of Hoffmann's novellas within the context of the goals of German Idealism versus the more realistic aims of German Romanticism, I hope to bring the reader to an understanding of Hoffmann's perspective on the artist's condition. The artist is a conflicted person with pure goals and the belief that the application of his ideals to his condition in reality will make him capable of achieving his goals. While we idealistically wish to believe that noble pursuits are enough to get us through the paradoxes of our being, Hoffmann uses his artists to show that an idealistic end is not possible. He instead allows his idealistic artists to die, either physically or symbolically, when they believe that they have reached the destination of all of their striving. They die because they fail their true goal, that is, to never cease in striving.

Chapter 1: *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*

Hoffmann's novella, *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, explores the condition of the Romantic artist who is striving for an idealistic end through acts of murder, which eventually culminate in his own destruction. The artist in question is René Cardillac, a renowned Parisian jeweler during the reign of Louis XIV. In spite of his renown as a goldsmith with extraordinary talent, Cardillac is an outsider in a society that has superficial appreciation for art. Hoffmann employs the frivolities of the court of the Sun King to set Cardillac apart from the other artists in this fictional version of Paris. The depiction of the other Parisian artists is generally negative; they are not artists who are dedicated to an ideal in art, but rather producers of witty nothings that are intended to amuse the king. This point is made clear in the poetical petition that is sent to the king to appeal to him to give a new crime tribunal greater powers to track down and punish those responsible for the knife murders in the streets of Paris. The petition is amusing, but is described in the following to lack substance beyond that of mere entertainment:

So ernst die Sache auch war, so fehlte es diesem Gedicht doch nicht, vorzüglich in der Schleichwege zur Geliebten sich ängstigen müssten, wie die Angst schon alle Liebeslust, jedes schöne Abenteuer der Galanterie im Aufkeimen töte, an geistreich-witzigen Wendungen. Kam nun noch hinzu, dass beim Schluss alles in einen hochtrabenden Panegyrikus auf Ludwig den XIV. ausging so konnte es nicht fehlen, dass der König das Gedicht mit sichtlichen Wohlgefallen durchlas. (660)

The king had previously refused the design to create a new tribunal out of the fear that the current tribunal was already abusing the power it held. The petition that the artists create for the king is a work of art that is produced with the purpose of pleasing the

king by superficial means to change his mind on the matter. While the request of the artists is reasonable, the excessive exultation of the king clearly has the intent of stroking his ego to prompt him into action rather than adopting an elevated aesthetic quality that would move him on a deeper level. The king, however, appears to be aware of the superficial methods of these courtly artists to the degree that he consults his mistress, the Marquise de Maintenon, on the poem. Her answer, however, proves to be unsatisfactory to the king, who claims that „Die Marquise mag nun einmal von den Galanterien unserer verliebten Herren nichts wissen, und weicht mir aus auf Wegen, die nichts weniger als verboten sind“ (661). Instead of influencing the king in an aesthetic manner that would allow him to act with conviction, whether that conviction is to increase the power of the police or to leave the situation as it currently is, the Marquise and the artists appeal to the king in words that they feel will please the king enough to achieve their personal goals. The art described here violates the Romantic concept of art for art's sake. This concept, defined by Kant as „Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck“ (Kant 143), emphasizes aesthetic representation as free, disinterested, and contemplative. The artists who make the petition do so with a direct aim that influences the manner in which they deliver their artistic creation, depriving it of the necessary aesthetic authenticity that would allow the king's decision to be objectively determined. Scuderi, a poetess, counters this poetical petition with lines of verse that are not meant to flatter the king, but are meant to artistically elevate the ideal of the chivalric lover in the face of inevitable danger. She claims that lovers who are not willing to risk danger for the sake of love are not worthy of love. In reaction to these lines, the king is described as „ganz erstaunt über den ritterlichen Geist dieser wenigen Worte, die das ganze Gedicht mit seinen ellenlangen Tiraden zu Boden

schlugen“ (661). The king’s admiration of Scuderi’s words shows her art, which represents an absolute in that it is spontaneous and unafraid of censure from its boldness, stands in stark contrast to that of the artists who only tailor their art to a form that serves the shallow intent of pleasing the king.

Cardillac establishes his role as a true artist by his reaction to the lines that Scuderi composes for the king. It is upon hearing of these lines that Cardillac goes home, celebrates, and endeavors to create his finest piece of work for Scuderi, whom he acknowledges to be a true artist of the same caliber as himself. Cardillac has the jewelry sent to Scuderi out of pure admiration and respect for her as an idealized artist. Cardillac makes this point clear when he explains to Scuderi how he came about making the piece, stating, „Bloß der schönen Arbeit willen suchte ich meine besten Steine zusammen, und arbeitete aus Freude daran fleißiger und sorgfältiger als jemals... ich [dachte] während der Arbeit an Euch“ (668). The first part of this explanation shows how Cardillac created one of his best works simply for the sake of creating a beautiful piece of art. This act is truly „Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck“ since Cardillac gains nothing by impressing Scuderi. This view is strengthened by the fact that he originally had the jewelry sent to her anonymously. It is out of appreciation for Scuderi’s pure character as an artist that moves Cardillac to create the work and give it to her in spite of his usual reluctance to let go of any of his work.

Cardillac is also an artist with a two-sided character that is incompatible with the society in which he belongs. This duality of character means that Cardillac struggles against two extremes; that of the virtuous citizen and that of the murdering demon. Even before the reader is introduced to the nature of Cardillac’s clandestine activities, there is

evidence of his double-nature in the most basic description of the jeweler: „Wäre Cardillac nicht in ganz Paris als der rechtlichste Ehrenmann, uneigennützig, offen, ohne Hinterhalt, stets zu helfen bereit, bekannt gewesen, sein ganz besonderer Blick aus kleinen, tiefliegenden, grün funkelnden Augen hätten ihn in den Verdacht heimlicher Tücke und Bosheit bringen können“ (664). From this description, Cardillac comes across as a man who preserves an external appearance of playing the role of the good citizen; he is revered by society as a decent man with a family and an honorable profession in which he is a master. If not for his reputation, a casual observer might have the initial impression that Cardillac has diabolical leanings. Even Cardillac himself, when confronted by his obsession with the jewelry he makes and the murderous consequences of this obsession, struggles to find a middle ground between the two extremes. Every commission he accepts is done so with „brennender Begierde“ (665), but once the work is completed, „war es kaum möglich, die fertige Arbeit von ihm zu erhalten“ (665). Cardillac’s struggle has reached a point that he refuses commissions to people, a refusal that is only reversed once he takes a look at the jewels and his artistic mind envisions the beautiful work of art that could be created from them. It is also possible that Cardillac’s place in a society that requires a completed product in exchange for money obliges him to submit to his customers and let them walk away with the creations that he views as rightfully belonging to him. This struggle between the reality of a man who dwells in a society that does not understand his attachment to his works of art, and the ideal of the artist who has the irresistible drive to make a beautiful work of art for the sake of making it characterizes Cardillac as the Romantic artist who is striving for an Ideal in art while dwelling in the finite reality of a society overrun by shallow artists.

1.1 TOTALITY OF BEING

The German Idealist thinker Hegel views the truth as a concept which can be represented in individuals as a totality that marks man in his concrete spirituality and its subjectivity. This means that the individual consists of various aspects of character that must function as a unified whole. Additionally, it is in ideal artistic representation that character is able to combine these aspects. Hegel explains that once the individual combines the parts of his character with his subjectivity, he will be a determinate figure, meaning that he will be able to develop according to essential traits that master the emotions via rationality and free will. Once the individual knows himself, he can reach a unity that has the potential to achieve an infinite condition, as described by the observation „Ist der Mensch nicht in dieser Weise *eins* in sich, so fallen die verschiedenen Seiten der Mannigfaltigkeit sinnlos und gedankenlos auseinander. Mit sich in Einheit zu sein, macht in der Kunst gerade das Unendliche und Göttliche der Individualität aus“ (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 236-37). This totality is meant to come from different parts, but not from oppositions. Hegel admits that the focus on individual parts while elevating the concept of the unity appears to be a contradiction, but he argues that „die ideelle Einheit ist nicht, nur *nicht* das sinnliche Außereinander, in welchem jede Besonderheit ein selbstständiges Bestehen und abgeschlossene Eigentümlichkeit hat, sondern sie ist das direkt Entgegengesetzte solcher äußerlichen Realität“ (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 125). In this way, the whole should be seen as a living organism with both external and internal functions. The importance of individual parts should never be seen as separate from the whole, but rather an essential function of the whole that cannot be maintained without its place in the whole. Hegel elaborates this point further with a brief comparison

of the united totality of the individual, described by Hegel to be the soul itself, with organic members of the living body. While the members of the body have their own individuality in the sense that they have functions that are unique to their features, they cannot subsist in their function alone, as described in the following:

Der Lebensprozeß umfaßt die gedoppelte Tätigkeit: einerseits stets die realen Unterschiede aller Glieder und Bestimmtheiten des Organismus zur sinnlichen Existenz zu bringen, andererseits aber, wenn sie in selbstständiger Besonderung erstarren und gegeneinander zu festen Unterschieden sich abschließen wollen, an ihnen ihre allgemeine Idealität, welche ihre Belebung ist, geltend zu machen... Durch diese Einheit der gedoppelten Tätigkeit sind alle Glieder des Organismus stets erhalten und stets die Idealität ihrer Belebung zurückgenommen. Die Glieder zeigen diese Idealität denn auch sogleich darin, dass ihnen ihre belebte Einheit nicht gleichgültig, sondern im Gegenteil der Substanz ist, in welcher und durch welche sie allein ihre besondere Individualität bewahren können. (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 125-26)

Hegel further illustrates the importance of the united whole over the separate parts by pointing out how a part that is completely separated from the whole will ultimately lose its function within the unity, as noted by the rationale „Die Hand, z. B., abgehauene, verliert ihr selbstständiges Bestehen; sie bleibt nicht, wie sie im Organismus war, ihre Regsamkeit, Bewegung, Gestalt, Farbe usf. verändert sich; ja, sie geht in Fäulnis über und ihre ganze Existenz löst sich auf. Bestehen hat sie nur als Glied des Organismus, Realität nur als stets in die ideelle Einheit zurückgenommen“ (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 126). In this sense, Hegel views the united whole as uncompromising ideal. This means that anything that could be cast off from the whole would make the whole incomplete since Hegel’s whole consists of „Glieder“ that are fused to the host and not simply of „Teile“ that could be collected and discarded at will without leaving the host broken both internally and externally. The cast off parts will die and become useless to the individual. This aspect of totality especially applies to art since the soul is made manifest in a work

of art, and the work of art helps the spirit turn back into its inner self. This form of objective idealism aids the artist in arriving at a state of self-consciousness that is also idealized.

In *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, René Cardillac is an artist who is consumed with totality through the possession of his works of art. As an artist, Cardillac labors endlessly at his works of art until they have reached his idea of perfection. Once he has achieved this state, he sees the jewelry as more meaningful to him than they could ever be to the customers who have requested the jewelry in the first place. The significance that each piece of jewelry has for Cardillac is reflected in the relentless effort to mold it into perfection once he has obtained the materials for the work from his customers:

Dann ließ ihm das Werk keine Ruhe, Tag und Nacht hörte man ihn in seiner Werkstatt hämmern und oft, war die Arbeit beinahe vollendet, missfiel ihm plötzlich die Form, er zweifelte an der Zierlichkeit irgendeiner Fassung der Juwelen, irgendeines kleinen Häkchens - Anlass genug, die ganze Arbeit wieder in den Schmelztiegel zu werfen und von neuen anzufangen. So wurde jede Arbeit ein reines, unübertreffliches Meisterwerk, das den Besteller in Erstaunen setzte. (665)

Cardillac does not only work at perfecting a work of art, but also has the desire to permanently keep each piece of jewelry he makes. Every time a customer returns to him to collect a piece of jewelry that he ordered from Cardillac, the jeweler will only let go of the piece after entreaties and protestations will not abate the customer in his insistence on collecting the piece. Cardillac's ready acceptance of commissions to work on a piece of jewelry upon seeing the jewels, versus his refusal to give up the jewelry when he has labored upon it and finished it, makes it clear that something has changed in Cardillac's relationship to the jewels. Somewhere in the process of converting those materials to works of art in the form of beautiful jewelry, Cardillac has developed an attachment to the jewels, almost as if they are parts of his body. This claim may seem outrageous to the

average observer, but Cardillac's assistant, Olivier, has been exposed to the depth of Cardillac's drive and has been told by the master craftsman what the jewelry means to him, which is explained in the following excerpt of Cardillac's story within Olivier's narrative:

Sowie [Cardillac] ein Geschmeide gefertigt und abgeliefert, fiel [Cardillac] in eine Unruhe, in eine Trostlosigkeit, die [ihm] Schlaf, Gesundheit - Lebensmut raubte. - Wie ein Gespenst stand Tag und Nacht die Person, für die [Cardillac] gearbeitet, [ihm] vor Augen, geschmückt mit [Cardillacs] Geschmeide, und eine Stimme raunte [ihm] in die Ohren: ‚Es ist ja dein - es ist ja dein - nimm es doch - was sollen die Diamanten dem Toten!‘ (692-93)

Cardillac's reaction to the idea that another person will own a piece of work that he sees as belonging to him is severe; he appears to deteriorate physically and mentally. It is as if a "member" of his body has been cut off, leaving him as a lesser being than he was before. As the last part of the quote emphasizes, Cardillac's insistence that his jewelry should belong to no one other than him leads him to drastic measures to maintain a sense of totality: he murders his customers in the dark of the night and steals back his jewelry. Cardillac sees his act of murder as the only means to retain his sense of totality. Proof that he feels whole once again upon committing the murder and repossessing the jewelry is evident from his remark to Olivier „[Den Mord] getan fühlte ich eine Ruhe, eine Zufriedenheit in meiner Seele, wie sonst niemals. Das Gespenst war verschwunden, die Stimme des Satans schwieg“ (694). This initial positive reaction to an act that would be expected to fill the average person with horror implies that Cardillac has just as much to lose by letting his customers walk away with his works of art than he does by having his own hand cut off.

From the perspective of German Idealism, Cardillac's pursuit for totality is completely justified. Cardillac is attempting to reach some type of Absolute through art

and murders to possess that art indefinitely. As an autonomous artist, Cardillac understands the value of his own work, and it can even be argued that Cardillac's idea of art is unselfish. He sees his works as pure pieces that hold an irreplaceable aesthetic value. Unlike the idea of the „Mordband“ that the Parisians think are responsible for the murder and theft jewelry from Cardillac's customers, Cardillac is not looking to obtain material wealth. Instead, Cardillac's desire to obtain the jewelry is for himself alone. He is not looking to be rich nor is he looking to use the jewelry in any manner other than to keep his members attached to his person. Without these members, he does not consider himself to be a whole person, and this seems to be preventing him from reaching a satisfactory destination in his life. Cardillac's motives are in stark contrast to the band of poisoners that are led by Sainte Croix and the Marquise de Brinvillier, who have no real aim in their efforts to poison others since they do it „Ohne weiterem Zweck, aus reiner Lust... haben oft Giftmörder Personen gemordet, deren Leben oder Tod ihnen völlig gleich sein konnte“ (654) Cardillac is not killing for the sake of killing, but rather to preserve his aesthetic Self within the paradigm of his image of the Ideal.

Nevertheless, Cardillac's path to totality via murder has destructive consequences. The jeweler goes out one night in pursuit of one of his customers with the intent to repeat his pattern of killing in order to take back one of his “members.” Instead of the usual success that Cardillac has enjoyed, he becomes the victim of his own dagger when his intended victim turns on him in self-defense. In this way, Cardillac is suddenly cut off from the realization of an ideal state since he is dead, and the aftermath of his death results in his secrets being discovered and the stolen pieces of jewelry that he so painstakingly recovered to be returned to their intended owners or to be donated to a

church. Even Cardillac's wish that his jewelry be destroyed after his death is not honored, allowing his body to be desecrated as its members are scattered throughout the city to be put to use by others rather than procuring a suitable resting place away from the aims of those unworthy people who did not devote themselves to the works of art that he valued.

