

'DIE MACHT DER DUNKLEN IDEEN': A LEIBNIZIAN THEME IN
GERMAN PSYCHOLOGY AND FICTION BETWEEN THE LATE
ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM

CATHERINE J. MINTER

ABSTRACT

In eighteenth-century Germany the rise of sensualism led to increasing interest in the non-rational or 'obscure' side of epistemology: the obscure ideas that occupy a position at the bottom of Leibniz's cognitive scale in his *Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate et Ideis* (1684). In the first half of the article, I examine changing attitudes towards the obscure ideas in German psychology at the turn of the nineteenth century, beginning with Sulzer's reserved approach and ending with the conciliatory view taken by thinkers such as Moses Mendelssohn and Jean Paul. I suggest that the evolution of the theory of the obscure perceptions in German psychology during this period exemplifies the Germans' caution with regard to the emancipation of the senses, since here a theory which rose to prominence against the background of the Enlightenment's sensualism is quickly integrated into a normative framework. In the second half of the article, I discuss two German novels which can be seen to illustrate alternative (sceptical and appreciative) approaches to the theory of the obscure perceptions at the turn of the nineteenth century: Tieck's *William Lovell* (1795-96) and Jean Paul's *Titan* (1800-03).

Weiß ich doch kaum, was ich jetzt tue und denke. (Tieck, *William Lovell*)¹

In his *Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate et Ideis* (*Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas*) of 1684, Leibniz posits a hierarchy of different types of knowledge from obscure to intuitive and hereby relativises the Cartesian black-and-white distinction between clear (true) and obscure (false) ideas. Descartes had decided that the things we conceive clearly and distinctly are all true, and that our false ideas are only false because they have something obscure and confused in them.² Leibniz puts it to his reader that things are not necessarily as straightforward as this: there is a broad spectrum of different kinds of ideas, and just because we think of something consciously and distinctly does not mean that our idea of it is true.³ The obscure ideas occupy a position at the bottom of Leibniz's carefully gra-

¹ Ludwig Tieck, *Frühe Erzählungen und Romane*, Munich 1978, p. 494.

² *Discours de la Méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* (*Discourse on the Method of rightly conducting one's reason and seeking the truth in the sciences*) (1637). See Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, Cambridge 1988, pp. 36 and 39.

³ See G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, trans. by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, Indianapolis 1989, p. 26: 'One cannot always appeal safely to an idea and [...] many use this splendid honorific improperly to prop up certain creatures of their imagination, for we don't always have an idea corresponding to every thing we consciously think of.'

dated epistemological spectrum: 'A notion which is not sufficient for recognizing the thing represented is *obscure*, as, for example, if whenever I remember some flower or animal I once saw, I cannot do so sufficiently well for me to recognize that flower or animal when presented and to distinguish it from other nearby flowers or animals.'⁴

In late eighteenth-century German psychology, Leibniz's obscure ideas were often rolled into one with his *petites perceptions* from the *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (*New Essays on Human Understanding*) (first published in 1765); as we shall see, this had some important implications for the accounts of obscure knowledge in the literature of the period. The *petites perceptions* formed the cornerstone of Leibniz's opposition to Locke's argument that the soul is sometimes completely inactive. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Locke had argued that the soul cannot be thinking if it is not conscious of its perceptions;⁵ Leibniz now posits a mass of insensible perceptions in the soul which lie beyond the reach of consciousness yet prove that the soul is constantly active: the soul's lack of consciousness of its own activity is not tantamount to an absence of activity. According to Leibniz, we fail to apperceive the *petites perceptions* because they are too minute or too confused – too much of a muchness – for us to notice them clearly. The mass of unconscious perceptions in the human soul resembles a sea of waves in which each individual little wave contributes to the overall sound, but cannot be distinguished from its fellows.⁶ For Leibniz, the *petites perceptions* prove that the human soul has a constant link with the universe, albeit a mysterious and ineffable one. His *petites perceptions* 'involve the infinite' because they mirror the universe, which contains all its past and future states within itself (*New Essays*, p. 55). Finally, the *petites perceptions* also lie at the heart of personal identity, for they conserve the individual's past states and put paid to the idea of the soul as a *tabula rasa*; thanks to the *petites perceptions*, no two souls can ever be exactly alike (*New Essays*, p. 58).

In the first half of this paper I should like to trace the development of the theory of the obscure and unconscious perceptions in German psychology at the turn of the nineteenth century. One of the main reasons for the lively interest in our obscure knowledge at this time was certainly the Enlightenment's emancipation of the senses: both the obscure ideas and the *petites perceptions* occupy a position at the bottom of the cognitive

⁴ Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 23–24. For a detailed account of Leibniz's hierarchy of ideas in the *Meditations*, see Hans Adler, 'Fundus Animae – der Grund der Seele: Zur Gnoseologie des Dunklen in der Aufklärung', *DVjs*, 62 (1988), 197–220 (esp. 198–201), and Adler, *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen: Gnoseologie – Ästhetik – Geschichtsphilosophie bei Johann Gottfried Herder*, Hamburg 1990, pp. 2–11.

⁵ See e.g. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch, Oxford 1975, p. 109: 'I do not say there is no Soul in a Man, because he is not sensible of it in his sleep; But I do say, he cannot think at any time waking or sleeping, without being sensible of it.'

⁶ See G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett, Cambridge 1996, pp. 53–4. Henceforth referred to in the text as *New Essays*.

scale; with the rise of sensualism and naturalism in the eighteenth century, interest grew in such *terra incognita*, the 'other of reason'.⁷ However, as I hope to illustrate, the evolution of the theory of the obscure, unconscious perceptions in late eighteenth-century Germany also exemplifies the Germans' cautious attitude towards the upgrading of the senses, since here a theory which rose to prominence against the background of the eighteenth century's sensualism is quickly integrated into a more normative, idealistic framework.

In eighteenth-century Germany, the theory of the obscure perceptions came into its own in discussions of the darker, non-rational side of human psychology. One of those with a particularly avid interest in psychological curiosities at the time was Johann Georg Sulzer; and in his *Kurzer Begriff aller Wissenschaften* (1757) he marks out the *cognitio obscura* as the proper terrain of contemporary empirical psychology, advising aspiring psychologists 'die genaueste Aufmerksamkeit auf die dunkeln Gegenden der Seele (wenn man so reden kann) zu richten; wo sie durch sehr undeutliche und dunkle Begriffe handelt'.⁸ In his own *Erklärung eines psychologischen paradoxen Satzes* of 1759, Sulzer interpolates the theory of the obscure perceptions into his analysis of the *parapraxis* or 'Freudian slip': the fact that we might avidly intend to do or say one thing and yet still end up doing or saying another (which typically goes against our better judgement). According to Sulzer, we can explain our 'paradoxical' actions, words and beliefs by calling on the theory of the obscure perceptions, which he conflates with that of the unconscious ones: 'Außer den klaren, oder denjenigen Vorstellungen, deren sich die Seele bewußt ist [...], giebt es zugleich eine große Menge anderer, mehr oder weniger dunkeln, Vorstellungen, die sie entweder gar nicht oder doch so wenig bemerkt, daß sie dieselben nicht unterscheidet'.⁹ *Parapraxes* or 'slips' occur when our clear and distinct knowledge of a thing is rivalled by our obscure, confused knowledge of the same thing: for example, we might feel admiration when we hear of another person's noble actions, yet our admiration may be tempered by some vague recollection of the other person's weaknesses (*Vermischte philosophische Schriften*, pp. 109–10). In such cases our obscure knowledge generally holds more sway over us than the clear because it is intimately related to the body – to our emotions and passions – whereas our clear knowledge is confined to the mind or understanding. For Sulzer, there are cogent physiological reasons for this: confused ideas affect a number of nerves in the brain at once and their movements then spread from the head to the chest and diaphragm, the seat of feeling; by contrast, a distinct idea touches only one single nerve in the

⁷ On the *cognitio obscura* and the upgrading of the senses in eighteenth-century Germany, see again Adler, 'Fundus Animae', and *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen*. Adler pays special attention to Baumgarten and Herder.

⁸ Johann Georg Sulzer, *Kurzer Begriff aller Wissenschaften und andern Theile der Gelehrsamkeit*, 2nd edn., Leipzig 1759, p. 159.

