THE LOVE THEME IN GOTTFRIED'S TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
AND ITS TREATMENT IN GERMAN LITERATURE
FROM THE ROMANTICS TO WAGNER

by

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Although there are several versions of the story of Tristan and Isolde before Gottfried von Strassburg none has survived in more than fragmentary form since they lacked appeal to following generations. The version par excellence is that by Gottfried. His method of writing in allegories and symbols, which he uses to convey to his select audience of edele herzen the deeper meaning of his words, has given rise to many controversial interpretations. The contradicting interpretations of the most noted scholars are briefly touched upon and an attempt is made to offer a more balanced approach to Gottfried's ideal of love.

The later medieval continuations by Ulrich von Türheim and Heinrich von Freiberg are considered in relation to each other as well as to Gottfried. Only the Eilhart version, entirely based on effective narration of outer action, remained popular. This was put into prose by an unknown author in the second half of the fifteenth century and became known as the Prose Romance. In it the old courtly epic was reduced to a story for entertainment and its style consequently altered to suit the level of the readers.

The Prose Romance of the sixteenth century became the source for Hans Sachs who retold the Tristan legend in six Meisterlieder and one drama (1553). Hereafter the legend seemed forgotten for two centuries until the
German Romantic Movement revived interest in it in the course of its general emphasis on the German cultural and literary past. Several attempts were made by the Romantics to create independent versions inspired by Gottfried's *Tristan* and under the influence of the critical writings of Schlegel and others.

The attempts at literary versions of the Tristan-theme by August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Karl Philipp Conz, Wilhelm Wackernagel and Friedrich Rückert are briefly discussed and analyzed in the light of Romantic theories of love. The results of Romantic interest in the theme of Tristan are surprisingly meagre and since no specific evidence can be adduced as to the reason for this, it is only possible to put forward a tentative theory regarding some of the causes. Only Immermann produced a work of any consequence and this is therefore discussed at some length. Only after the Romantics are there any serious efforts to produce linguistically and scholastically acceptable translations (Hermann Kurtz, Karl Simrock, Wilhelm Hertz).

It was left to Richard Wagner, on the basis of modern translations, to "rehabilitate" the Tristan legend in his music drama and although it has very little in common with Gottfried, it is nevertheless the only work since Gottfried that has succeeded in provoking further interest in *Tristan*.

M. S. Batts
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CHAPTER I

GOTTFRIED'S TRISTAN AND LATER MEDIEVAL VERSIONS

The story of the ill fated love of Tristan and Isolde, which is basically Celtic, received its classical form with Gottfried von Strassburg about 1210. It came to Germany via England and France gathering on its way new episodes and motifs around the old saga. It is only in the number of these episodes and type of the motifs that the various adaptations differ; basically the story is as follows.

Tristan is the son of Rivalin and Blancheflor, sister of King Mark of Cornwall. After Rivalin is killed in battle, Blancheflor dies giving birth to a son named Tristan. At the age of fourteen, after the boy has been kidnapped by Norwegian merchants and put ashore in Cornwall, he finds his way to his uncle Mark, who is at first unaware of his identity but on learning it accepts him as his nephew and heir.

The Tristan romance proper begins at this point. Tristan defeats the Irish giant Morholt, who annually claims tribute from Cornwall, but he is mortally wounded in the encounter by Morholt's poisoned sword and can be healed only by the Irish queen Isolde, Morholt's sister. Tristan comes to Ireland disguised as the minstrel Tantris and is received by the queen who heals him. Tristan returns to Mark's court but later goes back to Ireland as his uncle's envoy to request the hand of the princess Isolde.
On the journey homeward Tristan and Isolde by mistake drink the love potion prepared by the Queen Mother and intended for her daughter and King Mark. Henceforth the two young people are bound to each other by an imperishable love that becomes their fate. Since Isolde is legally bound to Mark, the lovers have to resort to ruses and deceit in order to meet, whilst Mark and his courtiers seek to entrap them. For some time they escape the snares laid for them until finally they are discovered and Tristan is obliged to flee the country. He eventually finds a new love in Isolde Whitehand and marries her but cannot bring himself to consummate the marriage. Later, when he is mortally wounded in battle, he calls for Isolde the Fair to heal him. When the ship is sighted, Tristan's wife informs him incorrectly that the ship is approaching under a black sail, which means that Isolde is not on board. Overcome by disappointment and sorrow, Tristan dies. Isolde, having arrived too late to save Tristan, also yields up her life over his body. A miracle follows their deaths: a vine and rosebush grow out of their graves and intertwine their branches.

One of the earliest literary adaptations of this original saga was the one by the German poet Eilhart von Oberge, late in the twelfth century (at the end of the sixties or the beginning of the seventies), Tristrant und Isalde. Since Eilhart's work is available only in fragments, it has to be reconstructed by relying on a
Czech translation of his poem and on the German Prose Romance of the fifteenth century, for which it was the main source. Eilhart based his work on the so-called Estoire and true to the trend of the period, the various adventures and heroic deeds are in the foreground; love is not his main interest, nor are the innermost feelings of the main characters. He enjoys depicting action, excitement, and the lusty and often crude aspects of the story. To him the lovers are excused for their behaviour because they could not have acted any other way under the influence of the "accursed potion" (uisseiler trank). He has very little interest in Tristan's and Isolde Whitehand's unconsummated marriage and devotes only a few lines to it. The deeper sense of it escapes him completely. The great popularity of Eilhart's epic is proved by the fact that Gottfried's successors based their continuations on Eilhart's version and not on Gottfried's, and that the German Prose Romance also relies on Eilhart.

Another important version of the saga is that by the Anglo-Norman poet Thomas from the late twelfth century, later on also translated into German and Old Norse. Though only fragments remain, they still show that the original was a work of outstanding merit. Thomas is a poet of courtly love and courtly life, who, in his praise of England, enthusiastically portrays his ideal of a modern, educated, and refined society. He reworked the poem in order to make it acceptable to the more refined courtly
level of his time and place of writing. Thomas achieved greater unity and plausibility in the main story by eliminating certain improbable episodes and fables, and he improved the general tone of the epic by a more sensitive and refined style. His nature inclined towards the lyrical rather than the epic and he therefore tends to focus on analyses of inner feelings and conflicts. He describes it all, however, from, as it were, an intellectual plane, not as a person who has actually experienced such emotions and sufferings. Consequently, the impression created by Thomas' psychological analyses is that of a rationalist who carefully motivates all events, but lacks warmth.

In this leaning towards reflection, motivation and analyses of emotion, Thomas found a kindred spirit in the German poet Gottfried von Strassburg. In the beginning of the thirteenth century (ca. 1210), Gottfried wrote his version of the love epic based on Thomas—although he also knew Eilhart—and he it is who gives the epic its final classical form. Unfortunately, the work breaks off in the midst of Tristan's monologue before his marriage to Isolde Whitehand. It is most likely that death prevented the poet from completing it.

Compared with Thomas, Gottfried is the greater artist. He has not merely translated Thomas' epic, he has refashioned it with great skill by modifying the form rather than the motifs. In general, he follows Thomas scene by scene, as he himself states in the prologue (149 ff.), and the
changes made mainly amount to the addition of greater insight and depth in the analyses of emotional states, as well as to psychologically more plausible motivation. He elevates the whole inner structure to a more spiritual level, aided by his extensive learning; in short, Gottfried transcends Thomas.

Since Gottfried had studied widely, especially in the fields of law, classical literature and theology, he was obviously familiar with the allegorical and symbolical method and used it to a great extent to convey to his 'select' audience of edele herzen the deeper meaning of his words. It is mainly due to the use of these allegories and symbols that many controversies arose regarding the interpretation, the inner meaning or message of Tristan. Some scholars saw only unrestrained sensual love glorified in the epic (Dilthey, Scherer)\(^2\) heralding the ideal of the Renaissance. Others saw the exact opposite in it, namely the religious character of love, which at times is elevated even to a doctrine; the lovers are considered "Minneheilige" (de Boor),\(^2\) the cave of lovers is symbolically interpreted as a church (Ranke),\(^2\) and the union of the lovers is understood mystically (Schwietering).\(^2\)

A completely different interpretation is offered by G. Weber, who claims that Gottfried incorporated in Tristan the various religious teachings of St. Augustine, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, of the Cathars, of the Amalricians, and of the school of Chartres, without identifying himself with any of them. Gottfried's "Love mysticism" is to
Weber not an analogy but an antithesis of Christian love-metaphysics: while the *Ideenstruktur* is completely Christian, the *Ideeninhalt* is very un-Christian, because Tristan and Isolde do not become one with God or Christ, but under the exclusion of God become one with each other. For Weber, Gottfried's love idea is rooted in the crisis and the tensions between the body and the soul of man, in the partaking of both the soul and the body in the love phenomenon—in the crisis between *eros* and *agape*. Dualism, dilemma, and the contrast between *minne* and *ère*, which finally result in a perverted relationship between God and the demonic metaphysical power of love, these are to Weber the decisive and essential factors for understanding and interpreting Gottfried's *Tristan*.

Friedrich Maurer and Maria Bindschedler base their interpretations on the courtly ideal, that is on the conflict between love and the standards set by courtly society. Denis de Rougemont, however, sees the key to the understanding of the epic in the violation by the lovers of the courtly love doctrine.

In comparison with the foregoing rather one-sided interpretations, the views of Schwietering, Petrus Tax and Gerhard Meissburger seem to offer a more reasonable and balanced approach. They see the love of Tristan and Isolde on two levels: the physical union (belonging to the courtly world, as well as to the realm of evil or darkness), and the spiritual love-bond, towards which the separated lovers develop through suffering (belonging to the divine realm).
It is obvious that there are several ways in which one can approach Gottfried's epic and attempt to solve the riddle of its deeper meaning. But it must not be overlooked that Gottfried himself has given us in his prologue indications as to how his artistic intentions are to be judged. He clearly states that his world is that of the *edele herzen*, that world which embraces and welcomes in its heart love and sorrow. Consequently, even Tristan and Isolde themselves are outside this circle as long as they do not reach this stage of love, though the basic idea does place them within the world of *edele herzen*. Gottfried is also quite explicit as to the kind of love Tristan and Isolde aspire to:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ich wil in wol bemaeren} \\
\text{von edelen senedaeren,} \\
\text{die reiner sene wol taten schin:} \\
\text{ein senedaer unde ein senedaerin,} \\
\text{ein man ein wip, ein wip ein man,} \\
\text{Tristan Isolt, Isolt Tristan} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(125 ff.).

The emphasis is on "reiner sene," i.e., on the spiritual-soul level; equally important is the accent on "inneclichiu triuwe" (219), "ir triuwe, ir triuwen reinekeit" (231).