Cardillac's role as an artist who appears to be in pursuit of totality to such an extreme that his methods work against him in a destructive manner appears to be a criticism of Idealism in art. While it is important that an artist is bound to his work to the point that he strives toward fulfillment and perfection in artistic representation, fusing his existence with his art has destructive consequences. Not only does Cardillac's fusion with his art cause him to view the lives of others as necessary sacrifices in the pursuit of his own sense of totality, but he also loses at his own game by being killed by the same method through which he aspires to reach that end goal of totality. In *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* the point of totality is never truly achieved since Cardillac moves on after every killing with yet another cycle of creation, a feeling of emptiness from the knowledge that his creation cannot indefinitely belong to him, followed by the act of murder in order to come back to a sense of totality. At the same time, it is clear that Cardillac's idea of totality is somewhat skewed: he is apparently never whole since he is eager to create yet again rather than to revel in a sense of totality that would take away the need to create. Without this need, Cardillac would be able to claim himself completely whole. Romanticism, on the other hand, supports the idea that totality is only a concept and not an actualization, as reflected in Friedrich Schlegel's observation that the individual can never exist as a totality, but rather only envisions totality to the degree that the individual is perpetually incomplete (Frank 189). Hoffmann's representation of Cardillac proves

that the striving artist, in spite of claims that he has reached a sense of totality through creation and the maintenance of the concept of the whole, is in reality not whole. The pursuit of the whole to such extremes, however, can only have destructive consequences since it is clear that the artist's idealism is incompatible with reality. For this reason, even the prospect of the artist achieving totality of character does not provide a satisfying conclusion to Cardillac's acts of murder.

1.2 REJECTION OF IRONY

Hegel viewed irony as a concept that had no place in aesthetics since irony is the result of the ego transforming an objective concept into subjective matter. Hegel defines irony as an „unendliche absoluter Negativität“ (*Ästhetik I* 76). This means that irony ceases at the end of the system because all of the negatives in the system eventually lead to the positive recognition that one has exhausted negativity. In this way, negativity is the path to truth. According to Hegel, irony cannot be a component of the striving individual since irony is the nullification of anything of worth to the individual's character.

In a manner reminiscent of Hegel, Cardillac displays a rejection of the concept of irony in his actions with the concept of his „böser Stern“. Cardillac's „angeborener Trieb“ (692), which he believes to be the force that has determined his artistic drive and his fate, pushes Cardillac to commit seemingly contradictory acts without irony. On the one hand, Cardillac is driven to create beautiful pieces of jewelry and yet, on the other hand, he is seemingly compelled to destroy the lives of their rightful owners. Cardillac does not speak about contradictions, but of an inborn need to be near his art. Cardillac tells Olivier the story of his own mother's pregnancy. In the first month of the pregnancy, she danced with a former lover of hers who was wearing a beautiful diamond necklace.

The lover died as the mother of Cardillac had reached for the necklace, leaving her in a state of agitation that made her ill to the point that her family feared for the life of the unborn child. Cardillac attaches much personal significance to the story, and claims that he had been directly affected by the event when he was in the womb: „Aber die Schrecken jenes fürchterlichen Augenblicks hatten mich getroffen. Mein böser Stern war aufgegangen und hatte den Funken hinabgeschossen, der in mir eine der seltsamsten und verderblichsten Leidenschaften entzündet“ (692). Cardillac believes that his obsession with jewelry is related to the event. Having only been in the womb and therefore unable to resist the shock he received from the event, Cardillac sees himself as a victim of fate with no control over his drive. Cardillac’s conviction that his actions are ruled by fate reach an extreme so intense that even the reader can question to what extent Cardillac is responsible for his actions. Without control, there is no irony. In this way, Hegel’s principle of irony is fulfilled in that a series of negations lead to a single positive at the end of the system. The acts of murder, which are typically seen as subjective, are now objective since „kein Widerstand ist möglich“ (691). Cardillac maintains this objectivity with the words „Es ist mir dann sogar, als ob das, was der böse Stern begonnen durch mich, meiner unsterblichen Seele, die daran keinen Teil hat, zugerechnet werden könne“ (696). With this logic, Cardillac completely rejects the idea that he is responsible for his actions, thereby ignoring any possibility for irony to be at work in his being.

Cardillac’s rejection of irony in relation to his own actions is problematic in terms of German Romanticism. While Hegel decries irony as a selfish concept that cannot function in the self-conscious individual, the German Romantics felt that irony was essential in art. Since the ideal state of being is beyond opposition, irony is „die Form

des Paradoxen“ (Schlegel, „Lyceums-Fragmente“ 153) that consists of the „Gefühl von dem unauflöselichen Widerstreit des Unbedingten und des Bedingten, der Unmöglichkeit und Notwendigkeit einer vollständigen Mitteilung“ (Schlegel, „Lyceums-Fragmente“ 160). This means that Romantic irony assists the artist by helping him adopt “an ironic attitude toward [the artist] and the Ideal, [so that] it becomes easier for [the artist] to accept the impasse that confronts him. Accordingly the artist attempts to inhabit a standpoint outside of himself from which the world of reality might be transcended in an aesthetic world of appearances (“Schein”)” (Röder 15). Since the Romantic artist fluctuates between oppositions, there is much pressure on the artist to fulfill one or the other of those extremes constantly. Irony provides the artist with a way to deal with these extremes so he does not go mad. Under Hegel’s system, Cardillac does not vacillate, but rather denies that his obsession with jewels is within his control in the first place. This results in a tangible act of madness, that is, murdering his patrons by plunging a knife into their hearts. The act of stabbing the heart, an organ that has a figurative association with the emotional depth of the soul, appears to reflect the personal nature of the crime on Cardillac’s part. He is not only trying to kill their living bodies, but also to deliberately destroy their spirit, almost as if they should not live on in the infinite state of being. It is not the morality of the act that is the issue here; even the German Romantics did not see morality as having a place in irony. Irony, from their perspective, is not about what is right or wrong, but is more of a matter of coming up with new and better ways to dealing with the conflicting aspects of being, because being itself transcends what we know of it. Cardillac clearly has a conflicted nature; he is living a double-life of the virtuous citizen and the murderer in the dark alley. He cannot bear the thought of committing acts of

murder, but also cannot resist the urge to take any action necessary to repossess his works of art.

Cardillac does attempt to view his contradictory acts ironically by idolizing Scuderi as a Madonna figure. He approaches Olivier one day and praises Scuderi's poetic lines to the king, revealing at the same time that „[Cardillac] [Scuderi] von jeher verehrt habe, wie sonst kein menschliches Wesen, und daß [Scuderi], mit solch hoher Tugend begabt, vor der der böse Stern kraftlos erbleiche, selbst den schönsten von [Cardillac] gefertigten Schmuck tragend, niemals ein böses Gespenst, Mordgedanken in ihm erregen würdet [*sic*]“ (695). It is clear that Cardillac sees Scuderi as a type of saintly intercessor who can help him from the conundrum of his „böser Stern“. He sends her his finest work, a necklace and bracelets made out of rubies. Cardillac admits that even the task of making a diamond crown for a statue of the Holy Virgin in one of the Parisian churches is not enough to quell the demonic voices of his evil star. Instead, it is when he thinks of Scuderi that „ist es [Cardillac], als wenn [Cardillac] der Tugend und Frömmigkeit selbst demutsvoll ein Opfer bring[t] und wirksame Fürsprache erfleh[t], indem [Cardillac] Scuderi der schönsten Schmuck sende[t], den [Cardillac] jemals gearbeitet“ (696).

Cardillac's acknowledgment of Scuderi as a saint who is worthy of permanently possessing his greatest work without the consequence of becoming his next victim indicates Cardillac's high degree of trust in outlying forces on his life. In his mind, Cardillac's drive to kill will be resolved since his sacrifice of the jewelry will ultimately end the influence of his evil star over him. Scuderi, acting as a saint, will be able to conquer the forces of evil for him, releasing Cardillac of all responsibility of what happens to him later on, good or bad. The supposed solution to Cardillac's problem is

only a temporary one. It is not long after Olivier has delivered the jewels to Scuderi that he begins to notice Cardillac's behavior resembles that of a mad man:

Da geschah es, daß Cardillac plötzlich alle Munterkeit verlor. Er schlich trübe umher, starrte vor sich hin, murmelte unverständliche Worte, focht mit den Händen, Feinliches von sich abwehrend, sein Geist schien gequält von bösen Gedanken... nun wußt ich, daß sein irrer Geist wieder erfaßt war, von dem abscheulichen Mordgespenst, daß des Satans Stimme wieder laut worden vor seinen Ohren. (696)

Even the knowledge that his holy virgin possesses his finest work is not enough to contain him. Cardillac, who tries to shift from the extreme of a deadly murderer to the extreme of the bearer of a precious gift to a saint figure, cannot maintain a middle ground between the two. Cardillac also believes that he cannot control the madness he experiences when he targets Scuderi in order to repossess the jewels. By refusing to acknowledge irony in the situation, Cardillac sets out to kill Scuderi and meets his own death. Cardillac could have saved himself by acknowledging his capacity for control over the situation and by finding some way to maintain the balance between the oppositions in his nature via art. It is Cardillac's denial of irony in favor of an Idealist tendency to view the world in irreconcilable extremes, however, that diminishes the possibility that the change will come from Cardillac himself.