⁹ Sulzer, *Vermischte philosophische Schriften*, Leipzig 1773; repr. Hildesheim 1974, p. 107.

brain at a time and its related movement is never sufficiently strong to spread to any other part of the body (pp. 113–14). Even on a physiological level, our obscure ideas are more powerful than our clear ones; if a kind of rivalry should arise between these two types of ideas, a parapraxis or ‘Freudian slip’ will occur when the senses trick reason:

Wenn sich also zwei Vorstellungen zu gleicher Zeit efinden, so wirket die dunkle gar nicht auf den Verstand, sondern führet unmittelbar zur Empfindung, da indessen die andere den Verstand wenigstens auf etliche Augenblicke beschäftigt; und eben in diesen Augenblicken bemächtigt sich die dunkle Vorstellung der Seele, und bringt die Handlung hervor. Es ist nicht möglich, daß die langsame Wirkung der deutlichen Idee die schnelle Wirkung der dunkeln Ideen verhindere, und auf diese Art überraschet oft die Empfindung die Vernunft. (p. 115)

Sulzer is rather concerned by the implications of his own analysis: the power of our obscure, confused perceptions suggests to him that humankind will always be slaves to passion; the force of our obscure ideas accounts for our prejudices, superstitious beliefs and faith in all that is antipathetic to reason (p. 117).¹⁰

Sulzer’s cautious attitude towards the darker side of psychology and epistemology is echoed in Karl Philipp Moritz’s *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde* (1783–93). In one contribution to the journal, ‘Handlung ohne Bewußtseyn der Triebfedern, oder die Macht der dunkeln Ideen’, a Dr Wedekind describes an ongoing bad feeling he once had about one of his female patients: in spite of signs of the patient’s well-being, the doctor found himself fearing (apparently irrationally) for her health; he even cut short a journey to check up on her; finally, his worst suspicions were confirmed when his patient suddenly died.¹¹ Wedekind assures us that he is a level-headed man (*MzE* III, ii, 87); none the less, the power of such obscure presentiments suggests even to him that his senses sometimes dominate his reason: ‘so sehr auch meine Pathologie und Semiotik mich fest überzeugten, daß es mit der Krankheit nichts auf sich habe, so vermogte doch meine Vernunft nichts gegen meine innere Empfindung’ (*MzE*, III, ii, 82). The strength of his bad feelings about his patient leads Wedekind to the theory of the obscure perceptions and to some important conclusions regarding the freedom of the will:

Folgt nicht aus dieser Erzählung, daß die *dunkeln Ideen*, solche nemlich, deren Entstehen und Verhältnisse wir nicht genau kennen, uns oft zum Handeln determiniren? Folgt nicht ferner, daß die dunkeln Ideen und Vor-

¹⁰ On Sulzer’s fundamentally cautious account of the obscure perceptions, see also Wolfgang Riedel, ‘Erkennen und Empfinden: Anthropologische Achsendrehung und Wende zur Ästhetik bei Johann Georg Sulzer’ in *Der ganze Mensch: Anthropologie und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Schings, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 410–39 (especially pp. 410–23).

¹¹ See Karl Philipp Moritz, *GNOTHI SAUTON oder Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde als ein Lesebuch für Gelehrte und Ungerlehrte*, Berlin 1783–93, III, ii (1785), 80–9. Referred to in the text as *MzE*.

stellungen, wenn sie nur die *lebhaftesten* sind, uns zu Handlungen zwingen, die uns klare Ideen widerrathen? Folgt nicht endlich heraus die Bestätigung des Satzes, den der junge *Jerusalem* so evident erwiesen hat, und den ich so gewiß als mein Dasein glaube, *daß unser Handeln unwillkürlich ist?* (*MzE*, III, ii, 86)

Wedekind is here referring to Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem's essay *Ueber die Freiheit*, published by Lessing in 1776. In his essay Jerusalem equates virtue with the control of the passions by reason and in turn identifies reason as our ability to turn our obscure perceptions into distinct ones: 'Was heißt unsere Leidenschaften durch die Vernunft beherrschen? Nichts anders, als die *dunkeln Vorstellungen unserer Seele zu deutlichen aufklären.*'¹² For Jerusalem, the obscure perceptions are linked with vice and moral weakness through their association with our physical urges and involuntary conduct; our clear, distinct and rational ideas are connected with virtue and self-control. Taking his cue from Jerusalem, Dr Wedekind arrives at some troublesome psychological and moral conclusions when he contemplates the power of the obscure perceptions to determine his feelings and actions.

The cautious view of the obscure perceptions taken by figures such as Sulzer and Jerusalem exemplifies the strong presence of Cartesian, mind-body dualism in late eighteenth-century Germany. Other thinkers were less reserved in their reception of the *cognitio obscura*. In his *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele* (1778) Herder (famously) expostulates on the merits of basing psychology on physiology: 'Oft liegen unter dem Zwergfell Ursachen, die wir sehr unrichtig und mühsam im Kopf suchen; der Gedanke kann dahin nicht kommen, wenn nicht die Empfindung vorher an ihrem Ort war.'¹³ In his treatise he accordingly shows a profound appreciation of the dark depths of the human organism which belong to the province of the body and lie beyond the reach of rational cognition. Herder begins his enraptured account of human physiology and psychology in *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden* with Haller's 'Reiz' or irritable stimulus, which he regards as our most basic and obscure physical impulse and as the prototype of everything more refined:

So klein und dunkel dieser Anfang des edlen Vermögens, was wir Empfinden nennen, schein; so wichtig muß er seyn, so viel wird durch ihn ausgerichtet. Ohne Samenkörner ist keine Ernte, kein Gewächs ohne zarte Wurzeln und Staubfäden, und vielleicht wären unsre göttlichsten Kräfte nicht ohne diese Aussaat dunkler Regungen und Reize. (*SWS*, VIII, 171)

¹² *Philosophische Aufsätze von Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem (1776): Mit G. E. Lessings Vorrede und Zusätzen*, ed. Paul Beer, Berlin 1900, p. 26.

¹³ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, Berlin 1877–1913, VIII (1892), p. 179. This edition is henceforth referred to in the text as *SWS*.

For Herder, nothing exists in isolation in the irritable depths of the human organism: 'Der innere Mensch mit allen seinen dunklen Kräften, Reizen und Trieben ist nur *Einer*' (SWS, VIII, 178); this multiplicity and lack of distinctness mean that the depths of the organism resemble Leibniz's sea of *petites perceptions*: 'Ein Meer von Tiefen, wo Welle über Welle sich regen, und wo alle Abstraktionen von Aehnlichkeit, Klasse, allgemeiner Ordnung nur brette Wände des Bedürfnisses oder bunte Kartenhäuser zum Spiel sind' (SWS, VIII, 180–1). The human soul has no clear knowledge of the depths – 'sie war nicht im Stande, ein rauschendes Weltmeer so dunkler Wogen laut zu hören, ohne daß sie es mit Schauer und Angst, mit der Vorsorge aller Furcht und Kleinmüthigkeit umfinge und das Steuer ihrer Hand entfiele' (SWS, VIII, 185) – but the obscurity of the soul's knowledge in this respect is not only fortunate, but also a positive source of pleasure:

Die mütterliche Natur entfernte also von ihr [from the soul], was von ihrem klaren Bewußtseyn nicht abhängen *konnte*, wog jeden Eindruck ab, den sie davon bekam und sparte jeden Kanal aus, der zu ihr führte. Nun trennet sie nicht Wurzeln, sondern genießet Blüthe. Düfte wehen ihr aus dunkeln Büschen zu, die sie nicht pflanzte, nicht erzog; sie steht auf einem Abgrunde von Unendlichkeit und weiß nicht, daß sie darauf stehe; durch diese glückliche Unwissenheit steht sie fest und sicher. (SWS, VIII, 185)

The sensuous knowledge that drifts up to the higher part of the soul from the nether regions consists of obscure presentiments, imaginings and memories such as those described by Herder in his *Viertes Kritisches Wäldchen* (first published in 1878) as 'der dunkle Grund in uns'.¹⁴

Sulzer highlighted the ambivalence of the role of the obscure perceptions in human psychology; Herder, by contrast, beholds the dark depths of the human organism with intense delight. Other eighteenth-century thinkers, who were less wary than Sulzer but more cautious than Herder, integrated the theory of the obscure ideas into a normative framework. They were assisted in this by their tendency to roll the obscure perceptions into one with the unconscious *petites perceptions* from the *New Essays*. Leibniz had intended his theory of the *petites perceptions* as a challenge to a Cartesian (and Lockian) 'all or nothing' view of mental life: our lack of knowledge of the soul's activity is not necessarily equivalent to an absence of the soul's activity.¹⁵ As we shall see, thinkers such as Moses Mendelssohn and Jean Paul would follow Leibniz in construing the presence of obscure,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, IV (1878), p. 33. For a more detailed account of Herder's view of the obscure perceptions, see Adler, 'Fundus Animae', pp. 210–20, and *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen*.