An emerging of two levels now becomes apparent: the world of the *edele herzen* (for whom Gottfried writes in the first place and to whom his allegories and symbolism are directed) is contrasted with the *courtly society*, which may enjoy reading the epic as an exciting love story, without necessarily appreciating its depth. On the basis of these two levels—which have very little in common—Gottfried portrays the main characters. Tristan and
Isolde of course belong to the level of edele herzen; Brangaene—though the confidante of the lovers—belongs to the courtly society. Brangaene is exceedingly clever, scheming and interested in immediate advantage; everything she does or advises others to do is in keeping with conventional courtly honour (âre), her highest norm. Courtly manners and decorum are very important to her; she is not inclined toward aggressive action, but favours compromise. Mark, Marjodo, Melot, also belong to the courtly society, to the outside world incapable even of understanding the world of the edele herzen, acting only upon the apparent and superficial and unable to penetrate to the truth. Obviously this discrepancy in understanding and communicating will create tensions and sufferings, especially for the lovers who live on a more elevated level.

Tristan's path is meant to be under the special guidance of God, something that is Gottfried's innovation as compared to Thomas, and the first reference to this is made in lines 1788 ff:

```
und sagen wir umb das kindelin
daz vater noch muoter haete,
was got mit deme getaete.
```

God seems to intervene on behalf of Tristan in the episode in which he is being kidnapped by Norwegian merchants, when the furious sea (2425 ff.), whipped by a terrible tempest, not only intimidates the merchants but leaves them completely helpless and in despair of their lives. After eight days and near to exhaustion, one of the merchants
feels that this terrible situation has as its cause their sinful treachery in kidnapping Tristan (244ff.) and they resolve to set him free as soon as the storm subsides. Instantly the turmoil in nature begins to recede and Tristan is set ashore.

Tristan receives a most diversified and comprehensive education and he excels in speaking languages, in music, and in all courtly accomplishments. In spite of his youth he acquires great self-assurance, a keen mind; he completely lacks inhibition but has great "présence d’esprit" to the point of telling tall tales in order to turn a difficult situation into his favour, or at least to astound people. All these traits combined with his polished courtly attitude cover up his inherent instinct for self-preservation, his cunning, his shrewd, often brutal and at no time knightly spirit. Everything in him is geared to self-interest, self-glorification, ambition. Tristan as a brilliant courtly youth stands with both feet on the level of the courtly world—with all its implications of "Sein und Schein"; he is a gambler, an adventurer, to whom all means are justified to reach his goal. It is interesting to observe that even Brangaene, as clever as she is, cannot equal Tristan's ruthless shrewdness.

Isolde, too, is brought up in true courtly fashion, and it is Tantris-Tristan himself who gives her conventional education the finishing touches—he is the only one truly
qualified to do this. Through this fact, Gottfried raises Isolde from the level of the other courtly ladies and makes her the only equal of Tristan.

It is at this level of awareness that Tristan and Isolde partake of the love potion. The latter is again a source of much controversy amongst scholars in part concerning its symbolism, and whether or not Tristan and Isolde had been infatuated with each other before drinking it. According to Fürstner and Hatto, Tristan and Isolde in Gottfried's epic are not in love with each other, not even unconsciously. Therefore, the love potion becomes the symbol of love-magic, of something superhuman: fate.

Gottfried himself describes the nature and the consequences of his love potion, as the Queen Mother prepares it, thus:

mit syme sin ieman getranc,  
den muoser ane sinen danc  
vor allen dingen meinen  
und er da wider in einen:  
in was ein tot unde ein leben,  
ein triure, ein vröude samet gegeben  (ll 436 ff)

The Queen Mother's instructions to Brangaene regarding the love potion were most emphatic and detailed, stressing the need to protect Isolde's "ôre und al ir dinc bewarn" (ll 478). Emphasis is on "ôre." After Tristan and Isolde have partaken of the philtre due to Brangaene's negligence, Brangaene is inconsolable—she has now lost her ôre and her triuwe and wishes she were dead. She concludes her lamentations with the following words:

ouwe Tristan unde Isot  
diz tranc ist iuwer beider tot!  (ll 705 f.).
As the ship was leaving Ireland, the passengers intoned a pilgrims' song: "in gotes namen varen wir." This song in fact is sung twice more, thus giving it an importance not to be overlooked. It is quite obvious that this whole trip of Tristan and Isolde is to be made under God's care and guidance—hereby connecting with the previously raised idea that Tristan's path was meant to be under the special guidance of God (1788 ff., 2441 ff.). Here we have then the exposition of the main themes in this epic: Love, Life and Death, God.

Gottfried leaves no doubt (ll 707 ff.) that after partaking of the potion Tristan and Isolde have in a new way become eternally united, and thereby is brought into being the Love-Sphere, which only encompasses the lovers. This fact is further underlined by Gottfried in that he denies that Mark partakes of it after the wedding (as stated by Thomas). As an immediate result of the love potion, the lovers are overwhelmed by minne, who first disposes of their inner inhibitions—they disclose to each other their feelings through their eyes (ll 730-875)—and then the confession follows, sealed by a kiss, "ein saeleclicher anevanc" (12 041). But just at this high spiritual level of love-suffering, Brangaene intervenes, afraid that the lovers will die. Tristan first secures her promise of faithfulness for both him and Isolde and then declares that if they were to die of love, it would be entirely her fault, since she does not give them an
opportunity to be alone: "unser tot und unser leben / die sint in iuwer hant gegeben" (12 117 f.). After Isolde confirms the truth of Tristan's words, Brangaene agrees reluctantly to give them an opportunity for physical union, assuring them of her devotion and secrecy. Gottfried intentionally avoids all sensual description of this love union, emphasizing more the symbolic aspects at this stage of Tristan's and Isolde's love-journey.

In the ensuing (so-called) "Busspredigt der Minne" Gottfried does not use the key-word herze when speaking of the two lovers and only mentions their moment of mutual joy. Obviously the love ideal—love and sorrow entwined—has not been reached in this first experience. Gottfried implies by this omission that both Tristan and Isolde still dwell on the courtly society level, only seeking enjoyment. Their love, "minne, diu vrie, diu eine" (12 301), is not yet self-sufficient but needs outside assistance, i.e., Brangaene. The ensuing love-joy during the remainder of the journey is not in agreement with Gottfried's standards and requirements of true love, since by their action the lovers avoid the blending of love with sorrow (12 387).

Full of remorse and guilt, Brangaene consents to be the substitute for Isolde on the wedding night and then she discloses to the lovers the secret of the love potion. Tristan's reaction is:

\['nu waltes got!' sprach Tristan
'ez waere tot oder leben:
ez hat mir sanfte vergeben.\]
ine weiz, wie jener werden sol:
dirse tot der tuot mir wol.
solte diu wunnecliche Isot
iemer alsus sin min tot,
so wolte ich gerne wiben
umb ein eweclichez sterben'  

(12 494 ff.).

It is a frivolous play of words on "tot," because in googifried's sense "ein eweclichez sterben" includes an allusion to "eweclichez leben" (4304 ff.). Tristan again refers only to the sensual joys of his love life, and if this is called "eweclichez sterben," he has no objections to experiencing it over and over again! Tristan is still embracing only one aspect of love.

In the relationship between Tristan and Mark, the aspects of êre and triuwe are discoursed upon as main motives for Tristan's ensuing action. He leads Isolde to Mark and the wedding takes place; Gottfried mentions it only very briefly. Concerning the substitution of Brangaene, Gottfried voices regret that the lovers stooped to such a measure. The event takes place in complete darkness, a further symbol that the act belongs to the realm of the demonic, of evil. Gottfried's sympathy is with Brangaene, and thanks to her the lovers are able to carry on their carefree love life. Gottfried remarks upon this: "dan dahte weder wip noch man / deheiner slahte undinges an" (12 689 ff.). Seen objectively, this kind of life is an undine, an evil, except that nobody notices it!

Isolde is still not satisfied. In spite of Brangaene's assurance of devotion and secrecy, and her help in the wedding night, Isolde fears she will be betrayed to Mark
and wants Brangaene killed. This attempt at murder makes an even more unfortunate impression since in Gottfried's work Brangaene is treated as Isolde's blood relative (which is not the case elsewhere). Isolde demands Brangaene's tongue as proof of her death. This recalls the judicial practice by which a person is punished on that part of the body with which he had sinned. Gottfried's own judgment of Isolde's attempted murder is voiced in the following verses:

\[
\begin{align*}
diu sorchafte künigin \\
diu tet an disen dingen schin, \\
daz man laster unde spot \\
mere würhtet danne got \\
\end{align*}
\]

Brangaene's symbolic language (12 792-848) where she excuses Isolde and thus saves herself, at the same time proving her triuwe for her mistress, is of interest with regard to the "zwei hemede wiz alsam ein sne":

\[
\begin{align*}
daz wize, daz reine: \\
sus liebet ir daz hemede an. \\
do siz üben began, \\
biz daz siz über übete, \\
sine wize gar betrübete. \\
\end{align*}
\]

This criticism of Tristan and Isolde's love life is surely not directed to the hired henchmen, who are not even meant to understand the symbolism, but neither is it intended for Isolde! So we must assume that by using Brangaene as his mouthpiece, the author wanted indirectly to convey to his readers (well versed in symbolism) his own opinion regarding the physical union of the lovers: Isolde had thereby very much soiled her purity.

For the time being there is no change in the love relationship of the two lovers, and as long as they need
Brangaene's assistance and protection to bring it about, their love does not transcend the purely courtly level of physical pleasure. Their behaviour towards the outside world is branded by Gottfried as deceit (13 003). The key-word herz is still missing when referring to the two lovers.

With Marjodo begins the herzeleit of the lovers (13 488 ff.). His dream about the boar in the King's bed is very important for the eventual discovery of Tristan and Isolde's secret love. King Mark is brought into the picture and thus precipitates the suffering cycle of our two heroës. Again the sexual symbol of the boar is meant for the readers: it is a soiling of the connubial bed, and in a symbolical sense of the sacrament of marriage. This trend of thought is further supported by the symbolism of light and darkness in the ensuing scenes. Although the moon is shining outside, there is complete darkness in Isolde's chamber, since Brangaene has shaded the light by a chess-board. This togetherness of the lovers is again evil and Brangaene, who has made it possible, is the third party in this demonic pact.

Marjodo, formerly Tristan's friend, has become the sly and envious opponent of the lovers and indicates to Mark his discovery about Tristan and Isolde. Thus the two parties confront each other and the courtly battle of ruse against ruse, deceit against deceit, begins. In the ensuing three scenes, Gottfried's intentions come fully to light. At Marjodo's instigation, Mark plans to trap
Isolde in order to establish her true relationship to Tristan. Her innocent first replies alarm Mark, making him highly suspicious, and he immediately informs Marjodo. Isolde is from now on coached by Brangaene while Marjodo fans Mark's suspicions (13 707 ff.). Isolde braces herself against Mark's inquisition and uses all possible means and wiles to allay his suspicion. Her courtly lies achieve this end until Mark distrusts Marjodo.

In these episodes, Gottfried intends to show the basic discrepancy between the actual Love-Sphere and that of the normal courtly world. Whenever Isolde has to rely upon herself, she emerges as the loving woman who subconsciously pays attention to Tristan—and only to him—but unwittingly gets Tristan into trouble by telling the truth. On the other hand, whenever Isolde aligns herself with the courtly level, with Brangaene, her concentration on, and spontaneous reaction to, her lover ceases entirely, and while she denies her Love-Sphere with a crude lie, a dubious truce is achieved on the courtly level; on the surface all seems to be in perfect order.