If Cardillac had found irony as a way to cope with the aspects of being that make him an obsessive creator who must also eternally possess his works of art, he would have been able to strive continuously toward an artistic ideal. What prevents Cardillac from acknowledging irony is the delusion that he cannot strive to become better as a being in a way that would manage both his creative and destructive drives. Cardillac's Hegelian stance on the nullification of irony is a delusion since he is claiming to have achieved an ideal state of being by becoming the possessor of his works. If that had been the case, he

would have experienced transcendence in the act of retrieving his jewelry and would have been able to stop the murderous behavior altogether. While the means of achieving the ideal state matter, Cardillac is rejecting responsibility for the negative aspects of his actions since he maintains that the control is not his, but rather the opposing forces of the „böser Stern“ and the saintly Scuderi.

The manner in which Cardillac attempts to maintain an ideal of artistic purity that ultimately results in death and infamy among those involved reflects a negative attitude toward Idealism's dependence on the Self reaching a state of perfection that can only be within its control. Cardillac, as a Hegelian aesthetician, fails as an artist since, although he appears to be yearning and constantly striving toward a goal, he continues to see that goal as the final end product where all issues will be resolved and he can live in peace. It is not so much that Cardillac has failed, but that the Idealist system has failed him, preventing him from moving forward in his endless journey. Cardillac has the drive and the talent to be an ideal artist, but the belief that he can transcend his limitations to reach the ideal state of self-consciousness by controlling reality on his own terms allows no room for him in the finite world. Cardillac's death is inevitable because he has never learned to accept the shortcomings of those who do not share his ideals nor to live among others in the physical world. By rejecting irony and obsessively trying to reach a state of totality, Cardillac is dwelling in subjectivity that believes it perceives itself through the Other, but denies that he can do anything about the Other's presence in his life.

Chapter 2: *Rat Krespel*

At first glance, E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1818 novella *Rat Krespel* does not leave the impression that the story is about a dedicated Romantic artist. The titular character himself is identified by no other name than Rat Krespel, with the word *Rat* describing his profession as a legal counselor. The use of Krespel's professional title without explicit focus on his career in the story indicates that Krespel as a protagonist has a double character in which the opposing forces of the logical, legal world and the fanciful nature of his artistic whims are constantly at odds with one another.

Rat Krespel is not an artist in the traditional sense. He is not a professional artist who has built a career around the production of art, but instead holds a post as a legal counselor, a profession considered to be dull and uncreative. Despite his professional choices, Krespel is a continuously-producing artist, specifically as a maker of violins. While Krespel does not create violins from scratch, he indiscriminately dismantles functioning, oftentimes precious violins to discover their secrets and to make a new violin out of the various parts at his disposal. He then plays the violin he has created for an hour or two until he is satisfied with the knowledge he has gained from the endeavor and puts the violin down, never to pick it up again. This process of destruction, creation and discarding categorizes Krespel as a striving being. In this way he is an artist that creates and appreciates his work in the present, but acknowledges that there is something better awaiting him in the next artistic production. According to Friedrich

Schlegel, the work itself is a search for knowledge (*Wissen*), and Schlegel, like Schelling, realizes that knowledge cannot be regarded as a mere object attained through reason, and that the striving (*Streben*) after knowledge demands an investigation into the conceptual tools employed in the inquiry (qtd. in Sculte-Sasse 165-66). Krespel's continuous process of disassembling the violins and using the parts to construct something new with its own unique qualities is a search for knowledge that is employed by the medium of art. This search for knowledge in which one's artistic ability is broadened in the production of a newer, and presumably improved work of art reflects the Romantic standard of infinite progression toward a state of self-consciousness (Frank 107-08). It is not only in the production of violins that Krespel is marked as the striving artist; Krespel's other endeavors in his daily life imply that he never ceases to be an artist. This tendency is noted in the opening event of the novella in which Krespel takes charge of the construction of his own house. Granted the financial resources from a prince to build the house according to his own tastes, Krespel takes full artistic advantage of the situation. Instead of entrusting decisions concerning the method of building the house to the hired construction crew, Krespel takes on the role of the foreman and orders the crew to simply build the four walls of the house until he has decided that they are high enough. Once the walls have reached a height that is satisfactory to Krespel's aesthetic vision, he orders them to stop. After that, Krespel begins to move around the garden in an erratic matter that appears to be an exaggerated display of his artistic mind at work, as elaborated in the following:

[Krespel] lief nach einem Ende des Gartens und schritt dann langsam auf sein Viereck los, dicht an der Mauer schüttelte er unwillig den Kopf, lief nach dem andern Ende des Gartens, schritt wieder auf das Viereck los und machte es wie zuvor. Noch einige Male wiederholte er das Spiel, bis er

endlich, mit der spitzen Nase hart an die Mauer anlaufend, laut schrie:
,Heran, heran, ihr Leute, schlagt mir die Tür ein, schlagt mir eine Tür ein!‘
- Er gab Länge und Breite genau nach Fuß und Zoll an, und es geschah,
wie er geboten. (32)

Krespel continues the process with the windows until the house is finished under his specifications. Considering that Krespel has not consulted a builder to make plans for his house, but rather impulsively makes the decisions concerning his house in the moment, reflects an artistic impulse that is unfettered by predetermined planning and conventional structure. Krespel becomes the artistic force behind the creations that characterize his life, especially behind the building of the house, which itself serves as a personalized space where he can constantly create his violins and improve upon his individual development as an artist.

Krespel's lack of limitations is exemplified in the scene with the Professor's niece; after eating a meal of rabbit meat, Krespel takes the bones that remain and makes a toy for the little girl. Krespel is an artist who never ceases in pursuit of art, even in situations where a need to produce is not demanded, but rather, unconscious. Krespel's violin-building, house construction, and other minor acts of creation are reminiscent of Friedrich Schlegel's concept of the *Wechselgrundsatz*, or alternating principle, in which the striving individual is "always in some condition of self-identity (as a relatively closed condition of knowledge), and [the individual] overstep[s] this condition (as our past) always in the direction of a future" (Frank 181). Schlegel maintains that a starting point is not something certain, and that the aesthetic condition itself is one that can be infinitely employed (qtd. in Frank 183). By treating not only his hobby of violin building, but also moments in this daily life that do not necessarily focus on art as a means to progress in

his development as an artist, Krespel proves himself to be the continuously striving individual who is focused on aesthetics for the sake of self-improvement.

Krespel displays his Romantic imagination via representation. Fichte views imagination as a transition point between the concrete individual and the purely determinable infinite. Schlegel also perceives imagination to act as a mediator between oppositions within the Self. These views confirm imagination's role in German Romanticism as the "ideal middle joint (*Mittelglied*) or *medius terminus*, inserted between the notion of the infinitude of the highest and that of the sensible finitude, imagination drafts an image of that which otherwise would remain unrepresentable" (Frank 207). Rat Krespel most notably displays his imagination in the form of his music. During his tormented marriage with Angela, he mentions to the narrator that he was in the habit of reverting to music to alleviate his woes at the fact that Angela would not acknowledge their marriage publicly and that her profession brought many unwelcome male visitors into her presence. Krespel improvises on his violin, presumably transferring his own emotional state into a more concrete form, that is, of music. In this way, Krespel attempts to reach some form of transcendence in his unhappy moments. While he has not reached transcendence, it is evident that he intends to move past his present unhappy situation to something higher than himself through the medium of art. In this manner, Krespel actively attempts to fuse the finite with the infinite. The violins themselves become a symbol of Krespel's relationship with Angela. While Krespel was a talented musician in his youth before he has met Angela, he does not begin constructing violins until after the incident when he throws her out of the window. Krespel does not explain to the narrator exactly how or why the violin construction came about as a hobby, but Krespel makes

subtle references to the role of the violins in relation to his issues with Angela. After Krespel does throw Angela out of the window, an event that seems to have cured her of her wantonness, he immediately returns to Germany. Krespel is so perturbed by his act that he resists all temptation to see her and their daughter, Antonie. While Krespel desires to meet his daughter, the thought of encountering Angela after what he has done to her is enough for him to stay away from them both, even after they move to Germany. Instead, he „blieb zu Hause unter seinen zerschnittenen Geigen sitzen“ (47), indicating that the construction of the violins is the artistic manner in which he maintains a balance between the monstrous side of both himself and Angela. He has already confirmed his belief to the narrator that if he sees Angela again, the possibility exists that „der böse Geist [erhält] wieder Kraft und Macht über Angela...“, forcing him to ask himself „was soll ich nun in gleichen Falle tun? was ist mir noch übrig?“ (46). Krespel doubts that he can control himself around Angela, and Angela around him. It can be argued that Krespel uses music from violins, both the ones he acquires in their complete form, and the ones that he creates out of pieces of whole violins, as a means to represent his Romantic imagination in the face of this internal discord that he has concerning his history with Angela. According to Friedrich Schlegel, the imagination is not purely connected to the subjective realm, but rather consists of activity that is in a constant state of becoming (Schulte-Sasse 168). Krespel acknowledges that he is not ready to see Angela again, and instead attempts to merge the duality between himself and Angela, who can be seen here as the Other, into an artistic form. This reflects Schelling's concept of the sign, that is, the Other as an image formed by the Self (qtd. in Schulte-Sasse 54). Krespel uses these violins to attain the area between the concrete and finite condition of his discord with Angela to represent

the sensuous feeling of the infinite that he cannot otherwise articulate. It is no surprise that Krespel does not attempt to put his feelings into words for the narrator; it is something that he cannot articulate, therefore he lets his violins as instruments of artistic representation, both as a physical constructed product and an auditory product, elaborate the point for him.