¹⁵ See Nicholas Jolley, *Leibniz and Locke: A Study of the New Essays on Human Understanding*, Oxford 1984, p. 105.

unconscious perceptions in the human soul as proof that the soul is constantly active.¹⁶

In his response to an article by Johann Joachim Spalding on the subject of parapraxes in the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, Mendelssohn, like Sulzer, calls on the theory of the obscure perceptions.¹⁷ He links Sulzer's puzzle – 'daß die Seele zweyerley verschiedene Verrichtungen zugleich, eine durch deutliche, die andere durch dunkle Erkenntnis, sehr gut verrichten kann'¹⁸ – with Christian Wolff's distinction between 'efficient' ('wirksame') and 'inefficient' ('unwirksame') ideas: the former are designed to produce an action, and so have an effect in the body ('organischer Anstoß'); our inefficient ideas are the purely speculative or intellectual ones. Like Sulzer (and Spalding) before him, Mendelssohn allows that the soul can pursue two different chains of ideas simultaneously – the one clear and rational, the other obscure and unconscious: we might, for example, follow a speculative line of thought at the same time as we play a musical instrument (*MzE*, I, iii, 52). Problems such as those described by Spalding begin when an errant idea creeps into the chain of associations between our efficient ideas, or when two or more such ideas try to work on the same bodily organs at once in some of our automatic processes, such as in speech (*MzE*, I, iii, 52–63). The efficient ideas have a powerful influence over us precisely because they are obscure: 'in der Region der wirksamen Ideen können die dunkelsten Begriffe eine solche Gewalt besitzen, oder vielmehr die Begriffe, die eine so große praktische Gewalt haben, sind mehrentheils undeutlich, wegen der Geschwindigkeit, mit welcher sie aufeinander folgen, wie bei allen Fertigkeiten und Geschicklichkeiten der Menschen zu ersehen ist' (*MzE*, I, iii, 68).

Thus far, Mendelssohn's analysis of parapraxes has not differed significantly from that of Sulzer: he also entertains the idea of a kind of rivalry between our clear and obscure knowledge; like Sulzer, he is troubled by the power of our obscure ideas to confuse and confound the soul. However, the roots of Mendelssohn's thinking are more firmly rooted in rationalism than those of Sulzer; and he in fact begins his analysis of the darker side of mental life in the *Magazin* by stressing that the soul is always the

¹⁶ In a letter to a Dutch nobleman on how to educate a young man in philosophy (*Anweisung zur spekul. Philosophie, für einen jungen Menschen von 15–20 Jahren* (1774)), Mendelssohn – a life-long Leibnizian – recommends reading the *New Essays* in tandem with Locke's *Essay*. He writes: 'Ich vertraue mich zu behaupten, daß diese beiden Werke allein fast hinreichen, einen philosophischen Kopf zu bilden, wenn sie mit erforderlichem Nachdenken studiret werden' (Moses Mendelssohn, *Schriften zur Philosophie und Ästhetik*, III, i, Berlin 1932, p. 305). Jean Paul made excerpts from the *New Essays* (and from Locke's *Essay*) in 1787. See Götz Müller, *Jean Pauls Excerpte*, Würzburg 1988, p. 185.

¹⁷ 'Psychologische Betrachtungen auf Veranlassung einer von dem Herrn Oberkonsistorialrath Spalding an sich selbst gemachten Erfahrung, vom Herrn Moses Mendelssohn', *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, I, iii, 46–75. Mendelssohn had already expressed his fascination with the darker side of the psyche in a review of Sulzer's *Kurzer Begriff*. See Moses Mendelssohn, *Rezensionsartikel in Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend 1759–1765*, Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt 1991, pp. 91–2.

¹⁸ Sulzer, *Kurzer Begriff*, p. 163.

centre of all our mental and physical activity (*MzE*, I, iii, 46). In Mendelssohn's view, even though our efficient ideas are obscure and unconscious, they were originally no less mental than our speculative ones; our consciousness of them has now simply retreated: 'Ich sage, die ganze Reihe der Veränderungen [a chain of 'wirksame Ideen'] hört deswegen nicht auf, eine Wirkung der Seele zu seyn; ob diese sich gleich derselben nicht mehr bewußt ist' (*MzE*, I, iii, 49). Mendelssohn follows Leibniz in arguing that even our unconscious perceptions are governed by the soul; but whereas Leibniz's *petites perceptions* had never crossed the threshold of consciousness, Mendelssohn's efficient ideas have withdrawn to the unconscious depths of the soul.

Mendelssohn's view of our obscure knowledge in the *Magazin* is echoed and deepened later by Jean Paul in his fragment *Selina, oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* (1827). Mendelssohn stresses that our obscure ideas originate in the soul in spite of our failure to apperceive them; in *Selina*, Jean Paul goes one step further and suggests not only that our obscure perceptions are proof of the soul's constant activity, but also that higher states of consciousness are unbound precisely in the obscure, unconscious realm.

For Jean Paul in *Selina*, matter is imbued with active principles: it is an amalgam of forces such as motion, inertia, attraction and gravity. By their very nature, all such forces retain an occult quality; we can only guess at their nature by analogy with the sole 'Kraft' of which we have direct experience: the force of our will.¹⁹ Typically, we personify matter by regarding its active forces as analogous to our own power of will and action; we hereby turn the material world into a 'lebendig[e] Unterseelenwelt', a sort of *analogon rationis* (*Werke*, VI, 1179). Jean Paul describes this animated material world as a '(Leibnizianisch[es]) Monadensystem': a world in which everything is spiritual, just in differing degrees (*ibid.*). Here, he takes the ideas of hierarchy and continuity that play a central role in the *Monadology* – in Leibniz's notion of a hierarchy of monads with differing degrees of clarity of perception²⁰ – and applies them to the material world.

The Leibnizian idea that everything is spiritual, just in differing degrees, leads us to Jean Paul's important discussion of the 'unconscious' in *Selina*: on this view, the realm of the unconscious is a part of the soul like any other; it just happens to be the part that we do not apperceive. The unconscious is one of the biggest and still least known lands of the 'Ich': Jean

¹⁹ Jean Paul, *Erzählende und theoretische Werke*, ed. Norbert Miller, Munich 1959–63, VI, p. 1178. Referred to in the text as *Werke*.

²⁰ See Leibniz, *Monadology* (1714), §60: 'Monads are limited, not as to their objects, but with respect to the modifications of their knowledge of them. Monads all go confusedly to infinity, to the whole; but they are limited and differentiated by the degrees of their distinct perceptions' (Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Ariew and Garber, pp. 220–1).

Paul's 'inner[es] Afrika' (VI, 1182).²¹ More of this territory remains hidden than will ever be disclosed; we catch glimpses of its mountain peaks, but rarely see its dark valleys: 'Von der weiten vollen Weltkugel des Gedächtnisses drehen sich dem Geiste in jeder Sekunde immer nur einige erleuchtete Bergspitzen vor und die ganze übrige Welt bleibt in ihrem Schatten liegen' (*ibid.*). The 'worldly' part of the unconscious – its physical sphere of activity – is constituted by muscle control by the nerves, in particular those muscular movements that were first performed consciously with will and calculation, but which have now become automatic, 'die Tausende Gang-, Sprung-, Wurfbewegungen, die Flügelschläge und Finger-setzungen' (*ibid.*). These movements fall within the sphere of the unconscious because, although they were originally carried out with the coercion of 'Geist', our consciousness of them has now retreated. This does not mean that these movements are now performed without the mind's activity; we just no longer apperceive the element of 'Geist' within them.