Since Marjodo alone cannot convince Mark, he calls in a partner: the dwarf Melot. It is the idea of all three of them (14 275) to forbid Tristan all contact with Isolde in order to find out the truth. Tristan obeys Mark's order. It is at the point of the lovers' parting—when Tristan and Isolde stand alone and confront not only their three opponents but the whole court, when they cannot even speak to each other, certainly not meet—
is at this point that Gottfried describes in touching words (reminiscent of the scene before their love declaration, ll 915), their sorrowful union of hearts raised to supersensual oneness, "... ir beider guot, / ir beider tot, ir beider leben" (l4 330 f.).

Mark immediately realizes the truth, and all that is needed is to find the lovers in flagrante. Brangaene, too, feels the tribulations of the lovers and while talking to Tristan about it, he for the second time implores her to provide a chance for meeting Isolde alone (a direct repetition of the first physical union episode). Brangaene suggests a solution, and the two are again under her protection. The opposing teams are now equal in number: three against three. As before, these meetings of the lovers under Brangaene's watchful eyes belong to the realm of darkness.

After the nightly meeting in the orchard, where the lovers are aware of being spied upon by Mark and Melot, Tristan and Isolde part again sadly (l4 907 ff.). The impossibility of sharing physical contact and sensual love again raises the lovers to a higher spiritual level. However, this situation is only of short duration, since Mark's suspicions have been appeased, or so it seems. The flour-scene proves the contrary. Although Tristan sees the white flour but ignores it and jumps into Isolde's bed, he proves by his sexual behaviour that he does not see love in its true essence and therefore misunderstands it. Gottfried calls Tristan here "der minnen blinde"
because he is, symbolically speaking, blind.

The consequences of this episode culminate in the judicial ordeal by which Isolde is to prove her innocence (15 518 ff.). In this episode it is important to distinguish between Isolde's behaviour in relation to God and her behaviour towards Mark and the courtly world. Isolde knows she is guilty before God, but she asks him not to betray her before Mark and the court. To her it really means an ordeal before God, and she offers him her heart and hand for his grace. Isolde formulates the oath herself and directs it only to Mark (15 697-723), so that in this final battle Isolde and the King confront each other alone. As far as Isolde is concerned, her oath speaks the truth, and the ordeal ends in her favour: God has heard her prayers and bestowed His grace upon her—which does not at all imply that her guilt and sin before God have been mitigated. Gottfried merely says, "daz an ir eren genas" (15 750), i.e., God did not wish to disclose in any form at this time to Mark and the court the lovers' secret. God has helped Isolde and appeased Mark's "zwivel unde arcwan" (15 763 ff.) without Brangaene as mediator.

Tristan, who has left the country, obtains for Isolde the little dog Petitcreiu with the magic bell that banishes all sorrow. He sends a minstrel to take the dog to Isolde for her enjoyment and consolation. It is obvious that this dog is a typical courtly symbol: it represents sheer joy. Gottfried stresses this by the fact that the dog reaches Isolde via Brangaene. However, by the mere fact
that Tristan sends the dog to his beloved in a most unselfish and understanding way, he not only shows the inner depth and strength of love for her but also affirms and welcomes by this gesture his own love sorrows imposed upon him by Isolde's absence.

Isolde, however, "diu getriuwe staete senedaerin" (16 400), has already been uplifted and spiritualized through her love to such a degree that Petitcreiu cannot possibly give her any solace and she tears off the magic bell—which is supposed to banish her sadness—because she too wishes to maintain sadness of heart like Tristan. By this gesture Isolde has completely transformed and actually reversed the courtly purpose of the little dog: it not only loses its joy-giving function, but becomes a symbol of sorrowful love, of reine sene und triuwe. Thus the giving of Petitcreiu and the removal of the magic bell denote that both Tristan and Isolde have changed the quality of their love considerably from eros towards agape and only now have they reached the level intended for them by Gottfried from the outset. Love in reiner sene und triuwe and in herzeleit.

Tristan is back at court again, but the lovers' love had been spiritualized already to such a degree that they of their own accord stay apart (16 411 ff.). Strangely enough it is just this kind of love, highly approved of by the author, that makes Mark suspicious again due to the tender gestures and looks of the lovers, which Gottfried wants to have understood strictly symbolically as a
spiritual soul-bond, a oneness of hearts (16 493 ff.) expressed in looks and gestures. The King does not understand this, of course, for he lives on another level, and he therefore banishes the lovers from the court; he cannot bear the sight of them any more. Tristan and Isolde now have no choice, they have to go since Mark renounces Isolde (16 613) and gives the lovers full freedom; he even wishes them God-speed: "vart ir beidiu gote ergeben" (16 617). Again there is the mention of God in connection with the fate of the lovers.

Tristan and Isolde now proceed, but not without regret, to the lovers' cave accompanied by Tristan's dog Hiudan and by Curvenal. They are still rather courtly and the banishment from court affects them. Brangaene remains at court for she has no part whatsoever in the Love-Sphere, that will receive its highest fulfilment in the grotto. Petitcreiu also—now the symbol of sorrowful love—would be out of place in these surroundings, where the lovers will experience their greatest bliss. Only Curvenal knows where the lovers are because he is to play the role of a mediator, though definitely standing on the side of the lovers. He is the only one who beside the lovers has access to the surroundings of the cave, since he too is "von edeles herzen art" (2 263).

This section concerning the cave of the lovers has undergone the greatest changes with Gottfried and encompasses a full 1100 verses. Without going into detail about the differences between Thomas and Gottfried regarding this
section, one can summarize by saying that Gottfried has extended it largely by the allegorical interpretation of the Minnegrotte which is his own invention. He introduces the miraculous mutual nourishment of the lovers through love itself. The cave has become a temple of love, a magic grotto, which includes the immediate surroundings of nature, the occupants of which are portrayed as the lovers' entourage. Tristan and Isolde have finally found an abode in keeping with their inner level of spirituality; and since allegorically there is an implication of life in paradise, so too there is the mystery of the Speise- wunder, an invisible mutual nourishing. Their togetherness has now reached an intensity of delight comparable to nothing in this world, even with that of any other lovers in the past (17 225).

The true purpose of the cave is fulfilled to its highest potential only through Tristan and Isolde and their love for each other, and the dwelling in this grotto with all its inherent bliss and elevation is a grace bestowed upon the lovers. Now their love does not need any outside help for its fulfilment and especially not "akust unde list" (16 936). Tristan and Isolde are experiencing ideal love and Gottfried sees in them transfigured beings—almost saints. Their present love is free of gewalte, craft, liste, meisterschaft, valscheit or lüge (17 011 ff.), otherwise they would never have entered the cave through the erine tür. Its two bolts: "wisheit und sinne, kiusche und reine," prevent anybody but the lovers from getting
into the cave (17 024 ff.). The love-fulfilment is closely linked with "rehter güete" (17 052) and that is only achieved with "arbeit" und "ungemach" (17 108).

The inside of the cave is illuminated not only by the sunlight filtering through the three windows that represent "güete, diemüte und zuht," but also by the constant glow of ēre, which is always present when earthly love (i.e., human love) is lived and experienced in an ideal manner and based upon the three virtues just mentioned. Gottfried wants to present to us here his love ideal in a poetic-symbolical way, an ideal that should be made reality already on this earth. In the epic Tristan and Isolde have reached this stage and ēre (i.e., virtue) enfolds them, as it originates in true love and has nothing whatsoever in common with courtly ēre, since its light descends from above. It is there like the sun, also given as a gift for transcendental reasons. We have here a God-willed and God-pleasing love and ēre in perfect harmony.

Looking back at the life and love of the lovers at court with all its high points but also with its setbacks, we can see that they all represented stages to be overcome in the gradual ascent on the narrow path of perfecting oneself. In a symbolical way, this also depicts the way of each loving couple as it could and should be.

In spite of the paradise-like life in the cave, Tristan and Isolde have to abandon it and return to the court at Mark's instigation. By obstructing one of the windows with grass and flowers, Mark eliminates one of
the important sources of light, cancelling out the perfection of rays within the cave: the King is the real and last obstacle outside of the Love-Sphere confronting the lovers. It also means that the King intends to demand again his right as lawful husband: to Gottfried marriage as a sacrament has precedence over a God-willed and God-pleasing love. Another reason for returning to court is the great desire of the lovers to be part of society. In spite of their harmonious life at the cave, Gottfried declares:

\[
\text{sin haeten allez bi in da.}
\text{sin haeten umbe ein bezzer leben}
\text{niht eine bone gegeben}
\text{wan eine umbe ir ere (16 875 ff.).}
\]

They feel that they owe it to their worldly \( \text{âre} \) again to become part of courtly life, something for which they had hoped ever since their banishment. However, Gottfried also wishes to convey on a higher level that it is not compatible with the present stage of love and love-\( \text{âre} \) (i.e., virtue) of Tristan and Isolde, nor justified before God to stay any longer in the blissful self-sufficient atmosphere of the cave. They should return to court, and since the love experience on the highest level is definitely terminated, they will have to content themselves with a lesser kind.

Upon their return to court, Mark promptly forbids Tristan and Isolde to indulge in tender love-gazing. In his passion for Isolde, he not only \textit{cannot} see but does not \textit{want} to see the truth and therefore, objectively
viewed, it is he who is really the guilty one.

In the orchard scene at high noon, where Isolde arranges a secret meeting with Tristan in the shade of a tree, it is Isolde herself who invites the eclipse of their love, thinking that she can avoid her sorrowful and painful fate. Here, however, in contrast to the situation at the lovers' cave sunne and love-ère are in opposition (18 127f.), as much as sunne and minne (18 129 f.). In the shade, the lovers again enter the realm of evil, of darkness, by indulging in physical union. Gottfried compares this situation with the first fall of man in paradise, since he is of the opinion that the fall and sin of Adam and Eve was a sexual one. He could not have made the greatness of the lovers' fall more emphatic. It is again a defiling of the connubial bed, and Isolde is the victim.

Since Mark surprises the lovers and finally finds them in flagrante, Tristan has to flee. But while at the parting Tristan definitely remains still on the courtly level (18 256 ff.), Isolde discloses in her parting speech (18 288-358) the absolute height and strength of her spiritual inner life. She leaves all courtly values behind as completely worthless, falls back on her own inner resources after her keen awareness of having not only become one with Tristan in heart and spirit, but in the mystical love-exchange of body and life with him, finally reached the peak of selflessness (18 324-358). As she watches Tristan's ship leaving, she reveals in her long monologue the fervent intermingling of love and
death, body and life of the lovers. She realizes that it is only through continence that Tristan will be able to atone and be healed, and her final words reveal that she is striving to overcome her own desire for his and her sake:

\[ \text{ich wil mich gerne twingen} \]
\[ \text{an allen minen dingen,} \]
\[ \text{das ich min unde sin entwese,} \]
\[ \text{durch daz er mir und ime genese. (18 597 ff.)} \]

It is reminiscent of the Christian-mystic experience of body and life; the senses of the lovers die away and the pain of the parting foresees this as a fact already accomplished.