The German Romantics were constantly looking to a point in the future when all oppositions such as imagination versus reality, mind versus matter, the real of metaphysics versus the material world of reality will have been transcended (Röder 10). When this point occurs, all oppositions will have been reconciled. Krespel not only uses art to find the balance between his finite situation and his infinite soul, but he also recognizes the possibility for transcendence in art. Krespel's language uses extremes when speaking about art with terms such as „Satan“, „Hölle“, „Engel des Himmels“. Such vocabulary suggests that Krespel acknowledges a side of art that moves past the reality of *Diesselts* to that of *Jenseits*. In addition to utilizing such words, Krespel has strong reactions to experiences that appear to take him beyond reality and into a form of transcendence. When Krespel hears Antonie sing for the first time, the ethereal quality of Antonie's voice brings him to tears and moves him to the point that he begs her to stop singing. Krespel recognizes the transcendent quality of Antonie's singing, saying, „Der Klang von Antonies Stimme war ganz eigentümlich und seltsam, oft dem Hauch der Äolsharfe, oft dem Schmettern der Nachtigall gleichend. Die Töne schienen nicht Raum haben zu können in der menschlichen Brust“ (48). The means to transcend the finite to the infinite is further represented in the violin that mimics Antonie's voice. Instead of tearing this violin apart, Antonie prompts Krespel to play it. Krespel senses something

different about the violin and obeys his daughter, allowing them to discover that it produces a beautiful sound that can replace Antonie's voice. Krespel acknowledges the violin's potential to allow the individual to transcend to an ideal state of being, but he does not dare investigate further, seemingly out of fear of losing the ethereal quality of the violin's sound altogether. This acknowledgment has a place in the Romantic concept of mimesis, in which an object mirrors the world in a positive and revelatory sense whereby art is a source of ever-renewable articulations (Bowie, *From Romanticism* 84). In this way, the violin functions as the proof that the power of Antonie's voice is not some subjective reality that is built up by an adoring father, but rather an artistic ideal that can be found in multiple forms at various points in time, thereby maintaining transcendence as a continuous activity rather than one occurrence of aesthetic beauty in the present moment. Krespel's description of Antonie's voice and her doctor's confirmation that Antonie has an organic defect that both causes the ethereal quality of her voice and will ultimately kill her indicate that Antonie is not meant to last long in the material world. Antonie is also the harmonious equalizer between her parents. She is a talented singer just as Angela was, but Krespel remarks of Antonie's singing „nie hatte er Angela so singen hören,“ (47-48) indicating that the daughter has surpassed the mother in terms of artistic representation. She also does not possess „die hässliche Kehrseite“ of Angela, which inspires a loving bond between Krespel and Antonie that in turn motivates him to act in what he perceives to be her best interests. Antonie helps Krespel to reach a satisfactory state of being where the memory of Angela no longer afflicts him, which means that Antonie's predicament in the novella will have drastic implications for

Krespel as an artist functioning under a system that depends on the occurrence of a transcendent event.

2.1 FREEDOM IN AUTONOMY

By the standards of German idealism, the condition of the true artist is marked by the acknowledgment of aesthetic freedom. According to Schiller, freedom is not reliant on deductive principles, but instead is based on aesthetic reflection, which stems from the Kantian principle that freedom does not make the individual above the laws of society, but rather materializes from within the autonomous being (Riou 76-77). What restricts freedom, however, is acquiescence to the passions. Hegel describes the passions as „beschränkt und fesselt die Seele in sich selbst, beenzt sie zu einer begrenzten Konzentration und läßt sie dadurch verstummen, einsilbig werden oder ins Blaue und Wilde hinein toben und rasen“ (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 404). Hegel maintains that the spirit does not have to be burdened by the passions, but with „die Größe des Gemüts, die Kraft des Geistes erhebt sich über solche Beschränktheit und schwebt in schöner, stiller Ruhe über dem bestimmten Pathos, von dem sie bewegt wird“ (404). The spirit must find a way to maintain peace within itself, which marks true freedom. The manner in which the subject achieves „Erhebung“ over his senses is through means of artistic occupation since „Ein kräftiger, adeliger Geist, preßt die Klage als solche zurück, hält den Schmerz, die Verzweiflung unmittelbar herauszuschreien und sich dadurch die Freiheit, in dem tiefen Gefühl des Leidens selber sich noch mit Weitabliegendem in der Vorstellung zu tun zu machen und in diesem Entfernten sich sein eigenes Schicksal im Bilde auszusprechen“ (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 406). German Idealism therefore determines freedom as aesthetic reflection that is defined by self-mastery, which also hints at the potential for the

transcendence of the subject. Rat Krespel gives the initial impression that he understands freedom in the scene where he is playing out the woes of his marriage to Angela on the violin. Krespel has found a coping mechanism from which he can lift himself above the influence of the passions and maintain solace through his art, thereby functioning as an autonomous being who has the potential to move past his present situation. At the same time, however, it is clear that Krespel has a lot to learn about freedom since that same scene concludes with his reverting back to his passions and throwing Angela out of the window in a moment of rage. Krespel is so shaken by the event that he flees to Germany and begins to build violins as a way to cope with the passion that he cannot control. Krespel's avoidance of Angela can be seen as a method by which he further ensures his freedom since he is no longer in an environment in which he is tempted to succumb to his passions to that degree for a second time.

Krespel is given another opportunity to exhibit freedom when the fatal consequences of the defect in Antonie's lungs is made known to him by her doctor, a condition that will kill her if she persists in singing. The news is a burden to Krespel since, „es war ihm, als hinge zum ersten Male ein schöner Baum die wunderherrlichen Blüten in sein Leben hinein, und der solle recht an der Wurzel zersägt werden, damit er nie mehr zu grünen und zu blühen vermöge“ (48). Since Antonie's singing has transcendent qualities, Krespel is conflicted between preserving Antonie's life and preserving her art. Krespel attempts to master his own passions by means that are not strictly artistic, but do reflect his respect for the autonomous force behind artistic production. He does this by recognizing Antonie's role as an autonomous being and gives her the freedom to make a choice telling her of the consequences of further singing. It is

then that Krespel „stellte ihr die Wahl, ob sie dem Bräutigam folgen und seiner und der Welt Verlockung nachgeben, so aber früh untergehen, oder ob sie dem Vater noch in seinen alten Tagen nie gefühlte Ruhe und Freude bereiten, so aber jahrelang leben wolle“ (48). Krespel gives Antonie the opportunity to exhibit self-mastery with this choice. Antonie initially gives up on singing, leaves her composer fiancé, and moves with Krespel to his town. When the composer B... follows them and asks to see Antonie, Antonie changes her mind and sings for B... one last time, prepared for the consequences that may arise from her decision. Her words „Nur einmal ihn sehen und dann sterben“ (49) indicate an abuse of freedom within the Idealist system since the decision appears to be influenced by the passions rather than by self-mastery. Krespel is disturbed by this decision, but begrudgingly allows Antonie to make that choice. The event proves to be near-fatal, confirming the harmful potential by which passions can lead the artist astray by being self-destructive. After Antonie recovers, she says to Krespel „Ich will nicht mehr singen, aber für dich leben“ (50). Antonie’s passions are thus subdued since she associates singing with her fiancé and death. Antonie attempts to adopt a method by which she can find artistic freedom within her self-mastery. She helps Krespel build violins, and finally is able to experience artistic beauty in the single violin that has its own transcendent quality. By these means she retains a balance between the finite reality in which succumbing to the passions will result in her own destruction, and the infinite nature of the aesthetic beauty her talent evokes.