Jean Paul's ideas on the realm of the unconscious have much in common with those of Mendelssohn in the *Magazin*. Mendelssohn too had identified certain muscular movements as now belonging to the unconscious whereas formerly they were performed with will and consciousness, 'mit vollem Bewußtseyn der Seele, und gleichsam unmittelbar auf ihren Befehl' (*MzE*, I, iii, 49). For Mendelssohn as for Jean Paul, the fact that such actions are now automatic and 'unconscious' does not detract from the mental, reflective component that inheres in them. Like Jean Paul, Mendelssohn construes the presence of a realm of the unconscious as proof of the soul's constant activity; for Jean Paul, though, 'spirit' or 'mind' is revealed most persuasively precisely when we fail to apperceive it.

The treatment of the phenomenon of animal magnetism in *Selina* derives its significance from being placed in the context of these ideas. For Jean Paul, animal magnetism enjoyed some close links with the realm of our obscure and unconscious knowledge; at the same time, his conception of magnetic sleep exemplified his belief that higher states of consciousness are unbound in states of dim awareness. In a theoretical essay from 1814, 'Mutmassungen über einige Wunder des organischen Magnetismus', he begins by placing animal magnetism in the context of eighteenth-century advances in anthropology, the study of mind-body relations: 'Schwerlich hat irgendet in Jahrhundert unter den Entdeckungen, welche auf die menschliche Doppelwelt von Leib und Geist zugleich Licht werfen, eine größere gemacht als das vorige am organischen Magnetismus.'²² He explains the phenomenon by identifying an 'aethereal body' ('Ätherleib') as the vehicle of magnetic energy: a 'missing link' between body and soul

²¹ See also Jean Paul's *Neues Kampaner Tak*: 'Das Unbewußte in den Geistern ist eigentlich das größere Reich und eben wegen dieses Unbewußtseyns das innere Afrika, dessen Gränzen, die man nicht kennt, sehr weit auseinander gehen können' (*Jean Pauls Sämtliche Werke, Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ii. *Nachlaß*, ed. Eduard Berend, Weimar 1928–, IV (1934), p. 210).

²² Jean Paul, *Jugendwerke und vermischte Schriften*, ed. Norbert Miller and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, Munich 1974–85, II (1976), p. 884.

which not only owes something to hermetic thinking, but also resembles the 'organs' of the soul posited by eighteenth-century physicians and philosophers such as Platner and Bonnet.²³ But although Jean Paul here bases his account of animal magnetism on anthropological (psycho-physiological) foundations, ultimately he uses the phenomenon as a springboard for a transcendence of the world of the senses. The drift of his argument is apparent early on in the essay in his attitude towards the fact that magnetised patients seem to receive sense impressions even though their external senses are closed. In Jean Paul's view this seeming paradox proves that the process of sensation is not reducible to purely physical or physiological factors; he concludes with regard to hearing that 'es muß demnach eine andere Hörlehre geben als die gemeine; und auf diese andere leitet eben der Magnetismus, welcher dem Ich auf andern Hebwerkzeugen als auf Luftwogen und Gehörknochen das Ton-Geistige zubringt' (*Jugendwerke*, II, 889). A few pages on, he repudiates all physiological explanations of animal magnetism (such as those by neural pathologists), arguing that the phenomenon transcends the realm of the purely natural; indications of magnetic sleep – improvements in the patients' intellectual abilities and moral attitudes, the gift of clairvoyance and so on – are all signs of the primacy of spirit over matter:

Noch einmal ziehe uns die große magnetische Erscheinung mit ihrem vollen Lichte vorüber, daß aus keinem gemeinen Körperlichen sich das Geistige erkläre, welches im Magnetismus vorherrscht; nicht die sittliche Läuterung und Reinheit, die schärfere Reizbarkeit für alles Moralische und die Liebe alles Edeln; und nicht das wunderbare Einschauen des Kranken in des Arztes Herz und Kopf. (*Jugendwerke*, II, 903)

Jean Paul's view of animal magnetism allies him with contemporaries such as Karl Christian Wolfart and Joseph Ennemoser who argued that magnetic sleep unleashes man's highest moral and intellectual faculties and abilities. To Ennemoser, all the features of magnetic sleep suggest that the patients are enjoying a higher state of being: their expressions of feelings of pleasure and beneficence and their strong moral sentiments; their loss of interest in their physical situation and contemplation of abstract, intellectual issues; and their repugnance to everything coarse and vulgar.²⁴ Some patients can even reach a state of ultimate 'Vergeistung' – 'der allerhöchste Zustand des Hellsehens, der innere Sinn tritt völlig unbeschränkt hervor und die ganze Natur wird ihm gleichsam wie im Paradiese erschlossen' –; but this condition is reserved for only the purest souls: 'Wahrscheinlich genießen nur Gott geweihte Seelen schon auf dieser Welt diese

²³ See Götz Müller, *Jean Pauls Ästhetik und Naturphilosophie*, Tübingen 1983, pp. 43–4.

²⁴ Joseph Ennemoser, *Der Magnetismus nach der allseitigen Beziehung seines Wesens, seiner Erscheinungen, Anwendung und Enträthselung in einer geschichtlichen Entwicklung von allen Zeiten und bei allen Völkern*, Leipzig 1819, pp. 132–45.

Gefühle der Seeligkeit, die der Schöpfer und allgerechte Vergelter auch nach diesem Leben nur Guten aufbewahrt.²⁵

In *Selina*, the heroine – who magnetises others and is herself then magnetised by Jean Paul – from the outset belongs more to another world than to this one, and so is sufficiently pure to experience a peak of absolute ‘Vergeistung’ in magnetic sleep. Shortly before Selina is magnetised by Jean Paul, it is said that misfortune has already made her spirit retreat to the highest part of her physical being: ‘Wenn von äußerer Gewalt die körperlichen Außenwerke, ja die ganze Festung erobert sind: so ist darum noch nicht der Geist überwunden; er zieht sich wie in ein Allerheiligstes in die Burg des Gehirns zurück, in den höhern Nervenkörper [...]’ (*Werke*, VI, 1214). Jean Paul commences his treatment; and Selina is almost immediately in a heightened state: ‘Kaum hatt’ ich einige Minuten meine Hände auf Haupt und Herzgrube gelegt: so entseelten sich die großen Lichtaugen und drückten sich wie gestorbne selber zu – und plötzlich verklärte sich das ganze Gesicht wie das [einer] in eine höhere Welt Dahingegangnen’ (VI, 1219). The speed with which Selina enters another, higher realm is testimony of her purity of spirit. Although her beloved, Henrion, is not yet dead, his soul now speaks with her, urging her not to grieve over him and telling her of the higher existence that lovers can enjoy in other galaxies after death (VI, 1220). In Selina’s magnetic sleep, the future is lifted into the present, giving us a glimpse of a higher condition; by analogy, this bears out Jean Paul’s conviction that the world of the senses is imbued with spiritual properties which are unbound in different, higher states of consciousness.

Sulzer had conceded the importance of obscure ideas in human psychology, but his attitude towards them had been cautious owing to their links with the body and the passions; much the same can be said of the contributors to Moritz’s *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*. Herder played a central role in the upgrading of the obscure perceptions in eighteenth-century German psychology and aesthetics, but his bold appreciation of all things bodily set him apart from the majority of his contemporaries. Other thinkers, such as Mendelssohn and Jean Paul, were able to accept and appreciate the obscure perceptions when they had integrated them into a normative framework. Typically, they rolled Leibniz’s obscure ideas into one with his *petites perceptions* from the *New Essays* and hereby arrived at a more positive view of the *cognitio obscura*, following Leibniz in arguing that the *petites perceptions* are proof of the soul’s constant activity. In his analysis of parapraxes in Moritz’s *Magazin*, Mendelssohn stresses the Leibnizian idea that a lack of consciousness of the soul’s activity does not amount to an absence of the soul’s activity. In *Selina*, Jean Paul goes one step further and suggests not only that the presence of obscure, uncon-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137. On interpretations of animal magnetism in Germany between the Late Enlightenment and Romanticism, see Jürgen Barkhoff, *Magnetische Fiktionen: Literarisierung des Mesmerismus in der Romantik*, Stuttgart 1995, pp. 85–136.

scious perceptions in the soul is a sign of the soul's constant activity, but also that higher states of consciousness are unbound precisely where we least expect them: in states of obscure awareness, such as magnetic sleep.