Tristan, in accordance with the values of his still courtly level, decides to devote his life to \textit{ritterschefte} (18 442) in order to be able to bear his love-sorrow and suffering. He really wants to rid himself of his love-pain and plunge into the world of action, joy and forgetfulness. But to Gottfried, this kind of world is equated with the death of the spirit, and the estrangement from his true life with the death of the body. Tristan then is endangered by two kinds of death: "sus twang in tot unde tot" (18 437). He would exchange his true life for an apparent life of joy ending in double death. Tristan at this stage is reminiscent of the "fallen saint."

After various adventures and detours, Tristan comes to Arundel, where he befriends Kaedin, the Duke's son, and meets his temptation in the latter's daughter, Isolde
Whitehand. Her name spells magic for Tristan, reminding
him of Isolde the Fair; his sorrow is awakened anew and
he acknowledges it as his true life, because the distant
beloved still means more to him than the present Isolde.
But little by little he begins to feel a joy in the present
situation. The result of the simultaneous blending of
spiritual suffering with physical joy is a confusion of
mind, which determines the further development.

Joy and suffering do not focus on one and the same
person any more, but only in the same name of two persons—
therefore Tristan's confusion concerning Isolde the Fair
and Isolde Whitehand. He senses this very well; he feels
that he is under the spell of the name. He constantly
hears Isolde but does not know where she is; he can see
her, but cannot recognize her; she is far away, yet near
him. He fears he has come under the spell of a magic
potion for the second time (19 006 f.) so that he cannot
differentiate between Isolde and Isolde. He believes
he has found the real Isolde, but quite consciously and
lucidly is aware that it is only Isolde of Arundel. But
then he suddenly decides to meet every woman with that
name with a loving heart, claiming he owes it to the name.
Tristan's desire is not Isolde the Fair any longer, nor
yet Isolde Whitehand, but their name! Thus Tristan trans-
fers memories from one to the other and thereby kindles
the flame of love in the latter's heart. Due to this
again, like a vicious circle, Tristan forces himself to
love Isolde Whitehand, hoping to be released from his
inner suffering and longing for the other Isolde.

Tristan attempts to overcome his painful love sickness by means of a new love (Ovid's advice in *Remedia Amoris*), but this will not bring about his desire. On the contrary, it will create more sorrow, and lack all vitality. Tristan is deceiving both Isoldes, and himself most of all, because the new life he is seeking will bring him physical death. Gottfried defies his master Ovid—for whom love was after all only an art one could acquire—and proves him wrong!

But Tristan's fate—contained in his own name—is stronger than this inner confusion of his, and he awakens as if from a bad dream: he cannot comprehend how he ever could have even thought of anyone else besides his Isolde, the only one belonging to his life and heart, and the only one having the key to it. She had accepted many a hardship because of him and had always faithfully stood by him. He sins against Isolde because he wants to live a life of which she will have no part. While she loves only him, he has tried to woo another woman!

Gottfried's judgment of the whole situation is very plain and frank: Tristan alone is the guilty party, he is the one who betrayed Isolde Whitehand (19 397): "si was betrogen." Therefore, we cannot label Isolde Whitehand as a seducer, but as the innocent and naive victim. Gottfried considers the relationship between Tristan and Isolde Whitehand based on deceit, as a crime and sin; such a marriage cannot last. In other words, Tristan
should have married Isolde the Fair and not Isolde Whitehand, but since his true love was already bound by the bonds of marriage to another, he therefore had no right to desire from her complete fulfilment. He also should not follow Ovid’s advice and look for a new love, but should renounce all but the spiritual relationship with the first love. One cannot divide one’s power of love, because such a division would affect the very core of love: the ability to love truly and deeply. One should only love one person, with all one’s might.

The slogan of the courtly love doctrine was that true love cannot exist in marriage and against this background the marriages of Mark to Isolde, and Tristan to Isolde Whitehand are to be seen, i.e., as examples of a marriage which Gottfried did not consider satisfactory. For him, a marriage would have been a complete one only if it combined and harmonized love and âtre, when love would not have been repressed because of the world’s judgment, but given to the beloved with discrimination and mâze. Gottfried searches for this ideal but cannot see it realized anywhere: Tristan and Isolde cannot marry each other, and outside of marriage the unity of all necessary components is not possible, since âtre--the recognition of the world--would have to be missing.

Gottfried sharply criticizes the emptiness of a rigid concept regarding marriages of his period and seeks to establish an ideal for simple mortals. However, he knew that he was ahead of his time and could hardly hope
to be understood by everyone, and this is why we can detect in his epic a tone of sorrowful resignation, and this is why, as he himself points out, he writes only for the select few, for the élite of edele herzen, because only they will truly understand his message.

Two German poets attempted to complete Gottfried's unfinished epic. The continuation of Ulrich von Türheim encompasses 3,800 verses based on Eilhart's version. It is a rather poor attempt, completely lacking any understanding of the deeper meaning in Gottfried's poem.

Heinrich von Freiberg had much greater artistic ability than Ulrich, and his efforts proved him to be a worthy follower of Gottfried. He added 6,890 verses to Gottfried's 19,548, perusing Eilhart as well as Ulrich's continuation, but his artistic ideal is Gottfried, with whose praise he begins his poem.

He is quite successful in imitating not only Gottfried's outer form by use of a highly polished language, but also making it his own style and form of expression. In the inner spirit of the legend, however, Heinrich cannot completely hide his own sense of reality. While Gottfried wrote his poem "der welt ze liebe," Heinrich concludes his version with comments on the futility of worldly love, admonishing every Christian to turn his heart to lasting love—to Christ.

Little by little, appreciation was lost for Gottfried's refined, psychologically motivated, spiritual portrayal,
while the Eilhart version, entirely based on effective narration of outer action, remained popular.

For about 200 years, the legend seems to be forgotten and only in the second half of the fifteenth century do we encounter the Prose Romance. At this time, old epic poems, previously only available in manuscripts, were put into prose and printed in order to reach the general public. An unknown author rewrote the whole Tristan epic into prose, unfortunately without any artistic ambition, founding it on Eilhart's version, "von der leut wegen, die solicher gereimbter bücher nit genad habent, auch etlich, die die kunst der reimen nit eygentlich versteen künden."\(^6\)

There were several printings made, the first one being in 1484 at Augsburg. Reprints were made in the sixteenth century and the Romance was also incorporated in the Buch der Liebe\(^7\) in 1578 and 1587. This collection was once more printed under the same title in 1809 through the efforts of Büsching and von der Hagen. Thus the legend of Tristan and Isolde was kept alive in Germany in a version which was in its content very close to the archaic form, in contrast to France where the so-called Estoire had become an extended Prose Romance already in the second half of the thirteenth century, but with such radical changes, that the basic structure was hardly discernible.

In the German Prose Romance, the old courtly epic was reduced to a story for entertainment and consequently its style was altered to suit the level of its readers.
The unknown author often intrudes with elaborate comments of his own, culminating in admonitions to the reader to give God priority over worldly love in order not to precipitate an untimely death.

The last early effort to clothe the Tristan story in a new garment came from a bourgeois poet. Hans Sachs knew the Worms edition of the Prose Romance (1549/50) and utilized the material for six Meisterlieder and one drama (1553), the latter entitled "Tragedia. Mit 23 Personen. Von der strengen lieb herr Tristrant, mit der schönen königin Isalden, unnd hat 7 actus." The rigid and stereotyped form of the Meisterlied does not really lend itself to a fluent account of such a Romance, and so Hans Sachs simplifies the material to a great extent. He discards the story of Tristan's parents and his youth, and all unnecessary persons and episodes, not even using names except for the main characters. A few new elements were found necessary to bridge the gaps. Unlike both the "Volksbuch" and the "Tragedia," there is no other Isolde, no wife for Tristan, a fact which of course greatly simplifies the story. Hans Sachs is very realistic but also very naive in his story telling. On the whole, he expresses throughout the Tristan poems his shame and sorrow regarding the love story and the lovers' life, giving admonitions for morals to the readers at the end of each poem.

In his drama, Hans Sachs followed his source faith-
fully, but shortened the legend by leaving out Tristan's youth, the Truchsess episode, Brangel as substitute in the wedding night, and as consequence of this, Isolde's attempt to have her murdered, as well as their reconciliation. He did not succeed in creating a dramatic action, since a too voluminous epic narrative had to be compressed into seven acts, resulting in far too long and numerous dialogues and obscure and illogical scenes, with time lapses amounting to several years within one act.

Hans Sachs has a somewhat lonely position among poets who have sung the Romance of Tristan and Isolde. Although he had forerunners, he did not know them, and his successors did not think of him, though he was the first to write and publish Tristan as a drama.

Again centuries elapsed before the Tristan and Isolde legend was revived in German literature, this time through the Romantic Movement at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER II

ROMANTICISM

After the emotional Storm and Stress period, there followed two literary movements, Classicism and Romanticism. Both of these movements were basically nothing more than an effort toward a reconciliation of the demands of intellect with the demands of feeling for literary purposes, and philosophical, ethical, and religious ends. The Classicism of Schiller and Goethe, who cultivated ideals more closely associated with the world of human accomplishments, achieved this end with recognized success. The Romantics, on the other hand, who cultivated the longings of their inner life, succeeded only in part. They attempted to reconcile intellect and feeling, the visible and the invisible, visual concepts and emotional states, calm judgments and passions, logical demonstrations and instincts, the conscious and the unconscious, realities and ideals, the world and God; they attempted to reconcile these forces under the burden of a conviction that they were irreconcilable. The Romantics wanted to be humanistic, but found no art at hand which could satisfy completely their emotional nature. They gave us a literary record of the experiences of their emotional inner life, of the enjoyment of that life, of its enrichment, deepening and enhancement. They attempted to project that inner life into the world and give us an account of its successful harmonization as well as of its failure.
German romanticism is Seelenkultur. It finds justification in the existence of an inner world. It is a record of approaches to, and revelations of, universal divine life. Romanticism stands for emancipation of the intellect, of the senses, emotions, and spirit, from traditional beliefs, forms, conventions, institutions, and literary standards. Among their idols are aesthetic self-culture and love of beauty. Although much of the beauty which the Romantics loved was sensuous, attaching itself to nature, beauty was to them essentially spiritual: all beauty was life, and that which made a particular thing beautiful was not its effect on their senses, but primarily the feeling it evoked in their minds. Beauty was feeling, emotional-mental states, psychic experiences, spiritual moods. Romanticism is, therefore, largely a record of this feeling of their love for things to be loved, a record of the properties of their own heart: a love gospel of soul experiences. This makes romantic writings autobiographical; it is the poetry of confessions of the experiences of the human heart.

The Romantics discovered or re-discovered the power of the subconscious, the dream, premonition, longing, magic, the magnetism of the soul and the secrets of the myths. They became most receptive to the inner voices of nature, gave a new understanding of the historical past, and followed Herder's footsteps in the realization of the creative individuality of all nations. They were convinced of the right and the freedom of the individual-
istic, yet at the same time preached the organic unity of all creation.