While it seems that the choice to sing or not to sing is completely Antonie’s, there are conflicting comments throughout the novella that indicate that the situation has taken its own definition of freedom. After the near-fatal episode with B..., Krespel appears to

be the one who is running Antonie's life in all matters, especially that of singing. This is made clear from the Professor's description of Krespel's relationship with Antonie:

...so viel ist gewiß, dass er das arme Mädchen auf die gehässigste Weise tyrannisiert. Er bewacht sie wie der Doktor Bartolo im ‚Barbier von Sevilien‘ seine Mündel; kaum darf sie sich am Fenster blicken lassen. Führt er sie auf inständiges Bitten einmal in der Gesellschaft, so verfolgt er sie mit Argusblicken und leidet durchaus nicht, dass sich irgendein musikalischer Ton hören lasse, viel weniger dass Antonie singe, die übrigens auch in seinem Hause nicht mehr singen darf. (37)

This depiction of Krespel's relationship with Antonie hardly seems like one of freedom. Now that she has been given a choice and has used it to reach an end that almost allowed her to transcend the material world completely through death, Krespel will not allow her to make that choice again. According to Hegel, however, Krespel's supposed tyranny over Antonie is more of an indicator of freedom to develop into a rational and responsible individual. Freedom is not simply about a choice, but also about being educated on how to live rationally. Hegel continues his discussion of freedom in the context of the state and the family unit, in which there is a head of the unit and the rest have duties to the head of the state or the head of the family that are not considered restrictive to freedom since restrictions put on people are meant to educate them. Hegel maintains that freedom is still found in the relationship between parents and children since the upbringing of children reflects freedom when the parents use reason in the endeavor, as stated in the following:

[Die] *Erziehung* [der Kindern] hat die in Rücksicht auf das Familienverhältnis *positive* Bestimmung, daß die Sittlichkeit in ihnen zur unmittelbaren, noch gegensatzlosen *Empfindung* gebracht [werde] und das Gemüt darin, als dem *Grunde* des sittlichen Lebens, in Liebe, Zu trauen und Gehorsam sein erstes Leben gelebt habe, – dann aber die in Rücksicht auf dasselbe Verhältnis *negative* Bestimmung, die Kinder aus der natürlichen Unmittelbarkeit, in der sie sich ursprünglich befinden, zur Selbständigkeit und freien Persönlichkeit und damit zur Fähigkeit, aus der natürlichen Einheit der Familie zu treten, zu erheben (Hegel, *Philosophie*

des Rechts 158).

Krespel's treatment of Antonie's artistic lifestyle reflects the Hegelian concept of freedom. Being the head of his small family, Krespel has every right to make decisions for Antonie that are considered for her own benefit. Antonie, as a member of that family unit, would be functioning within the Hegelian standard of freedom by obeying Krespel, even if she as an individual desires to act contrary to her father's wishes. By being educated to live her life rationally, she gains true freedom since this education idealistically will mold her into a rational being. Since Krespel acknowledges the difficulties that Antonie has in being forbidden to sing, he takes care to avoid all music with the exception of his constructed violins. When they discover the violin with the defect, Krespel realizes that the violin is a tool that can be used to help Antonie find liberation through art in spite of her withdrawal from artistic production. When the pair discover the violin with the defect, Krespel remarks that „Seit dieser Zeit kam eine große Ruhe und Heiterkeit in [Antonies] Leben. Oft sprach sie zum Rat: ‚Ich möchte wohl etwas singen, Vater!‘ Dann nahm Krespel die Geige von der Wand und spielte Antoniens schönste Lieder, sie war recht aus dem Herzen froh“ (50). Antonie's association of the violin with herself and the satisfaction she finds in hearing it allows Krespel to continue to believe that he is providing Antonie with all that she needs to live a rationally free and satisfying existence.

In spite of the harmony and the calm between Antonie and her father in the face of his control over her, the Idealist concept of freedom is doomed to fail in the artist. This is shown when story takes a sudden turn and Krespel either sees or dreams that Antonie is singing a beautiful aria while her fiancé is accompanying her on the piano. It is clear that Antonie is ultimately unable to maintain the static state of appreciating art

without producing it herself. In spite of her comment „Ach, das bin ich ja - ich singe ja wieder“ (50) in reaction to the first tones she hears from the violin, her face in death, after the supposed concert between herself and B..., leaves her lying „mit geschlossenen Augen, mit holdselig lächelndem Blick, die Hände fromm gefaltet, auf dem Sofa, als schliefe sie und träume von Himmelswonnen und Freudigkeit. Sie war aber tot“ (51). This description of Antonie's final appearance in death indicates that, although her father's idea of freedom is idealistic in that it attempts to manifest itself artistically from within in a rational manner, she has found her own peace and freedom through the instability that is associated with the defect in her lungs. Condemned to die if she continues to utilize the artistic talent that nature bestowed upon her, she at first turns away from passion, but then returns to it twice. Antonie is not satisfied with the static state of preservation without artistic production, so she rejects her father's freedom within Idealism and adopts a Romantic principle of freedom, resulting in her happy death.

Even Hegel admits that freedom, in establishing a relation of the Self to its Other, works in a model that has a weak side in which the Other can too easily emerge once again as a *Jenseits*. This means that the model, while promoting stability, is not guaranteed to be stable. Early Romantic thinking requires that the subject overcomes differences within its being. This type of overcoming helps the subject move toward indifference, which enables the subject to preserve its differentiation in the Self and the Other (Schulte-Sasse, 53). This sentiment reflects the Romantic emphasis on freedom as a concept that does not necessarily work on stability. German Idealism insists that freedom can only truly function within the individual, and that sentiment is not false. At the same time, the German Idealists describe their version of freedom as one with

limitations. The Romantics, on the other hand, encourage freedom without structure, regardless of the consequences. Friedrich Schlegel's vision of the Self departs from German Idealism by maintaining that the individual is never completely present. For this reason, "The Being-in-itself (*An-sich-Sein*), which the reflexive I can never get a look at, is expressed *ex negativo* as freedom; insofar as it cannot establish itself in its infinitude but rather must always strive to more beyond its limits, never able to remain absorbed in its identity with its respective condition" (Frank 179). With this reasoning, it is clear that Krespel's efforts to protect Antonie from certain death via the Idealist notion of freedom that is static and stable could not succeed in the face of artistic representation that requires uncertainty beyond the present. Antonie realizes her potential to move past the finite into the infinite, and embraces it openly. Krespel, on the other hand, is not willing to sacrifice his daughter for the sake of art, and his perceived solution of the defective violin as a suitable substitute for striving artistic representation is not enough to contain his daughter. Had she obeyed his instruction as a father and lived her life rationally, she would have been denied that transcendent moment that gives her heavenly satisfaction unto death, which would have served no purpose to either of them. Hoffmann uses the events leading up to Antonie's death to show how, when one attempts to be rational and to force fate to have a certain outcome, the resulting limitation on art is not beneficial to the subject. Antonie, possessing much artistic potential, but encouraged to only observe a beautiful work of art rather than to be the creator of that art herself, is unsatisfied with her condition and decides to defy the stability that allows her to hold onto life, but denies her the part of her Self that can achieve that single moment of transcendence via art. Krespel, on the other hand, contains Antonie in the material world, thereby missing out on the

moment of transcendence when it comes. Krespel is enough of an artist to understand and accept the significance of Antonie's death in terms of striving; he allowed her to risk death the first time she sang for B... in Krespel's house. It is immediately after that experience, however, that Krespel's fatherly qualities prevail and he repeatedly suppresses Antonie's artistic drive from within, as evidenced by his reaction to the narrator when the narrator prompts Antonie to sing. Krespel experiences some type of transcendent event on the night of her death, but he is uncertain whether it is a dream or reality. At the climax of the event in which Antonie and her fiancé embrace, Krespel loses consciousness, indicating that he is barred from the revelation of the secrets contained in that moment of transcendence. By adjusting the concept of freedom so that it fits with his idealistic notions, Krespel's attempts to force an ideal that satisfies his role as a loving father and keeps his daughter alive fail since art ultimately must move beyond the limitations of reality.