The evolution of the theory of the obscure, unconscious perceptions in Germany between the Late Enlightenment and Romanticism can be seen to reflect a general trend in German thinking during this period. The theory of the obscure ideas rose to prominence against the background of the Enlightenment's emancipation of the senses; but resistance to sensualism and naturalism in eighteenth-century Germany meant that the obscure perceptions were generally either regarded with suspicion or else integrated into the idealistic context furnished by Leibniz in his *New Essays*. The remaining part of this paper concentrates on two German novels from the turn of the nineteenth century that can be seen to illustrate these alternatives: Tieck's *William Lovell* (1795–96) and Jean Paul's *Titan* (1800–03).

William Lovell charts the development of the central character from an enthusiast and emotionalist to a cold materialist, moral relativist and sceptic: in this novel, the psychological interest runs deep. Lovell starts out as a 'Schwärmer' who trusts his senses more than his reason and hearkens to presentiments and obscure feelings: 'Eduard, eine dunkle, ungewisse Ahnung hat mich befallen, als sei hier, in diesen Momenten eine der Epochen meines Lebens [. . .]. Ja, Eduard, spottete nicht meiner Schwäche, ich bin in diesen Augenblicken abergläubig wie ein Kind.'²⁶ At this early stage, he enjoys any loss of self-awareness, such as when he is carried away by enthusiasm after confessing his love for Amalie Wilmont: 'Ich war auf alles gefaßt, aber nicht auf diese Milde eines glänzenden Engels [. . .]. – Ich zweifelte in diesem Augenblicke an meinem Dasein, an meinem Bewußtsein – an allem. Meine Freude hatte mich einer Ohnmacht nahe gebracht' (p. 258). But increasingly, our attention is drawn to the ambivalent nature of any pleasure that William takes in a loss of self-awareness and self-control. In a letter to Balder from Paris, he celebrates his love for Louise Blainville, vehemently denies that this love is purely sensuous (as Balder has intimated in another letter), and swears that he never loved Amalie (p. 299). The next morning, however, he is shocked by his words, realising that he wrote them entirely without presence of mind:

Ich erwache – und erschrecke, Balder, indem ich dies noch einmal überlese. – Wie ein Schwindel befällt mich die Erinnerung an gestern – Amaliens Andenken kömmt in der ganzen Heiligkeit der Unschuld auf mich zu, mit herzdurchschneidender Wehmut – o Balder, ich möchte vor mir selber entfliehen. – Was ist die Stärke des Menschen? – Ich bin ein Elender, tröste mich, wenn Du kannst. (p. 300)

²⁶ Tieck, *Frühe Erzählungen und Romane*, p. 242. All references to this edition will henceforth appear in the text, cited by page number only.

The problem of our loss of presence of mind when we are ruled by our passions is also the subject of a letter from Karl Wilmont to his friend Mortimer written around the same time as William's letter to Balder. In this letter, Karl's description of the conflict between reason and the passions takes the form of a humorous allegory in which the understanding sits in an armchair and delivers a lecture to the unruly passions (pp. 310–11). The understanding puts it to the passions that they should respect his authority, and they seem to agree; he sits back and relaxes, but the 'children' start fighting again as soon as he begins to doze:

“Was ist denn schon wieder vorgefallen?” fährt er auf. – “Ach! da hat die verdammte Liebe wieder tausend Streiche gemacht – da hat sich die Eifersucht den Kopf blutig gestoßen und in drei andere Köpfe gar Löcher geschlagen – da ist der Zorn mit einem durchgegangen – ach, es läßt sich nicht erzählen, wie viele Unglücksfälle sich indes ereignet haben.” – Der Verstand schlägt die Hände über den Kopf zusammen und muß nun mühsam wieder alles in Geleise bringen; oft aber legt er, wie ein Regent, der kein Mittel sich zu helfen sieht, plötzlich die Regierung nieder, entwischt aus seinem eignen Lande – und dann ist alles verloren, in einer ewigen Anarchie zerrüttet sich der Staat selbst. – Der letzte Fall wird hoffentlich nie bei mir eintreten, aber der erste wahrscheinlich noch oft. (p. 311)

As Karl goes on to tell Mortimer, he himself is subject to just such emotional turmoil when his love for Emilie Burton robs him of his presence of mind. In such instances, he finds himself behaving like William Lovell, saying and doing things which his reason would urge him to avoid:

Ich weiß nicht, wie es geschah, aber plötzlich kam der Geist Lovells über mich – ich drückte mit Entzücken die Rose an meine Lippen. – Unser Gespräch nahm itzt eine andre und empfindsamere Wendung, ich hatte Abreise und alles vergessen, und sprach mich mit der größten Unbesonnenheit in eine Wärme und Vertraulichkeit hinein, die sich nachher mit einer völligen Erklärung meiner Liebe endigte. (p. 312)

The problems of passion and our lack of self-awareness in states of passion in *William Lovell* are illustrated perhaps most clearly in the account of William's ill-fated relationship with the Italian girl, Rosaline. The story of their liaison begins with the description of William's loss of self-awareness when he first lays eyes on Rosaline's charms:

O Rosa, ich habe bis jetzt noch gar kein Weib gesehn, ich habe nicht gewußt, was Schönheit ist [. . .]. Ich fuhr wie aus einem Traume auf; wie man im Bette nach dem Gegenstande faßt, von dem man geträumet hat, so sah ich mich betäubt nach allen Seiten um, sie zu entdecken. – Ich taumelte in die Stadt zurück, und träumte die ganze Nacht nur von dem schönen unbekanntem Mädchen. (p. 413)

Characteristically, William's loss of presence of mind is bound up with his powerful sexual passion for Rosaline:

Wenn ich ihr gegenüber sitze – o wie Feuer weht mich ihr Atem an! Ich habe ihr schon an den Busen stürzen wollen, und diese Reize mit unzähligen Küssen bedecken; ich träume oft so lebhaft vor mir hin, daß ich nachher ungewiß bin, ob ich es nicht schon getan habe. Es reißt mich eine unbekannte Kraft zu ihr hinüber, die Töne ihrer Laute klingen mir oft schmerzhaft im Kopfe nach – und bald, bald muß es sich ändern, oder ich verliere den Verstand. (p. 427)

In turn, William's loss of self-awareness is responsible for his conviction that he is not a free agent:

Ich habe mehrere Tage hindurch in einer Verworrenheit aller Begriffe und Empfindungen gelebt [. . .]. Das Leben ist das Allerlustigste und Lächerlichste, was man sich denken kann; alle Menschen tummeln sich wie klappernde Marionetten durcheinander, und werden an plumpen Drähten regiert, und sprechen von ihrem freien Willen. (p. 441)

William's conviction that somebody or something else is pulling his strings means that he is unable to give a reliable account of his own actions. He thus has no recollection of murdering Rosaline's bridegroom: 'Sagen Sie, was Sie wollen, es ist nicht möglich, daß ich schuld an seinem Tode sein sollte, wenigstens kann ich es nicht glauben' (p. 441).