Following Fichte's philosophy, the Romantics were of the conviction that man's innermost being cannot achieve fulfilment in this world but only in the immeasurable "other-worldly" realm, and the blue flower represented their longing for it. The union with God was the only way for salvation—-and the Catholic church became its aesthetic-symbolical-mystical representative, reinforced by the discovery of the values of medieval culture which was based on Catholicism. The Romantic Movement was from the start a religious movement and in their search for identity the Romantics sought their ideals in the historical past, in the heritage of their own nation. Basically, this was an attempt to escape the present, born out of a spiritual necessity; it was the reflection of their religious crisis, their despair at "Enlightenment," an enthronement of subjectivism, due to Kant's destruction of belief in the ultimate reality of the empirical universe. Man searches for what he needs where he believes he can find it, and so it is a quite natural path for the Romantics to retrace their steps to the Middle Ages (from the early times up to and including the Renaissance), a period which seemed to possess everything that their present lacked. They could not possibly be satisfied by idealizing their own present time, they had to substitute for their own world a world in which religion was still a cultural power and the foundation of society. This cult
of the Middle Ages in fact means: Catholicism—not so much due to the truth of its teachings, as due to the divine order of man's life based on these teachings and culture.

THE ROMANTIC TREASURES OF THE PAST

At the end of the eighteenth century, Wackenroder glorified the art of the time of Dürer in Nürnberg, the brothers Schlegel deepened the literary-historical understanding of the past on an international level and then also turned to the past of their own nation by lecturing about Middle High German epics, heroic sagas, mythology, and by encouraging greater interest in the old sources of German language and poetry. Novalis saw in the medieval world that ideal and deep cultural unity for which all the Romantics were longing, since their era did not possess it.

Naturally, it was not only architecture and painting, language and history of the Middle Ages that was being promoted, but also interest in medieval poetry and writing. Ludwig Tieck took the banner from his friend Wackenroder. He finally found the literary form in which he could express himself best. These were Nacherzählungen and Umarbeitungen of old chapbooks, in which he succeeded in capturing the naïve manner and mood of true story telling. By using the material of old chapbooks and fairy tales, Tieck awakened a very lively interest in older poetry and writings, especially in that of the Volksdichtung.
in his artist-novel (Künstlerroman), Franz Sternbalds
Wanderungen, he wanted to depict the world at the waning
of the Middle Ages, the Nürnberg of Albrecht Dürer, as
well as the artistic world of the Netherlands and of
Italy. Old sagas (Ekhard, Tannhäuser) were also perused
as material for short stories in the manner of fairy tales
and in addition Tieck edited and published some of Hans
Sachs' Fastnachtspiele and brought to the attention of
his friends the writings of the Silesian mystic, Jakob
Böhme, a fact which had far-reaching results for the whole
Romantic Movement.

The deep impression which his visit to Nürnberg had
made on him and Wackenroder, prompted Tieck to study in
the libraries of Munich, Rome and Paris manuscripts of
Middle High German poetry, especially Minnelieder. He
published the latter in adaptation and in the preface gave
a summary of the development of poetry from the medieval
time to Shakespeare and Goethe, painting an ideal picture
of knighthood and courtly life. This characterization
of the medieval period had an extraordinary effect:
Jacob Grimm was prompted by it to investigate medieval
literature, others tackled renewals of old epics, Achim
von Arnim proceeded to peruse writings of the previous
centuries (notably the seventeenth) as topics for his
own literary efforts. Arnim revived many old stories
and fairy tales. In collaboration with Brentano, he
gathered over several years folksongs, sagas and poetry
of the past from printed and handwritten sources or by
word of mouth, finally publishing the results in 1805 under the title Des Knaben Wunderhorn. Their reasons were not scholarly, they were more interested in the immediate impact and enthusiastic reaction that this collection of treasures out of the past would have on their contemporaries. This they certainly achieved to a much higher degree than did Herder with his collection erroneously entitled Volkslieder.

Josef Görres, a dedicated Romantic and fighter for freedom and truth through the medium of journalism, became familiar with old German literature through Brentano, and collected chapbooks (about forty-nine of them). Grimm admitted being greatly indebted to him for some of his material. In his studies of the Middle Ages and its people, Görres' essays can be considered an improvement over Tieck's, due to their greater scholarly exactitude.

Von der Hagen and Büsching carried on with this interest in chapbooks and published in 1809 those of Pontus und Sidonia, Fierabas and Tristan under the title Buch der Liebe. While Wilhelm Grimm specialized in research on old sagas and fairy tales, Ludwig Uhland devoted already in his younger years considerable time to the study of Folksong, as well as to the sagas and poetry of the Middle Ages.

This revival of interest in the Middle Ages by the Romantics, especially in the epics, poetry and chapbooks,
raises the question of the Tristan and Isolde legend and
its possible interest for the Romantics, since it expresses
a high ideal of love, of which the Romantics practically
had made a cult.

Before discussing the Romantic treatments of the
Tristan legend, however, it will be necessary to look
at the Romantics' attitude to love in general.

ROMANTIC LOVE

"... Es ist alles in der Liebe:
Freundschaft, schöner Umgang,
Sinnlichkeit und auch Leidenschaft;
und es muss alles darin sein, und
eins das andere verstärken und
lindern, beleben und erhöhen."

(Lucinde, p. 83.)

In order better to understand the thinking of the
Romantics regarding love, we have first to go back to the
end of the eighteenth century and ascertain what kind of
spiritual and mental attitude was prevalent at that time,
and with what kind of an opinion on love the generation
of the Romantics had to wrestle.

The dualism in the thinking of the eighteenth century,
which distinguishes between sensual love and spiritual
love, is quite evident with the Romantics. The harsh
division of body and soul—a carry over into Christianity
from antiquity—is intimately linked with the accepted
opinion about woman during the Enlightenment period.
Woman was equal to man as a rational being, a difference
existing merely in their physiological functions. However,
a very low opinion prevailed regarding the sexual aspects, founded on Descartes' philosophy of the rigid division of body and soul qualities inherent in human beings. The irrationalistic philosophers of the eighteenth century extended this division further between that of sensuality and feelings. Thus any relationship involving a physical union was looked upon as inferior (and this included marriage!) to that of the 'spiritual bond' or the 'lofty meeting of kindred minds.' Klopstock's and Goethe's attempts\textsuperscript{12} to change this point of view--born out of their own deep and strong realizations--were unsuccessful. It was not until Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher pronounced the unity of the physical and spiritual aspects of love and corroborated it philosophically,\textsuperscript{13} that this conviction took permanent roots in society. They had to overcome that gulf imposed by all the teachings that preceded their own time.

While marriage had a higher value in German literature and philosophy of the eighteenth century than it did in French literature, theoretically the reasons for its existence still did not amount to more than procreation or a means to avoid promiscuity. So much the higher was the value of a soul relationship, especially in those circles that considered themselves guardians of the Christian teachings, e.g., Bodmer and his friends. In contrast to them, Wieland's novels and verse romances proclaimed the intense power (Allmacht) of the nature-instincts, which idealistic, Platonically-inclined youths
tried in vain to avoid. More honest than Wieland's veiled lasciviousness was the "Leidenschaftspathos" of the poets of the Storm and Stress, who embraced the natural sensual passions. At the opposite end stood at the close of the century the followers of the irrationalistic philosopher Hemsterhuis (who considered marriage a degradation of the soul-love, due to its physical aspects), including Jean Paul, Herder and Jacobi, all of whom hailed friendship (the "Ehe der Geister") as superior to love (the "Ehe der Körper"). Numerous literary works through several decades give proof of this point of view—a man between two women: the one is his wife, the other his "soul-mate" (e.g., Jacobi: "Woldemar"). Only a few poets, such as Klopstock and even more so Goethe, voiced a different conviction regarding love, where the physical is considered the expression of the spiritual, and of the soul itself. It was only through the Romantics that this latter thought became victorious.

Friedrich Schlegel, who, with his brother August Wilhelm, was the chief representative of Romanticism in Germany in its theoretical aspects, sharply criticized Jacobi's "Woldemar," not only for his opinion about love, but also for his portrayal of the two women, especially the one of the wife, hailed as an ideal by others for her complete submissiveness to the husband. The new ideal that Schlegel had was of a completely different kind: "Selbständige Weiblichkeit" was to be
the goal toward which the ideal of femininity should strive. In 1799 he published his romantic novel Lucinde, which aroused a considerable scandal. In this novel he laid bare his physical relations with his mistress Dorothea with a lack of reticence which shocked even his Romantic friends. Yet Lucinde is something more than a chronique scandaleuse: it unfolds a programme of social reform which was of much consequence for the future. Taking up a thread from the earlier essay Über die Diotima, Schlegel expresses his conviction that woman was to be man's sexual and intellectual comrade, not merely the mother of his children or a household drudge, and that she must even possess political rights. He saw in the union of man and woman an allegory of complete humanity in which masculinity and femininity unite in harmonious reconciliation, in the belief that man must take on some of the characteristics of womanhood, and woman some of the characteristics of manhood, to be worthy of such a humanity. The ideal marriage which he describes in Lucinde was based on the freedom of the individual and on a harmony and unity of souls which should persist not only in this world but also in the next. Through all the Romantic writers, from Tieck to Hoffmann, we find this same theoretical condemnation of marriage: they all see in such a commonplace fulfilment of love the death of high appreciation and the end of artistic inspiration. "Die Liebe ist nicht bloss das stille Verlangen nach dem Unendlichen" (that was the theme of the Hemsterhuis circle), "sie ist auch
der heilige Genuss einer schönen Gegenwart. Sie ist nicht bloss eine Mischung, ein Übergang vom Sterblichen zum Unsterblichen, sondern sie ist eine völliche Einheit beider" (L. 152). This conviction became the basic love motif of almost all Romantic poets and philosophers. 15

Schlegel was interested in matters of sex, love and womanhood from his early years, as his letters to his brother August Wilhelm testify. Influenced by his studies in Greek literature and philosophy, and by the philosophic activities of his own time, his interests later on deepened and became more spiritual, until he felt himself called upon to discharge the duties of an ethical reformer. He became convinced, as time went, that the society in which he lived was positively in error as to the position which woman was to occupy in the world. He was convinced that woman had been for centuries deprived of her natural right to stand by the side of man as his equal, and therefore needed to be emancipated. Woman's nature, Schlegel claims, is not inferior to that of man, nor different in kind, as Schiller had represented in his Anmut und Würde, but is like that of man. If there was any difference, it was one of degree only, as Plato had already pointed out. 16 Therefore, woman should enjoy greater spiritual independence, she should be allowed to work out her own salvation as a distinct, independent personality. She should not be looked upon as bearer and guardian of children only, but should be her husband's friend. She
should develop her intellectual gifts and satisfy her instincts for poetry, philosophy, or the sciences. In short, she should so cultivate her powers as to be the equal of man aesthetically, ethically, intellectually, and spiritually. This was Schlegel's new moral programme. The right of the woman to stand by the side of man as his equal is claimed on the theory that man and woman are equal parts of one abstract humanity which existed in God's mind before creation, and will come again in the future, in part on earth through man's gradual perfection and, ultimately, in another spiritual world.