2.2 END OF THE NEED FOR ART

The aim of German Idealism is the self-consciousness of the subject that will result in the realization of the Ideal. At this point of transcendence, the means to get to the goal are no longer needed since the goal itself has been reached. If the artist perceived that he had attained the Ideal, this would cause an end to the need for art.

Rat Krespel is initially characterized as a continuously creating being, and that his art maintains its character of striving by his constructing violins and playing on them. Krespel exhibits this penchant for creating from his early years until the moment of Antonie's death. At this point, the narrator notes behavior from Krespel that indicates he has stopped striving altogether since he no longer has the need for artistic production. His

appearance on the day of Antonie's funeral indicates that art has lost its function in his life since he had „Um den Leib... ein schwarzes Degengehenk geschnallt, doch statt des Degens einen langen Violinbogen hineingesteckt“ (41). Krespel believes that the moment of transcendence occurred with the events that led up to Antonie's death. This is confirmed by his description of what happened to the violin that mimicked Antonie's voice: „als sie starb, zerbrach mit dröhnendem Krachen der Stimmstock in jener Geige, und der Resonanzboden riß sich auseinander. Die Getreue konnte nur mit ihr, in ihr leben; sie liegt bei ihr im Sarge, sie ist mit ihr begraben worden“ (42). Krespel recognizes a final manifestation of the Ideal by laying both Antonie and the violin to rest together. While the act of burying the violin with Antonie does not necessarily prove that Krespel has given up on art, his behavior when the narrator cries out in reaction to the news of Antonie's death shows this:

Nun trat er in die Mitte des Zimmer, riß den Violinbogen aus dem Gehenke, hielt ihn mit beiden Händen über den Kopf und zerbrach ihn, daß er in viele Stücke zersplitterte. Laut lachend rief Krespel: „Nun ist der Stab über mich gebrochen, meinst du, Söhnchen? nicht wahr? Mitnichten, mitnichten, nun bin ich frei - frei - frei - Heisa frei! - Nun bau ich keine Geigen mehr - keine Geigen mehr - heisa keine Geigen mehr.“ (42)

Krespel's declaration that he will no longer build violins appears to be either madness or the reaction of a grieving father who puts the blame of his child's death on art. Under the circumstances, one would expect Krespel's decision to be overturned after he had finished mourning. On the contrary, after the shock of Antonie's death has passed, Krespel resumes his other activities as if nothing traumatic had happened. He maintains to the Professor that „[Krespel] niemals mehr Violinen bauen und auch auf keiner jemals mehr spielen wolle. Das hat er, wie [der Erzähler] später erfuhr, gehalten“ (43). Krespel also declares that he is free, no longer bound by the act of building violins. The violin

bow in the scene following Antonie's funeral also reinforces the idea of the end of art; Krespel places the bow in his sword belt, signifying its place as a weapon or a tool by which one reaches the goal of one's vocation in life. In Krespel's case, his vocation is artistic representation via violin construction and playing. By destroying the violin bow in the grandiose manner described by the narrator, Krespel is symbolically declaring that art has come to an end at this point in his existence, and that the tool is no longer needed.

Krespel not only destroys the tool by which he creates his art, but also implies that he is beyond the finite condition that required him to be a striving artist. He alludes to his person as having reached an infinite state of being when he shouts to the narrator in a rant that his behavior has come from the realization that „weil ich mir vor einiger Zeit einen Schlafrock anfertigte, in dem ich aussehen wollte wie das Schicksal oder wie Gott!“ (42-43). Krespel has deemed himself to be on a different plane of existence at this point in the novella, which stands in complete contrast to his description of the state he was in before Antonie's death, when he heard her sing for the first time and felt that he was experiencing the heavenly. The Professor reinforces this idea with the comment „Was auf der Erde steigt, gibt [Krespel] wieder der Erde, aber das Göttliche weiß er zu bewahren; und so steht es mit seinem innern Bewußtsein recht gut“ (43). Krespel, while appearing to be fixed in a finite condition, appears to go beyond it and to live that infinite condition internally. His old friend's observation, as well as Krespel's own self-comparison with God or destiny, shows a perceived shift from striving to a state of transcendence. Taking this into consideration, it seems to be no surprise that the story of Antonie's death is the last thing that is related in the novella. Structured within the story-within-a-story, the relation of the dreamlike experience, followed by the discovery of Antonie's smiling

corpse on the sofa ends the narrative without any other conclusion, almost as if there is no need for a resolution after it. Even the events that follow Antonie's death precede the telling of these events, as if the death itself is the end-point beyond which nothing else can be achieved.

Krespel's declaration that he no longer has a need for art since he has reached a perceived ideal state via transcendence is justified by Schelling's system of transcendental idealism, which attempts to fuse the subjective and objective nature of the individual into a harmony that will eventually attain the Ideal by one single act of self-consciousness. A component of German Idealism is transcendental idealism, which is a system of all knowledge that finds unity in their opposing parts, and this knowledge becomes part of consciousness through aesthetics. While German Idealism focuses on the arrival at the ideal of self-consciousness, transcendental idealism emphasizes the balance of subjective and objective components of being needed to enable the individual to transcend beyond reality to the ideal. According to Schelling, the artist is capable of transcendence when he looks at a completed work of art and feels an „unendliche Befriedigung,“ which is an indication of the objective real and the subjective ideal, and of the unconscious and conscious. Schelling maintains that while it is not actually known, there is an actual reality that is constituted by one absolute act of self-consciousness that is revealed to the individual ego through aesthetic intuition:

Wenn [das Ideal] in der Produktion erreicht ist, so muß das Produzieren absolut aufhören, und es muß dem Produzierenden unmöglich sein weiter zu produzieren, denn die Bedingung alles Produzierens ist eben die Entgegensetzung der bewußten und der bewußtlosen Tätigkeit, diese sollen hier aber absolut zusammentreffen, es soll also in der Intelligenz aller Streit aufgehoben, aller Widerspruch vereinigt sein. (Schelling 285)

Schelling's concept of transcendence no longer requires art since that point of existence provides solutions to all of the problems that arose in the finite state of being. The idea that art plays a role in the finite condition, but is no longer needed when transcendence occurs is reinforced by Hegel's idea on how art reaches such a height of existence that it ultimately transcends itself:

...die allgemeine Kunst des in sich freigewordenen, nicht an das äußerlich-sinnliche Material zur Realisation gebunden Geistes, der nur im inneren Raume und der inneren Zeit der Vorstellungen und Empfindungen sich ergeht. Doch gerade auf dieser höchsten Stufe steigt nun die Kunst auch über sich selbst hinaus, indem sie das Element versöhnter Versinnlichung des Geistes verläßt und aus der Poesie der Vorstellung in die Prosa des Denkens hinüber tritt. (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 94)

With this transcendence, it is further maintained that, „Uns gilt die Kunst nicht mehr als die höchste Weise, in welcher die Wahrheit sich Existenz verschafft“ (Hegel, *Ästhetik I* 110) since art does not go beyond transcendence. The logic behind Schelling's and Hegel's philosophies justifies Krespel's act of giving up on violin-making since the transcendent state no longer requires art.

While Krespel's renunciation of art appears to be a triumph within German Idealism, it stands in opposition to German Romanticism. As observed by Andrew Bowie, even the early Romantics had come to the conclusion that “the greatest art is not great because we know all about why it is great, but because it compels us to keep coming back to it. There is, therefore, no ‘closure’ with regard to art, and this is not a deficiency” (Bowie, *German Philosophy* 99). Art cannot end, just as the artist cannot cease in pursuing an ideal through artistic representation. Without a truth to pursue, existence itself would lose its significance since “Perhaps it is the very fact that we cannot cease questioning that is the source of value in our existence, rather than the hope that we will arrive at final answers” (Bowie, *German Philosophy* 100).