The Rosaline tragedy in *William Lovell* is followed by some discussion by William of paraproxes and related phenomena. In one striking passage, he admits to his friend Eduard Burton that he once had an almost overwhelming urge to push him off a high cliff that they had climbed together: 'Ich sah Dich frei in der Luft schweben, und eine unbegreifliche Lust ergriff mich, Dich von der Spitze des Felsen in die Tiefe hinunterzustoßen' (p. 461). This urge, of course, went against his better judgement; but the more he tried to resist it, the stronger it became: 'je mehr ich mich dieser Begierde erwehren wollte, desto heftiger ward sie in mir' (p. 461). Similarly, William now begins to remember instances from his childhood of urges he felt to curse, blaspheme, and even to commit murder; his memories of such feelings are sparked off by his belief that he is not a free agent:

Wie mag es überhaupt wohl um unsre Willkür stehen? Wer weiß, was es ist, was uns regelt und regiert, welcher Geist, der außer uns wohnt, und nur allmächtig und unwiderstehlich in uns hineingreift. Aus meinen Kinderjahren fallen mir manche Tage ein, wo ich unaufhörlich etwas Greuliches und Entsetzliches denken mußte, wo ich statt meinem stillen Gebete Gott mit den gräßlichsten Flüchen lästerte und darüber weinte, und es doch nicht unterlassen konnte, wo es mich unwiderstehlich drängte, meine Gespielen zu ermorden, und ich mich oft schlafen legte, bloß um es nicht zu tun. (p. 471)

The problem of unaccountable urges was central to the discussion of parapraxes and related phenomena in eighteenth-century German psychology, where it was generally agreed that strong urges would produce irrational and paradoxical behaviour owing to their links with the body and the passions. In a short article from the *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, Moritz confesses that he has sometimes felt an overwhelming urge to jump off a high building or to shout in church; although he is well aware that it would not be advisable to follow such urges, he also recognises that his reason is powerless in such instances, and knows that his only possible course of action is to hasten away from the scene before temptation gets the better of him after all.²⁷ And in Bonaventura's *Nachtwachen* (1804), Kreuzgang's mental self-portrait depicts him as a mixture of angel and beast ('eine Grazie, eine Meerkatze und en face den Teufel dazu'): the visual image of the poles of his nature that rise to prominence at horribly inappropriate times:

Dieser verdammte Widerspruch in mir geht so weit, daß z. B. der Papst selbst beim Beten nicht andächtiger sein kann, als ich beim Blasphemieren, da ich hingegen wenn ich recht gute erbauliche Werke durchlese, mich der boshaftesten Gedanken dabei durchaus nicht erwehren kann. Wenn andere verständige und gefühlvolle Leute in die Natur hinauswandern um sich dort poetische Stüfts- und Taborshütten zu errichten, so trage ich vielmehr dauerhafte und auserlesene Baumaterialien zu einem allgemeinen Narrenhause zusammen, worin ich Prosaisten und Dichter beieinander einsperren möchte. Ein paar Male jagte man mich aus Kirchen weil ich dort lachte, und ebensooft aus Freudenhäusern, weil ich drin beten wollte.²⁸

In *William Lovell* the themes of loss of self-awareness and parapraxes belong firmly in the context of one of the novel's central themes: the problem of determinism. Lovell's determinism has its origins in his sensualism and empiricism, which lead him to view life as a series of fleeting pictures, like shadows on a wall: 'Oft schwebt die Welt mit ihren Menschen und Zufälligkeiten wie ein bestandloses Schattenspiel vor meinen Augen' (p. 402). Sometimes he is simply an observer: 'ja wohl verfliegt alles und geht hinweg, und ich bin der betrübte Zuschauer des Possenspiels' (p. 458); more often, though, he is a marionette in this vain spectacle: 'Oft erschein ich mir dann selbst wie ein mitspielender Schatten, der kömmt und geht, ohne zu wissen warum' (p. 402). At best, Lovell seizes on the 'Bewußtlosigkeit' of the marionette as a state of absolute forgetfulness of guilt and sin: 'Es gibt nichts Höheres im Menschen, als den Zustand der Bewußtlosigkeit; dann ist er glücklich, dann kann er sagen, er sei zufrieden. Und so wird er im Tode sein' (p. 633); as a rule, though, he construes his lack of self-consciousness as a sign of his absence of freedom.

²⁷ Karl Philipp Moritz, 'Willensfreiheit', *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, I, ii, 100.

²⁸ Bonaventura, *Nachtwachen*, Stuttgart 1990, p. 57.

William Lovell is a Late Enlightenment novel in which obscure urges and unconscious actions are related to the body and passions and the problem of determinism. In Jean Paul's *Titan*, the realm of the obscure and unconscious is treated rather differently through being placed in the context of Leibnizian ideas. One of the central sets of associations in *Titan* – and one which plays an important role in the upgrading of the obscure and unconscious in this novel – is the connection between obscure ideas and memory. Here Jean Paul was perhaps inspired by Leibniz's suggestion that the *petites perceptions* constitute traces or imprints of the past in the individual's soul.²⁹ In *Titan* he often uses imagery of darkness and twilight in connection with the hero Albano's memories of his childhood and the past. In the first 'Jobelperiode' Albano goes for a walk on the island of Isola Bella, where he spent the first three years of his life; here he finds cool, shady places which remind him of his childhood: 'Er durchschwankte alle heilige Stätten in diesem gelobten Lande – Er ging in die dunkle Arkade, wo er die Reliquien seiner Kindheit und seinen Vater gefunden hatte.'³⁰ In eighteenth-century Germany Herder also forged a link between childhood and the obscure in his *Viertes Kritisches Wäldchen*. For Herder, one of the miracles of childhood is that it brings us so close to our origins; the closer we get to our origins, the more indistinct all our perceptions become: 'Unsre Kindheit ist ein dunkler Traum von Vorstellungen, so wie er gleichsam nur auf das Pflanzengefühl folgen kann' (SWS, IV, 31).

In *Titan* – which is after all his most strongly classical novel – Jean Paul often describes character development in terms of plant growth;³¹ correspondingly, childhood and the individual's past are here brought into an association with the roots and first shoots of organic life. For Albano, Italy is the 'Rosenparterre der Kindheit' (p. 23), and the village of Blumenbühl where he grew up is the 'träumerisch[e] Klause seines ersten grünen Lebens' (p. 338). In turn, Jean Paul links childhood memories and organic metaphors with the obscure perceptions. This particular association of ideas is forged very strikingly when the smell of orange blossom on Isola Bella evokes some strong but indistinct memories in Albano:

Ach er wußte nicht, daß es die Düfte waren, die er hier in seiner Kindheit so oft in die Brust gesogen, und welche nun jede Phantasie und Erinnerung der Vergangenheit dunkel, aber gewaltsam zurückriefen, eben weil Düfte, ungleich den abgenützten Merkmalen des Auges und des Ohres, seltener

²⁹ See Leibniz, *New Essays*, p. 55: 'These insensible perceptions also indicate and constitute the same individual, who is characterized by the vestiges or expressions which the perceptions preserve from the individual's former states, thereby connecting these with his present state.'

³⁰ Jean Paul, *Erzählende und theoretische Werke*, III (1961), pp. 54–5. All references to *Titan* will henceforth appear in the text, cited by page number only.

³¹ See e.g. pp. 14–15: 'Nach dem Tode der Mutter versetzte ihn sein Vater aus der welschen Blumenerde [...] in den deutschen Reichsforst, nämlich nach *Blumenbühl* [...].'

kommen und also leichter und heftiger die verblichene Empfindung erneuern. (p. 36)

The full force of his childhood memories strikes him when he steps into a dark, mossy grotto by the sea:

Aber als er in eine Arkade des Palastes, welche bunte Steine und Muscheln stückend färbten, geriet, und als er die Wogen spielend auf die Schwelle der Grotte hüpfen sah: so deckte sich ihm auf einmal eine bemoosete Vergangenheit auf – er durchsuchte seine Erinnerungen – die Farbensteine der Grotte lagen gleichsam voll Inschriften der vorigen Zeit vor seinem Gedächtnis. – – Ach hier war er ja tausendmal mit seiner Mutter gewesen, sie hatte ihm die Muscheln gezeigt und die Nähe der Wellen verboten [. . .]. (*ibid.*)³²

Childhood memories and obscure ideas are also linked by means of another association in *Titan*: the connections of both with morning. The links between childhood and morning in the novel emerge forcibly when Albano and his companions cross Lake Maggiore by night in order to arrive on Isola Bella, Albano's 'childhood island', at dawn. Similarly, Albano later visits Liane – who is by now staying with his adoptive family in Blumenbühl – early one spring morning, stepping into his own past as he walks:

Unter einem frischen Morgenblau ging er voll Hoffnungen, heute sein immer in weiße Nebel hineinlaufendes Leben aufzuhellen, jenen alten Weg [. . .]. Der ganze blühende Steig war ihm eine römische Erde, woraus er schönbemalte Vasen der Vergangenheit ausgrub; und je näher dem Dorfe, desto breiter wurden die geheiligten Plätze. (p. 336)

For Jean Paul, the links between morning and memory were perhaps suggested by the fact that early morning is typically a time full of promise of the day to come; by analogy, our unconscious memories are always charged with the potential to rise to consciousness and clarity.