Works depicting man's quest for inner unity (Goethe's Faust, Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre) and portrayals of ideal women (Natalie, Iphigenie) meant much to the young Schlegel still yearning for unity, completeness of being and life, as well as for mastery of his ambivalent nature. It was women who in life gave Schlegel his significant experiences, through which he matured and found his centre. The encounter with Caroline was a most powerful one for him, because she possessed what he longed for most: unity of being. But this encounter had to end in renunciation on his part, since Caroline became his brother's wife. While his love for her enabled him to find his own self, to purify his own character, fulfilment came into his life only later through Dorothea. She was the one who was capable of disclosing to him the unity of the sensual and spiritual aspects of love, and this experience had to have the most profound impact on him. He finally
experienced a love in which there was equal response of body and soul, where the physical submission meant a reciprocal opening and enfolding of their souls. This experience, this harmony, this unity of body-soul love is the theme of Lucinde. This fragment extolls the joys of sensuality but it was not his intention to glorify sensuality and moral freedom per se, as this novel was assumed to do by most contemporaries, because to him "blosse Sinnlichkeit ohne Liebe zerstöre das Wesen der Frau" (L. 80), and referring to the Greek courtesans, he states: "Die Kunst einer Aspasia kann vollkommen sein, aber nie kann ihre absichtliche Kunst den Namen der Liebe verdienen." 17

Schlegel does not believe in so-called "pure friendship" between two people of opposite sexes. "Etwas recht Albernes ist es, wenn so zwei Personen von verschiedenen Geschlecht sich ein Verhältnis ausbilden und einbilden wie reine Freundschaft" (L. 76/77). It is for this reason that he attacks "Woldemar," since to him the man-woman love relationship is far superior to that of friendship, because it is completely fulfilling "in der sie durch alle Stufen der Menschheit zusammengehen, von der ausgelassensten Sinnlichkeit bis zur geistigsten Geistigkeit" (L. 16), and yet in all this sensual eroticism, in all this submission we are to find only the expression of their "Zusammengehörigkeit."

In his "Athenäumfragmente" Friedrich Schlegel says:
"Das erste in der Liebe ist der Sinn für einander, und das Höchste der Glauben an einander. Hingebung ist der Ausdruck des Glaubens, und Genuss kann den Sinn beleben und schärfen, wenn auch nicht hervorbringen, wie die gemeine Meinung ist. Darum kann die Sinnlichkeit schlechte Menschen auf eine kurze Zeit täuschen, als könnten sie sich lieben" (Nr. 87 M. II, 216).—"Wie der Sinn für einander, wuchs auch der Glauben an einander, und mit dem Glauben stieg der Mut und die Kraft" (L. 141). A love relationship of this level obviously has to be valued more highly than friendship. "Freundschaft ist parziale Ehe, und Liebe ist Freundschaft von allen Seiten und nach allen Richtungen, universelle Freundschaft. Das Bewusstsein der notwendigen Grenzen ist das Unentbehrlichste und das Seltenste in der Freundschaft" (M. II, 265, Fragment #359). Precisely because of the woman's love capacity, Schlegel denies her ability for friendship, because everything a woman loves, she loves completely (wholly) and a friendship necessitates certain boundaries and must be spiritual. "Diese Absonderung würde Euer Wesen nur auf eine feinere Art ebenso vollkommen zerstören wie blosse Sinnlichkeit ohne Liebe" (L. 80). While one may not completely agree with this point of view, one must admit that in the battle between love and friendship, fought all through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, love had never been so elevated above friendship; and this statement coming from no one less than Friedrich Schlegel, who expounded his "Philosophie der Freundschaft," makes
it even more remarkable.

However, for Schlegel and his followers it is of the utmost importance that in spite of all submission (including that of the man, in accordance with the ideal of "der sanften Männlichkeit"), the personality does not become submerged, but instead truly comes to bloom. It is due to this very quality, that love becomes the deciding factor for growth and evolution to the Romantics. Love is focused on the core of the personality and is capable of singling out or illuminating it, thus bringing self awareness to the beloved. This conviction is at the basis of Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, but we also detect it in *Lucinde* in the joyous hopefulness of the lovers to understand each other completely in the "unerschöpflichen Gefühl unserer ursprünglichen Harmonie." . . . "Ach Liebe! glaube es nur, dass keine Frage in dir ohne Antwort in mir ist" (L. 163). Only through the love of another can man find his real self. "Nur in der Antwort seines Du kann jedes Ich seine unendliche Einheit ganz fühlen und selbst den inneren Keim der Gottähnlichkeit entfalten" (RL. 228).

For Schlegel, the highest goal of development is to become humane ("Menschwerden") and to reveal the inner centre of self (the God-likeness), out of which all can be explained and to which everything else leads back again, thus overcoming all singleness (Vereinzelung). Here, too, we find the striving for synthesis: to find one's centre in order to overcome all fluctuations, to obtain
harmony and partake of God through the medium and help of love. Thus the experience of love extends into that of religious experience. In this latter realm woman becomes the leader, since her being has more unity and centre than that of man. She, too, needs love for her development, but she anticipates it more eagerly; she is more religious, of a richer nature, with which she is preordained to awaken the innermost in man. "Denn ohne lebendiges Zentrum kann der Mensch nicht sein, und hat er es noch nicht in sich, so darf er es nur in einem Menschen suchen, und nur ein Mensch und dessen Zentrum kann das seinige reizen und wecken" (Idee #45, M. II, 294). It is the woman's mission to be the mediator-awakener and man owes it to her that he discovers his centre, that he is complemented and elevated to a higher being, due to their unity: it is not just a summation of two individuals. The "Dithyrambische Fantasie über die schönste Situation" begins with the following words: "Nur hier (in dir) sehe ich mich ganz und harmonisch oder vielmehr die volle ganze Menschheit in mir und in dir" (L. 13), thus foreshadowing the deeper meaning of the ensuing episode: even in play and the sensual enjoy­ments of love, their union is to have a higher connotation. "Die Religion der Liebe" brings ever greater closeness to their love (L. 19). Novalis once remarked on Schlegel's "Ideen": "Dir ist Religion geistige Sinnlichkeit und geistige Körperwelt überhaupt."18—"Es ist die älteste kindlichste einfachste Religion, zu der ich zurückgekehrt
bin. Ich verehre als vorzüglichstes Sinnbild der Gottheit das Feuer, und wo gibt’s ein schöneres, als das was die Natur tief in die weiche Brust der Frauen verschloss?

Weihe du mich zum Priester" (L. 50). The beloved becomes the mediator between the lover’s incomplete self and the indivisible eternal humanity. So we have here another kind of love after all, fused with the erotic, in fact, an offshot that unites with it: the love for mankind, for humanity, or, to say it in Schlegel’s sense: love for the Universe (L. 169).

But the romantic adoration of the beloved is different from the depicting of woman in the novels of the great passions (Leidenschaftsroman), as well as from those of Platonic enthusiasm (Empfindsamkeit). The Romantics do not want to worship the images of their fantasy in the other being—-which romantically speaking would have been very one-sided and incomplete--but the human being with the fullness of nature in him/her, more humane than the "Heiligenbild des Schwärmers." The woman becomes priestess, "Priesterin der Freude, die das Geheimnis der Liebe offenbart" (L. 166), and man adores her (L. 50).

To this religious experience of love, death is no barrier any more. Both lovers were from the beginning of their relationship prepared to follow each other into death—indeed, life after death seemed to promise to them a more intimate possibility of blending with each other. "Wir beide werden noch einst in einem Geiste anschauen, dass wir Blüten einer Pflanze oder Blätter einer Blume
From their mutual desire to extend, if not perpetuate, their moment of unity, from the feeling of "gegenseitiger Unerläßlichkeit im Lieben und Geliebtenwerden," so that they love "bis zur Vernichtung" (L. 17, 162), arises the love-death wish. "Dort (im Tode) wird dann vielleicht die Sehnsucht voller befriedigt" (L. 18).

This thought of the "Liebestod" was close to Schlegel at that time; a whole series of poems expresses the thought of dying together with the beloved in order to be eternally united with her. Here Schlegel's thoughts meet those of Novalis, and it is probable that they originated with the latter. Schlegel wrote to him, "Vielleicht bist du der erste Mensch in unserem Zeitalter, der Kunstsinn für den Tod hat." This love-death wish is the last consequence of the striving for unity. It is the desire for the last and highest gradation of love experience and touches upon the motif of the "Liebestod" at the close of the dialogue in Lucinde: "O ewige Sehnsucht!—Doch endlich wird des Tages fruchtlos sehnen, eitles Blenden sinken und erlöschen, und eine grosse Liebesnacht sich ewig ruhig fühlen!" (L. 204). After this serious moment follow Tändeleien der Phantasie which fade out into a dream, praising the harmony of love, the completion of existence. "Nun versteht die Seele . . . den heiligen Sinn des Lebens" (L. 209).
ROMANTIC MYSTICISM

Bei Nacht ward die Unsterblichkeit ersonnen,
Denn sehend blind sind wir im Licht der Sonnen.

A. W. Schlegel, An Novalis.

There was a mystic strain in all Romantic writers, simply because they all tended strongly towards religion and metaphysics. However, Novalis' mysticism was profounder than that of the rest: he was born a mystic. He had come from the spirit world: he lived on earth to perform his duties as one among men with truly human attachment for this earth, yet looked forward to the time when he could again return to what he regarded as his true home. "Wo gehen wir denn hin?" he asked of Cyane in Heinrich von Ofterdingen. "Immer nach Hause," was the answer.

Novalis lived in the world of the spirit while still on earth and this is the key to his individual romanticism. Certain of Novalis' statements lead us to regard him as more of a poet than mystic, since he does not always believe himself imprisoned in the world by the senses, seeking behind it a profound mystery; for him, this sacred realm beyond was not an insoluble mystery, but his original home. From here, he looked out upon the world of the senses and judged its relations. This mythos, instinctively a part of his nature, opened to him the secret doors of philosophy, the sciences, the arts, and the minds of great men. The wonderful charm and melody of his style
were not the result of study, but the natural expression of his being. There is a peculiar blending of the here and the beyond in his writings not found in those of the other Romantics. What he says is not doctrinal, didactic, or even strictly metaphysical, but essentially poetic, prophetic, interpretative of spiritual things, revealing spiritual relationships, and unfolding symbolic meanings of things seen and unseen.

This is Novalis' personal contribution to the romanticism of the School, giving it a distinctive colouring, which would be lacking otherwise. His individualism does not show itself in the form of revolt but submits from the outset to higher influences. He does not use the magic powers of his imagination for mere enjoyment, but for the sake of establishing through that power important relations between his own mind and the mind of the world. He did not play with his various moods, as other writers of Romanticism did (e.g., Tieck), since he attached to them profound meanings: they were to him important messages sent from the distant background of his inner life.

And again it was Tieck who was instrumental in arousing in another writer a deep response of the soul; it was he who talked to Novalis of mystic subjects and recommended the works of Jakob Böhme of whose teachings we find so much in Novalis' works. It is important, however, to remember that Novalis knew Böhme's works before Tieck called his attention to them, but when he read them again,
systematically, his understanding was greater than before.