Unlike Cardillac in *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, Rat Krespel does not suffer a physical death, but he does suffer an internal one. Whether or not he is aware of this death is uncertain, but to go on living after having experienced a moment of pure beauty is seen by Novalis in his *Fichte-Studien* as a denial of both the Self and the Other, since „das reine Ich... ist [nichts] als eine nothwendige Täuschung des mittelbaren Ich allein - das aufhören will mittelbares Ich zu seyn und insofern sich selbst widerstrebt“ (Hardenberg 127). Novalis’s observation indicates that Krespel’s rejection of art reflects the false perception that he has transcended and attained the Ideal. Since it is impossible to achieve that Ideal, Krespel has in reality achieved nothing and lost the possibility for doing so by refusing to strive any longer. What allowed Late Romanticism to differentiate itself from Early Romanticism was the principle that art cannot attain the Ideal in spite of the artist’s understanding and experiences:

[Das Ideals] Unerreichbarkeit wiederum unterscheidet [das Ideal] vom Reiz des Interessanten. Da [es] keine Annäherung zuläßt, kann [es] auch nicht verbraucht werden. [Es] wirkt nicht akut und kurzlebig, sondern chronisch und konstant. Demgemäß ist auch die Sehnsucht weniger eine Sucht mit dem unwiderstehlichen Drang nach Befriedigung als ein gleichmäßig anhaltendes Angeregtsein, das sein Genügen in sich selbst findet. Sie will darum gar nicht befriedigt werden. (Pikulik 369)

Krespel remained agitated at the fatal consequences of Antonie’s ideal art while she was living, given that he saw her death and her withdrawal from art as equally undesirable outcomes. In her death, however, he only finds tranquility even though he himself has withdrawn from art. The condition of the Romantic artist is not meant to be one in which he finds a resolution, but rather a condition in which the artist continuously attempts to balance extremes that come with being grounded in the finite world while aspiring to an infinite ideal.

Krespel manipulates the concept of the Ideal by restricting it to German Idealist principles so that his version of freedom, ruled by parental reason, allows him to keep his daughter close and to maintain his role as an artist who is still focused on his progression toward the Ideal via the defective violin. When this endeavor fails him after Antonie takes her freedom back and dies an aesthetic death that appears to be a realization of the Ideal, Krespel maintains that art has come to an end and lives a deceitfully satisfying existence in which he sees himself as a transcendent being that no longer has a need to create. This existence without art, which maintains Hegel's theory of the end of art in the modern era, is a living death in the eyes of the Romantics. While acknowledging the goal of an ideal state of being, the Romantics maintain that the best the individual can do is to focus on the means by which he believes the Ideal will be attained. For the artist, art is the path to the Ideal and consequently should never be abandoned. The philosopher Friedrich Karl Forberg, impressed by his encounter with Novalis in Jena, expresses the sentiment that, "[But] is an unreachable goal any less of a goal? Is the view of the heavens any less enchanting, because it always remains only a view?" (qtd. in Frank 54). By losing sight of the Ideal through his insistence on having attained it when Antonie died, Krespel rejects his condition as an artist and lives out his life in denial of an improved state of being.

Conclusion

The German Romantics were focused on discovering the Self in relation to its Other, which meant that the Self should be able to come to an understanding about both its potential and its limitations. While the Idealists maintained that the striving subject should be able to understand itself and overcome its limitations, their philosophy leaves little room for acceptance of shortcomings. E.T.A. Hoffmann's writings show an admiration for the concept of attaining „das Unendliche“ in that the artist's self-restriction to an ideal has destructive consequences. In the spirit of German Romanticism, Hoffmann attempts to show through his fictional artists the use of aesthetics as a means of reaching an idealized point of existence. His artists strive with a distinct destination in mind. By allowing his artists to pursue their goals in a manner without compromising Idealist principles, only then to utterly fail, Hoffmann shows the unforgiving nature of German Idealism. Consequently, this reveals that transcendence cannot be attained in practice. This poses the problematic question: what purpose remains for the artist?

One can begin to answer that question by looking back to German Idealism, which marked a point in philosophy and literary history when the idea of the individual became the focus. While the individual is revered by Idealists in philosophy and depicted in artistic works by the Romantics, the path of the individual was a problematic one. German Idealism made the individual out to be a person who took to principles of self-mastery as if he were capable of reaching an idealized state of being. What the

Idealists do not mention, however, is the plight of the individual who has attained self-mastery and the difficulties he will face in attempting to show the world how his higher truth is indeed the truth to follow. Only Friedrich Schiller discusses how the individual deals with society after he has reached an idealized form of enlightenment:

Zu dem reinen Begriff der Menschheit müssen wir uns also nunmehr erheben, und da uns die Erfahrung nur einzelne Zustände einzelner Menschen, aber niemals die Menschheit zeigt, so müssen wir aus diesen ihren individuellen und wandelbaren Erscheinungsarten das Absolute und Bleibende zu entdecken und durch Wegwerfung aller zufälligen Schranken uns der notwendigen Bedingungen ihres Daseins zu bemächtigen suchen. (Schiller 42-43)

Schiller acknowledges that the artist's role is essential in society's evolution because the artist has allowed himself to be ennobled and is the only one capable of the task of leading humanity to the ideal. While the ideal can be realized by and lived through the individual, it does nothing for humanity unless society as a whole is willing to follow suit. According to Schiller, the artist has a great responsibility to inspire others:

...so wird [des Künstlers] eigener Adel dort den ihrigen aufwecken und ihre Unwürdigkeit hier deinen Zweck nicht vernichten... Verjage die Willkür, die Frivolität, die Rosigkeit aus ihren Vergnügungen, so du sie unvermerkt auch aus ihren Handlungen, endlich aus ihren Gesinnungen verbannen. Wo du sie findet, umgib sie mit edeln, mit großen, mit geistreichen Formen, schließe sie ringsum mit den Symbolen des Vortrefflichen ein, bis der Schein die Wirklichkeit und die Kunst die Natur überwindet. (Schiller 37)

The individual must use his enlightenment to influence his unenlightened fellow man, and he can only do this with a physical representation of the wholeness of nature found within the beautiful. Beauty will inevitably evoke reactions from those who behold it so that they will begin to consider their own condition in a critical manner, become enlightened, and bring society to the ideal of the human condition by means of the collective development of numerous individuals.

Hoffmann's artist emulates Schiller's idea of an individual who uses art to reach an improved state of being. The difference between Schiller's artistic individual, and Hoffmann's artist, however, is the way the artist relates to society. Schiller describes the artistic individual who will inevitably influence those around him by inspiring them with his own idealized example. Hoffmann's artist barely considers society in the grand scheme of things. In a way, Hoffmann's artist does not have an obligation to change society with art. The manner in which René Cardillac stands out from the other artists in 17th century Paris in *Das Fräulein von Scuderi* portrays artistic distance between the individual and society. The artists, in spite of their lack of talent, attempt to cause change with their art. While their aims are not exactly idealistic, they understand that art has the ability to influence society. The portrayal of Cardillac as someone who does not care to change society with his art shows the artist as a self-contained entity. Rat Krespel does the same when he realizes that Antonie's beautiful voice will eventually be her destruction. As much as he realizes that the world will be missing out on the heavenly influence of her voice, he does his best to convince her and her fiancé that she should not even risk going out into the world out of the fear that the urge to sing will become overpowering.

Hoffmann's portrayal of the Romantic artist encourages the individual to be concerned with his own development, and to be self-reflective rather than concerned with the society around him. Goethe suggests a similar concept in *Faust*. Eventually completed as a two-part drama, *Faust: Der erster Teil* was the only part published during Hoffmann's lifetime. The work is centered on Faust's efforts to experience a moment of pure satisfaction in which his striving would come to an end and he would want nothing

more than to linger in that moment of satisfaction. Goethe's *Faust* has much to do with Hoffmann's understanding of German Romanticism, because it attempts to fuse the ideal of fulfillment with the individual's efforts to constantly improve himself in relation to the Other. Faust's journey is not fool-proof; as experienced by Hoffmann's artists, Faust's journey to the Ideal carves a path of destruction that affects Gretchen and her family. Mistakes do not destroy the artist, since even God states „Es irrt der Mensch, solang' er strebt“ (Goethe, „Prolog im Himmel“ 317). This means that although the first part of the play ends in disaster, the second part of the play shows Faust continuing in his journey in spite of error. What makes the conclusion of *Faust* remarkable is the fact that the angels do not claim that Faust has reached the end. They admit that he has reached a point of satisfaction in his earthly life, but that that point does not mark the end. Faust's transcendence is seen as the beginning of a new journey rather than a static state of satisfaction.

While Hoffmann's artists mistakenly establish a goal for themselves, Faust only desires and searches for the destination. Both Cardillac and Krespel remain living, productive artists as long as they are still searching for their Ideal. When they have come to a point in which they tell themselves that the Ideal has come or will come, their lives as artists are disrupted and they are left with a form of non-Being, as exemplified by Cardillac's death and Krespel's apathy. Thus the Romantic artist is not supposed to see an end to his endeavors, but instead to see his endeavors as the essence that bring the work its true aesthetic purpose. The real “end” of Romantic striving is the development of the individual during the journey. The loftiness of Faust's fate reflects an ideal that can only be determined by supernatural beings, which means that reaching the Ideal does not

belong to the human condition, even though the possibility for it can be conceived in the human consciousness.

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