For Jean Paul, morning was also a time of promise and anticipation owing to its resemblances to evening: as he notes in *Titan*, the sound of morning bells tends to remind us of the evening bells and vice versa (p. 203). In *Titan* morning is usually associated with childhood and the past, and evening with the future: 'Die Natur [. . .] war heute ein Abendstern voll Dämmerlicht – die Welt und die Zukunft lagen so groß um ihn und doch so nahe und berührend' (p. 55). But the association between evening and the future is only possible because evening itself is full of

³² For a similar convergence of associations between obscurity, childhood memories and dark vegetation in Jean Paul, see for example the following passage from *Hesperus*: 'hinter seinen [Viktor's] verdunkelten Augen, in seinem überschatteten, mit dem Grün der Natur aufgeschlagenen Innern, das gleichsam abendrote Vorhänge dunkel machten, brach eine Farben-Nacht an, in welcher alle kleine Gestalten seiner Kindheit neblig aufstiegen' (*Werke*, I, p. 622).

promise of the next morning. Jean Paul can thus describe an evening landscape – the view over Lilar park – using ‘morning’ imagery:

Albano und Liane kamen vor eine Aussicht, wo die weite Morgenlandschaft mit den Lichtstreifen von blühenden Mohnfeldern und mit dunkeln Dörfern an die sanften Gebirge hinanstieg, wo der Mond aufwachte und der Glanz seines Gewandes schon wie der eines Geistes durch den Himmel streifte – hier blieben sie, auf die Luna wartend, stehen. (p. 351)

We should note that the idea that morning and evening are intimately related – the notion that each contains a promise of the other and that past and future hereby come together in one dynamic, cyclical whole – also plays an important role in *Hesperus* (1795). Venus, or Hesperus, is both the morning and the evening star; one of the novel’s central themes is the question of how we can rise above the fleeting passage of time by forging continuity between past and future, and by appreciating the value of memory and hope.³³

The question of how to forge continuity between past and future is also very important in *Titan*, where it can be placed in the context of Jean Paul’s reception of Leibnizian ideas in the novel. According to Leibniz, the *petites perceptions* not only constituted traces of the past in the individual’s soul; they also helped to link past, present and future on a more general, abstract level by virtue of their persistence in the human soul as imprints of a universe in which perceptive eyes can see the whole reflected in the smallest grain of sand (*New Essays*, p. 55). In one important passage from *Titan*, Jean Paul laments that the majority of mortals (and even his hero Albano) are wasteful with their experiences and carry precious little of the past over into the present and future with them:

O da alle Erfahrungen so teuer sind, da sie uns entweder unsere Tage kosten oder unsere Kräfte oder unsere – Irrtümer: o warum muß der Mensch an jedem Morgen vor der Natur, die mit jedem Tautropfen in der Blume wuchert, so verarmet über die tausend vergeblich vertrockneten Tränen erröten, die er schon vergossen und gekostet hat? – Aus Frühlingen zieht diese Allmächtige Sommer auf, aus Wintern Frühlinge, aus Vulkanen Wälder und Berge, aus der Hölle einen Himmel, aus diesem einen größern – – und wir törichte Kinder wissen uns aus keiner Vergangenheit eine Zukunft zu bereiten, die uns stillt. (pp. 56–57)

In *Titan* the theme of the past and the question of how we can carry elements of the past over into the present and future in a meaningful fashion play a central role in giving the novel the thematic and formal

³³ See *Werke*, I, p. 578: ‘Den umgaukelten Menschen führen zwei *Prospektmalerinnen* durch das ganze Theater, die *Erinnerung* und die *Hoffnung* – in der Gegenwart ist er ängstlich, das Vergnügen wird ihm nur in tausend lilliputische Augenblicke eingeschent wie dem Gulliver; wie soll das berauschen oder sättigen?’

cohesion it has often been denied.³⁴ In the first four 'Jobelperioden' Jean Paul lays the foundations of the whole novel by exploring Albano's memories of his childhood on Isola Bella and of his Blumenbühl past with Wehrfritz and Albine, Rabette, Dian, Liane and Roquairol. We arrive in the present in the fifth 'Jobelperiode', when the hero comes to the university town of Pestitz; essentially, though, the rest of volume one and volume two will chart a coming to realisation of elements of Albano's past – especially of his Blumenbühl past – showing us the development of his love for Liane and his friendship with Roquairol. At the beginning of volume three, Albano's past hopes and dreams all seem to have reached fruition, and he enjoys a brief period of happiness with Liane. In the chronology of the novel, we have now reached the height of summer; and the imagery surrounding Albano during this period is that of the midday heat and scorching sun. The concentration on light and heat in this part of the novel reflects not only the pitch of Albano's passion for Liane – 'die glühende Einzigen-Liebe' that she cannot reciprocate (p. 374) – but also his desire to bathe in the bright light of the past made present (and the dream made reality):

Wenn er sie [Liane] wiederfand [after even a short absence]: so war die Erde ein Sonnenkörper, aus welchem Strahlen führen, sein Herz stand in lauter Licht, und wie ein Mensch, der an einem Frühlingmorgen von dem Frühlingmorgen träumt, ihn noch heller um sich findet, wenn er erwacht, so schlug er nach dem seligen Jugendtraum von der Geliebten die Augen auf vor ihr und verlangte den schönsten Traum nicht mehr. (p. 357)

But Albano's fixation on the present and his loss of memory and longing in this part of the novel exemplify the wasteful attitude towards experience that Jean Paul had complained about earlier. He now warns Albano that he is tempting fate by refusing to acknowledge it:

'Ja', (sagt' er) 'ich bin ganz glücklich und brauche nichts mehr, kein Schicksal, nur mein und ihr Herz!' Albano, möge dein böser Genius diesen gefährlichen Gedanken nicht gehöret haben, damit er ihn nicht zur Nemesis trage! O in diesem wildverwachsenen Leben ist kein Schritt, sogar in den blühenden Lustgängen, ganz sicher, und mitten in der Fülle dieses Kunstgartens erwartet dich ein fremder finsterer Giftbaum und hauchet kalte Gifte in das Leben! (p. 356)

³⁴ Writing to Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger about the *Vorschule der Ästhetik* on 29 July 1816, Tieck remarked that Jean Paul had been mistaken in thinking the plot of *Titan* a good one: 'Die Naivetät, sich selbst immer zu citiren, hat mir gefallen, auch die Sicherheit, mit der er den Plan des Titan für einen gut erdachten hält: das Schlimmste (einzelne herrliche Sachen abgerechnet natürlich), wohin sich J. Paul verstiegen hat' (*Solger's nachgelassene Schriften und Briefwechsel*, ed. Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich von Raumer, Leipzig 1826, I, p. 431). The view still persists today that Jean Paul was congenitally incapable of constructing a decent plot. See e.g. Kurt Wölfel, 'Die Unlust zu fabulieren: Über Jean Pauls Romanfabel, besonders im *Titan*', in Wölfel, *Jean Paul-Studien*, ed. Bernhard Buschendorf, Frankfurt a.M. 1989, pp. 51–71.