Novalis' poem *An Tieck* is a generous eulogistic tribute which he pays to his friend, calling him the heir to Böhme's spiritual treasures and the modern herald of his works. We today, however, may feel that the reverse is the case, that Novalis, not Tieck, was Böhme's rightful heir.

What Novalis found within the esoteric realism of his inner spiritual life, the great treasure house of spiritual truths and values, shaped itself in his mind in the form of a grand imaginative, symbolic picture, the picture of the "Veiled Maiden" or "Veiled Goddess." Throughout his works, in one form or another, in one reference or another, there is this maiden. His whole mystic philosophy is compressed into it. Happy was the man who could find her, and lift her veil. Yet this task was as difficult as it was for Parzival to find the Holy Grail—for this maiden was invisible! It was the spiritual nature in man, which he had lost when he was driven from Paradise, and to point out to man the way back to Paradise, to his lost kingdom, was Novalis' poetic mission. There is a possibility of finding her again, for there is in every man something which yearns for her love, an inner voice gently calling; a secret power which draws him, and by which, after many trials and infinite struggles, through pain, suffering and disappointments, he will finally reach his goal--it is the romantic Blue Flower. This Blue Flower was also known to Böhme; it apparently grew in the
rose garden of Paradise: "The way to this flower is not far," he says, "he who finds it may not reveal it, nor can he; for there is no language that can name it. Nor can any find it without the flower's consent; however, it will meet him who fervently seeks with a maiden-like spirit. Then you will say: 'That must be God?' No; it is not God; but it is God's friend." Novalis' whole poetic mission may be said to be an effort to restore to man his spiritual life which he lost when he was driven from Paradise. His works are dream pictures of this lost life, and indications of ways open to man to regain his former heavenly kingdom.

Novalis' *Hymnen an die Nacht* introduce us to the mystic side of Romanticism, away from the world of the senses, against the daytime and the light of the sun, sensuous beauty, nature in its splendour and riot of colour and sound. It is a yearning away into the spaces of the night, away from the world and its sameness to another unknown world of golden hopes. The *Hymnen an die Nacht* celebrate this yearning. They are intimately associated with events in his life, soul experiences, confessions wrung from his heart amid trials and tribulations.

The events referred to are all relevant to his relationship with his yet child-like fiancée, Sophie Kühn, her illness and ensuing death. Already during her illness, a magic transformation seemed to take place in her person,
which deeply affected Novalis: hovering between life and death, the immature, childish traits of Sophie seemed to slough off, and the inherent character Novalis sensed in her when he stated that she did not strive to be something but was something, developed without restrictions, permeating her whole person, until a spiritual affinity between the two lovers was established. From this time Novalis became more introspective, restless, more accustomed to interpret the world from within rather than from without. He turned with renewed eagerness to his philosophic studies, hoping to find consolation for his grief. When Sophie finally died, it was a tremendous shock to Novalis, radically changing his whole being. He described it as a divine occurrence, a key to everything, a wondrous providential move: a power had arisen in his consciousness and he believed he could yet achieve something. His love had grown into a flame, by which everything earthly was consumed. He focused his consciousness longingly on the world of truth, where Sophie now was. For a moment, he even contemplated suicide, in order to join her sooner, but quickly dismissed this ignoble thought from his mind. There was another, better, and nobler way--Fichte had pointed it out to him--a transcendental way: by sheer will power!

He went frequently to her grave, dreaming by its side the great dream of a reunion, and within three months after Sophie's death, he prepared himself for the grand superhuman act of will power which was to sever
his soul from this world and conduct it into the next world. From these dreams, and from attendant struggles and meditations and mystic writings, the *Hymnen an die Nacht* took shape in the poet's mind. His ardent desire for reunion with Sophie was crowned with success, and Novalis recorded it in the third *Hymn*. His clairvoyant experience at the grave of Sophie, his vision, gave him an undying, imperishable faith in the heavenly realms of the night and its light—his fiancée. He had seen by an inner light what his bare senses could never have revealed to him. This central idea of the *Hymnen*, which grew out of his vision at the grave, became later greatly enlarged and universalized. What in the beginning was purely personal, became in the course of time applicable to the whole world. Sophie's love grew into a love in which the whole of humanity had a share, and the place, where her spirit was, became the abiding place of the loving spirit of the whole world, and the sacredness of her person and the sacredness of her heavenly home grew into the Christ of religion and the heaven of Christianity. In this new, amplified conception, he was in part influenced by Böhme's *Aurora* and the *Three Principles*. To Novalis, Sophie was his spiritual Eve who had come to him from the heights of heaven and had dwelt with him for a little while. Then she departed, but he saw her again on that memorable day at the grave. She existed, she lived. There was an hereafter, there was a spiritual life, there was something there beyond the stars for every individual man,
waiting for him--man's Eve, his spiritual betrothed. Then there was immortality, a Christian heaven, a Christ, a Heavenly Father. And she being there in that home of Christian faith, she became in Novalis' eyes the symbol of that home, deified, a Divine Maiden, the Christian Madonna or the Christian Christ, the representative symbol of the Christian religion and divine Love, the symbol of those twin-flowers of Romanticism entwined on one life-stalk--religion and love.

This then is Novalis' conception of the Night in praise of which his Hymns were sung. In the day-time, our senses reign, in the night-time, our spirit. The night becomes, therefore, a symbol standing for the realm of the spirit, for the Christian heaven, where the Father is, where Christ is, where all the loved ones are, and where Sophie, the betrothed, lives. To love the night is to love the spiritual in man, which will one day be released from the body and pass from daylight of earthly existence into the light of eternal life. Longingly Novalis stretched out his arms for that spiritual home.

\[ \text{Hinunter in der Erde Schoss,} \\
\text{Weg aus des Lichtes Reichen!} \]
\((\text{R. I., p. 658.})\)

he sings in the sixth and last Hymn, the most truly mystic of them all, ending with this stanza:

\[ \text{Hinunter zu der süßen Braut,} \\
\text{Zu Jesus, dem Geliebten!} \\
\text{Getrost! Die Abenddämmerung graut} \\
\text{Den Liebenden, Betrübten.} \\
\text{Ein Traum bricht unsre Banden los} \\
\text{Und senkt uns in des Vaters Schoss.} \]
\((\text{R. I., p. 659.})\)
Although the Hymns praise the Night, we can still find in them an appropriate estimate of the merits of the daytime. His purpose is not to sunder the spirit from the flesh, but merely to emphasize the symbolic relationship of the one to the other, the inner world to the empirical world. In the daytime, beauty holds sway, and the body demands its own physical life, but when the night wraps itself about man, peace enters his soul, and beyond the twinkling of the stars he sees yet another light, the immortal life of the spirit. Addressing the Day in the fourth Hymn, he says: "Gern will ich die fleissigen Hände rühren, überall umschaun, wo du mich brauchst; rühmen deines Glänzes volle Pracht" (R. HN. I., p. 651/2). At once, however, follows a comparison with the Night. "Aber getreu der Nacht bleibt mein geheimes Herz und der schaffenden Liebe" (R. HN. I., p. 652),

... Ich lebe bei Tage
Voll Glauben und Mut,
Und sterbe die Nächte
in heiliger Glut.

As we have seen, through the death of his beloved Sophie, the highest senses were awakened in Novalis, making him not only a true poet, but a dweller in two worlds. This evolution of Novalis is depicted in his fragmentary novel, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, in which the greatest importance is given to the experience of Love. There is also the battle between Mind and Heart; the poet saw the destroying of his heart as a danger for himself, whereas love meant his salvation. In many ways,
we can see in this novel what Sophie had meant to him. The most beautiful dialogues about the nature and effect of love written, not only by Novalis, but by the Romantics as a whole, can be found here. Equally important are the gestures of the lovers, 26 and the strong impact of looking at each other: their eyes speak.

Novalis is of the conviction that love effects an evolutionary growth in the lovers, each wanting the perfection of the other, seeking the union in order to complement, soothe and awaken in the other the true core of self; one mirroring the other. Such an evolution, such help for the other, is only possible through a heightened ability to love, and that can only be evoked in man through love itself. Only through love can the riches of the inner life unfold, can man truly become aware of self, can new worlds be opened to him. "Wenn man recht liebt, so entfaltet sich in unserm Innern eine wirklich sichtbare Welt" (M. III., 327).

For Novalis, the theory of Love is the highest science. "Was ist das ewige Geheimnis?" fragte die Sphinx: "Die Liebe" (M. IV., 202, 195). However, all love for God, the Cosmic, Nature, is crystallized in the love for his beloved and only through her death does it receive its last culmination and transfiguration: "Verbindung, die auch für den Tod geschlossen ist, ist eine Hochzeit, die uns eine Genossin für die Nacht gibt. Im Tode ist die Liebe am süßesten; für den Liebenden ist der Tod eine Brautnacht, ein Geheimnis süßer Mysterien" (M. II., 297).
"Tod ist eine nähere Verbindung liebender Wesen" (M. II., 280). This is for him the idea of the "Liebestod." In addition to this idea, Novalis also touches upon another more prevalent one: death at the moment of union, in order to achieve eternal duration.
CHAPTER III
VERSIONS BY THE ROMANTICS

Considering all that has been said about the Romantics as emancipators of the intellect, the feelings, and the spirit, as well as representatives of a new attitude towards woman, love, nature, and beauty, and comparing this with the basic legend of Tristan und Isolde, it would seem as if it were made for the Romantics, that they would be delighted and inspired to recreate either the whole romance or some aspects of it. They could perhaps give it their own interpretation, under the influence of their own doctrines about love, marriage of the souls, religion. We will see in the following chapter, what they accomplished and how meagre a crop was actually harvested.

Bodmer began to collect the treasures of Middle High German poetry and these were later published in 1784/85 by C. H. Müller under the title Sammlung deutscher Gedichte aus dem 12., 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Volume two contained Gottfried's Tristan with Heinrich von Freiberg's continuation. However, this and other medieval text editions had no practical value in the beginning, since all the commentaries, annotations, and glossaries, so essential for their complete understanding, were still lacking. Since the Romantics considered it their task to awaken a general interest in the literary achievements of the German Middle Ages by way of adaptations, commentaries
and new versions, A. W. Schlegel, too, was motivated and inspired by the legend to write a poem Tristan in the spring of 1800, incorporated later (1811) in his collection Poetische Werke. Schlegel came upon Gottfried's Tristan in the course of his research in old German literary works in 1799, and he had the following to say about it:

Der Hauptinhalt ist die Liebe des Tristan und der Königin Ysalde, die der des Lancelot mit der Genevre symmetrisch gegenüber steht. Die Ungesetzlichkeit des Verhältnisses haben beide Dichter durch anderweitige Tugenden und Zartigkeiten der Gefühle auf alle Weise zu adeln gesucht, am Tristan wird besonders ein rührendes Muster der unüberwindlichen Treue bis in den Tod aufgestellt. Man kann wohl sagen, dass bei allem, was der Moralist anstößig finden würde, doch eine grosse Unschuld der Gesinnung sich offenbart, weswegen der Dichter auch zuletzt den Sinn seiner Dichtung aufs Heilige, die Überschwänglichkeit der religiösen Liebe wendet.