Sure enough, time soon marches onwards, and Albano finds that he must now do battle against Liane's conviction that she is soon to die and resist her attempts to steer him in the direction of Linda. In fact, almost as soon as Albano's and Liane's love for each other comes to fruition, the state of 'Sein' gives way to one of 'Werden' again (p. 369). The rest of volume three of *Titan* is then characterised by a pull towards futurity. This is not least owing to the fact that Albano, who is soon separated from Liane, here spends most of his time hoping and expecting to be reunited with her and to recapture his former happiness. The third volume of *Titan* also abounds with warnings and dark omens, such as the note from Albano's (as yet unnamed) sister telling him to beware of the princess (p. 500), the *Kahlkopf's* prediction of Schoppe's madness (p. 520), and Albano's presentiment of some disaster threatening Liane (p. 527). Volume three in fact marks the termination of virtually all the happiness that the first two volumes of the novel have established: there are to be no more friendly outings to Lilar, Rabette is deflowered by Roquairol, and Albano's friendship with the seducer comes to a violent end. The one element of the past to which Albano clings is Liane, but his presentiments of disaster in this quarter are well founded, for Liane soon dies. By the end of volume three, the hero seems to have lost his entire Blumenbühl past, which is now only 'verhaßt' to him, and 'entstellt' in his perception (p. 532). He leaves for Italy with Gaspard with a stubborn refusal to remember his losses and a trance-like fixation on the future with his supposed father:

Kein Auge schauete auf die Blumenbühler Höhe hinüber, von der eben jetzt ein schwarzes Wagengefolge langsam mit aufrecht-brennenden Trauerfackeln wie ein ziehendes Schattenreich herunterging, um das stille gute Herz, worin Albano und Gott gelebt [Liane], mit seinen toten Wunden an den sanften Ort der Ruhe zu führen. [. . .] Tränenlos und weit ruhte Albanos Auge am schimmernden, unaufhörlich gehenden Schöpfrad der Zeit, das ewig Sternbilder in Morgen einschöpfte und in Westen ausgoß; und seine kindliche Hand faßte leise die väterliche. (pp. 556–7)

Albano now – compliant, credulous and apparently without a past of his own – is Gaspard's ideal creature. Yet the outcome of the voyage to Italy will in fact be the triumph of Albano's 'inner' life over the artificial identity constructed for him by Gaspard; in volume four, the Gaspard action comes to its terminus, but this first conclusion is transcended by the resolution of the hero's 'inner' action: by the ultimate flowering of those elements of the past that volume three had seemed to lay to rest.

In volume four Gaspard takes Albano to Italy not to make a 'hero' of him, but to unite him with Linda as the gentlemen go through the motions of a 'Grand Tour'. Yet for Albano, the voyage to the land of his birth has deep significance as a journey into his own origins and an emancipation of the 'heroic' spirit that lies within him. His dominant sentiment in Rome is melancholy at so many signs of the passage of time and his own powerlessness (p. 576), and he now begins to long for concrete

activity, inspired by his conviction that the real Rome is the heroic one: 'Wie in Rom, im wirklichen Rom, ein Mensch nur genießen und vor dem Feuer der Kunst weich zerschmelzen könne, anstatt sich schamrot aufzumachen und nach Kräften und Taten zu ringen, das begreif' ich nicht' (p. 583). Gaspard, who has not reckoned with this reaction, is baffled by Albano's melancholy and irritated by his decision to join the revolutionary fighters in France. His opposition to Albano's 'heroism' is owing to the fact that he anticipates a conflict between Albano's ambitions and the future that he has devised for him. And Gaspard is right to be worried, for Albano's longing for heroic deeds in this part of the novel repeatedly drives a wedge between him and Linda (who cannot understand why Albano is not completely fulfilled by his love for her) and thus disrupts Gaspard's plans. Albano's relationship with Linda in volume four is consistently threatened and eventually undermined by rumblings from the past. When the couple meet on Isola Bella, Jean Paul draws our attention to the obscure memories evoked by the island; when Albano and Linda visit Albano's old playroom, they become increasingly uncomfortable as the ghosts of the past seem to threaten their union in the present:

Immer mehr wurd' ihm in der helldunkeln Stube unheimlich – ein Sonnenstreif brannte seltsam durch das hohe Fenster herab – beseelter auferstandner Staub spielte in ihm – die Geister der Schwester und Lianens konnten jede Minute durch das Erdenlicht blitzen – und entfernter standen die Gebürge draußen im Leben. Er sah die blühende Linda an, da kam sie ihm auf einmal anders vor, fremd, überirdisch, als erscheine sie unter den Geistern und gehe wieder von hinnen. Sie sah ihn bedeutend an mit den Worten: 'Hier ists unheimlich, gehen wir!' (p. 670)

The obscure and disquieting sentiments that stir within Albano and Linda probably originate in the couple's dark memories of having been brought up on Isola Bella as brother and sister, which give rise to a suspicion within them that their union is not a holy one. Albano and Linda are not siblings at all, of course, but what counts here is their unconscious knowledge that all is not right between them for reasons that lie deep in the past.

By the time we leave the shores of Isola Bella for the second time, the Gaspard action is by and large complete, awaiting only the seal of marriage between Albano and Linda. The strand of the action related to Albano's inner mysteries and which stirred again in the playroom on Isola Bella has, however, yet to be resolved. Before *Titan* can reach its conclusion we must therefore journey back into Albano's Blumenbühl past once more. Jean Paul clearly hopes that his readers will compare the action in volume four to that in the first volume, for he now has his hero return from Italy and visit Blumenbühl on Wehrfritz's birthday – mirroring the second 'Jobelperiode', where Albano's revisitation of his childhood had begun with his memories of this occasion. The ultimate triumph of the hero's 'inner' action over the external intrigue will now be worked out in Germany, where the final resolution of the Gaspard action is jeopardised and

eventually precluded by stirrings from Albano's Blumenbühl past. In particular, Roquairol now decides to take Albano to task for what he construes as a breach of trust – Albano's relationship with Linda – and hereby brings to its logical terminus an element of the plot that was sown long ago in Germany on Ascension Day, when Albano first presumed to offer resistance to Gaspard's Gothic machinery and swore to have nothing to do with Linda for Roquairol's sake (p. 254).

Provided that we distinguish between the strand of the action related to the hero's 'inner' mysteries – his obscure memories of his own past and the persons and hopes connected with it – and the external intrigue foisted on Albano by Gaspard, we can certainly appreciate Jean Paul's careful plotting in *Titan*. In the first four 'Jobelperioden' he lays the foundations of the narrative by exploring his hero's memories of his distant childhood on Isola Bella and more recent childhood in Blumenbühl. The development of Albano's 'inner' action then occupies volumes one to three, which show the realisation, followed by the loss, of the dreams related to his Blumenbühl past. In volume four, Gaspard's intrigue reaches its logical conclusion, but the resolution of this strand of the action is quickly undermined by new stirrings from the hero's own past, both distant and more recent: Roquairol seduces Linda, Schoppe discloses Albano's true origins, and Albano finds his true love in Idoine (a mature and more worldly version of Liane). The plot of *Titan* thus illustrates the primacy of the mysteries that lie in the recesses of human consciousness – dark memories of one's own origins, ineffable and inevitable links with certain persons and places, the power of predestination – over all external manipulation and intrigue.

In *Titan* then, the obscure, unconscious realm is treated positively by virtue of its links with childhood memories and the past, which play a central role in the character development of the hero. In this novel, Jean Paul rejects the artificial identity imposed on Albano from outside by Gaspard in favour of a more inward principle of character development; the significance of Albano's unconscious memories in shaping his character can be seen to bear out the Leibnizian idea that the insensible *petites perceptions* give meaning to present and future by preserving the links of both with the past. Its close links with memory and the past endow the obscure, unconscious realm with central structural importance in *Titan*, which draws to a close only when Albano has managed to integrate his past experiences into his present existence in a meaningful way, and when he has realised that the seeds of the future are sown in the past and the present.

The treatment of the obscure, unconscious realm in *Titan* draws this novel close to the later *Selina*; in both works, Jean Paul suggests that higher meaning is contained in states of dim awareness (such as magnetic sleep or in our memories of the past). The positive treatment of the theme of the obscure ideas in works such as *Titan* and *Selina* represents an advance on the sceptical view taken of this theme by Sulzer (in his discussion of

parapraxes) and Tieck (in *William Lovell*). However, Jean Paul's approach is also fundamentally cautious: he is able to arrive at a positive view of our obscure ideas thanks to his commitment to the Leibnizian idea that the presence of obscure, unconscious perceptions in the human soul is proof of the soul's constant activity. The shifting perspectives on the theme of our obscure knowledge in German psychology and literature at the turn of the nineteenth century reflect the evolution of German anthropological thinking between the Late Enlightenment and Romanticism. Although the Enlightenment's emancipation of the senses led to a growth of interest in issues such as the obscure ideas, late eighteenth-century German thinkers tended to integrate such issues into a normative, rationalistic framework. With their combination of progressive and conservative elements, the interpretations of our obscure knowledge at the turn of the nineteenth century in Germany anticipate Romantic psychology and anthropology.