Schlegel valued poetic adaptations, such as Tristan, very highly, as evidenced in some remarks in his lectures concerning "britannische und nordfranzösische Ritter-mythologie" (1803-04):

Bei der Erstorbenheit der Phantasie, welche aus der gegenwärtigen Verfassung des Lebens grosse und kühne Dichtung hervorzulocken beinahe unmöglich macht, wäre es denn doch sehr anzureten, dass man durch Wiedererweckung jener alten unkenntlich gewordenen Gebilde die Poesie zu bereichern suchte. . . . Es kommt nur darauf an, eine Dichtung in ihrem eigentümlichen Sinne aufzufassen, und sie mit dem Glanze aller der Darstellungsmittel zu umkleiden, welche uns die heutige Ausbildung der Sprache und poetischen Kunst an die Hand gibt, so kann sie die grösste Wirkung nicht verfehlen. Auf diesem Felde ist noch unermüdlich viel Ruhm einzuernernt.

Schlegel's Tristan comprises 91 stanzas, being only the first part of his great outline, which was to include not only Gottfried's Tristan, but the Grail and Lancelot
as well, which are linked in later Arthurian literature. Since this would, in part, involve a duplication of events (Tristan/Isolde and Lancelot/Ginevra), and create complications, it is quite apparent that Schlegel's outline had not been thoroughly analyzed nor seriously considered. Moreover, Schlegel was far too busy a man with his academic lectures, his critical writings, the *Athenäum* and his various translations from foreign languages, to be able to devote sufficient time to the pursuit of an epic of such vast proportions. Thus he was unable to keep his promise, expressed in the last lines of his *Tristan*:

\[
\ldots; \text{was drauf ihm widerfahren,} \\
\text{Sollt ihr im folgenden Gesang erfahren.} \\
(P. 126)
\]

In his 91 stanzas, Schlegel follows Gottfried quite closely, ending the narrative at Tristan's kidnapping by the Norwegian merchants, but condensing the story by eliminating detailed contemplation or minor facets, constantly keeping in mind the vastness of his plan. And yet, this does not seem to prevent him from introducing some of his own inventions, as for instance the disguise of Blancheflur as a pageboy. Also, Riwalin's last battle, which Gottfried glosses over quite briefly in a line or two, is depicted very vividly and at quite some length by Schlegel. It probably did not suit the modern poet to dismiss the hero of the preceding romantic episode in such an abrupt manner.

Schlegel probably knew the French Prose Romance and followed it in the episode where the dying Blancheflur
herself gives Tristan his name, motivating it by the
sorrows she endured leading up to his birth:

71. Sie sprach, es hegend am gebrochenen Herzen:
"Ich habe, da ich dich empfing, getrauert,
Dein Vater traurig lag in wunden Schmerzen,
In Trauer hat mich die Geburt durchschauert,
Traurig umwölkt sich deine Sterne Schwärzen,
Weil du verwaist und von Gefahr umlauert.
Drum heisse Tristan mit dem Traur'gen Namen.
Das ist mein letzter Muttersegen. Amen."

Blancheflur's blessing then provides the transition
back to Gottfried's text where the child was named by
Rual.

Tieck, who had seen Schlegel's Tristan in manuscript
form, gives an interesting analysis of the story in a letter
to him in September 1802:

Ich finde, dass Tristan ganz Leichtsinn, Liebe,
Leidenschaft ist, die Abenteuer haben ordent-
lisch etwas von Anekdoten. . . . Worüber ich
aber nicht mit Dir einig sein kann, ist der
religiöse Ton, ich weiss nicht, wie Du es mit
der Hauptgeschichte wirst verbinden können?
Ist Tristan in irgend einer Sage wirklich nach
dem Graale geritten? Ich zweifle daran, und
zweifle noch mehr, dass Du es willkürlich hin-
zudichten darfst; der Graal und Parceval sind
eins, Tristan und Liebesabenteuer; in diesem
Gedichte widerspricht alles der Religion, ja
auf gewisse Weise ist Spott damit getrieben,
wie bei dem artigen Doppelsinne der Feuerprobe
der Isolde, wie Tristan sich durch die Capelle
rettet, so dass Gott ihm selber zum Ehebruch
behülflich scheint: es ist zwar, statt des
Schicksals, eine moralische Beendigung da,
in dessen nur, wie in den Romanen sein kann,
die von Liebe handeln, das Höhersteigen der
Leidenschaft und der Tod, als Tristan seinem
Freunde in unrechtmassiger Liebe hilft; diese
Moral auf der einen, der Liebestrank auf der
anderen Seite erregen wieder ein Unschuldsgefühl,
wodurch die herrliche Schilderung und Erfindung
dem Gemüte wohl tun. Bei solchen Stellen, wie
sie beide in der Einsamkeit, in der wunderbaren
Höhle leben, bleibt dem neueren Dichter recht
viel Spielraum."
Carl Philipp Conz (1762-1872) was professor of Classic Philology at the University of Tübingen and as such a very well versed and apt translator of Greek poets. He had a leaning towards philosophical and didactic lyric and followed in this in Schiller's footsteps. As a poet, he was of little significance. He published in 1821 his Romance Tristans Tod, based on Heinrich von Freiberg's continuation of Gottfried's epic, but with quite a few innovations as well. The Romance begins thus:

Krank an bitterschweren Todeswunden
lag daheim auf seinem Bette Tristan,
näher neigt mit jeglicher Minute
schon dem Tode zu sein Heldenleben,
schon dem Tode zu sein Liebeleben.
Eine Hoffnung hält noch von den Lippen
ab des Todes Finger: seine Liebe;
ob Isotte nicht, die Vielgeliebte
nahen würd! Ihre Anblick, ihrer Augen
Strahlen, ihrer Nähe Zauberkreise,
Ihre Finger heilende Berührung,
wundertätig, konnten sie vom Tode
den dem Tode schon verfallenen retten.

The classic episode of the white and the black sail follows, with Tristan's and Isolde's death. Conz has treated Isolde's lamentation over Tristan's dead body in a rather original, though typically romantic way, and has Isolde express her sorrow in very sentimental words:

"Leb' ich noch, war doch in ihm mein Leben
Einzig. Eine Seel' in zweier Leibern!
Ungetreuer, kannst du mich verlassen?
Schlage noch einmal die blauen Augen
Auf zu mir, die Liebeshände reiche
Mir einmal noch, dass wir gehn zusammen
Und vereint des Todes Hochzeit halten!"
Und so sinkt sie wieder hin zum Todten.

However, contrary to the legend, the bodies of the lovers are not taken to Cornwall, but remain in Britanny, and instead of the vine and the rosebush, we find here the lily and the rosebush--adding a more sentimental touch,
which was not inherent in the legend.

Karl Heinrich Wackernagel, born in 1800, studied under Lachmann and became himself professor of German language and literature in Basel, where he died in 1869. His first poetic attempts, gathered under the title *Gedichte eines fahrenden Schülers* (1828) are still very much under the influence of his studies in the old German Period, full of archaic words and artificial phrases and similes. His later poems (*Neuere Gedichte*, 1842, *Zeitgedichte*, 1843, and *Weinbüchlein*, 1845) are stilistically more independent. In his collection of poems *Gedichte eines fahrenden Schülers* are included seven Tristan Romances. They are based on the English *Sir Tristrem* and are also in 'balladesque' form. Wackernagel was further influenced by the German Prose Romance and, of course, Gottfried.

The first three Romances have each a special title: *Das Goldhaar*, *Die Brautwerbung*, and *Minnezauber*. The last four Romances are more closely linked under the heading *Tristans und Isoldens Tod*. The narrative is extremely brief and erratic, lacking all poetic empathy; the language is rather forced, the verses exceedingly clumsy.

Since Wackernagel called his Tristan Romances "Bruchstücke," we may assume that he had planned to write more Romances, or perhaps even the whole Tristan epic in this form. It is just as well that nothing came of it, since the available material is already sufficient proof of a sad failure. Here, for example, the drinking of the potion:
Schnell trugen die Kiele hin/Die Magd und ihr Gesinde, 
Den zarten Frauen thaten weh/Wasser und die Winde.

Sie waren gefahren auf öder Flut/Manche Wassermeile. 
Tristan gab der Königinn/Mit Rede Kurzweile.

"Mägdlein, gebt mir eures Weins:/Mich beginnet dürsten." 
Einen Becher von lauterem Glas/Brachten sie dem Fürsten.

Er bot ihn vor mit Züchten dar/Zu Isolden Hande. 
Sie trank und gab ihn aber hin/Herren Tristande.

Was sehnet Herz zu Herzen sich/Im beiden all zur Stunde? 
Aug' in Auge was schauen sie?/Was seufzet Mund nach Munde?

Sie sassen nach der Röthe bleich/In liebem Verlangen, 
Suchen und fliehend den Wechselblick/Mit freudigem Bangen. 

P. 37

Friedrich Rückert was born at Schweinfurt in 1788. 
He is quite well known as a singer of the Wars of Liberation
(Geharnischte Sonette), but his great interest was the
study of oriental literature. He rendered valuable services
to German literature as an interpreter of oriental life
and poetry, notably of HAFIZ; he is excellent as a translator of Sanskrit and Arabic, and ranks with Platen, who
also began his literary work with oriental imitations.
He, too, planned a Tristan and Isolde epic, of which the
first part (entitled by the editor Jung Tristan) was
published in 1839 in Oswald Marbach's Quarterly Die Jahres-
zeiten.

The poem starts where Schlegel ended: how young
Tristan, kidnapped by Norwegian merchants, lands in Corn-
wall. Rückert obviously favours great brevity: he covers
in his 32 stanzas of 8 lines each what Gottfried relates
between verses 1790-2530 (i.e., 740 verses). Rückert
does not give us the Prologue, nor the story of Riwalin
and Blancheflur, and we can glean from Rücker's sketches for his epic only that he did not have in mind a translation, but an independent and free adaptation. His poetic freedom consists mainly in the arrangement of his material. We were to learn, for example, about Tristan's parents and his own youth later on, in flash-back manner, presumably through Rual's account. Young Tristan turns up then—for the reader as well as for King Mark—as a perfect stranger, thus creating tension and expectation right from the start. The plan of the story is indicated by the author in the beginning verses:

Was heben wir zu singen an
Von Helden alter Zeit und ihren Holden?
Vom ritterlichen Held Tristan
Und seiner Braut Isolden,
Was der von Strassburg Gotefried
Sang meisterhaft und starb, eh' er's vollendet,
vollenden lasse mich ein günstiger Stern
das Lied!

Und ob es anders mir beschiede,
Der über uns die Sterne lenkt,
So will ich sterben unterm Liede,
Ins süsse Weh der Welt versenkt;
Die Liebe, die mir gab das Leben,
Sie möge mir den Tod
Und ewiges Leben dort, hier ewigen Nachruhm geben!

Rücker relates Tristan's encounter with the pilgrims and the hunting scene, though these are considerably shortened. King Mark is portrayed as a gloomy, unfriendly, reticent man, mourning the mysterious disappearance of his sister. His favourites are a dwarf, Melot, and a blind bard. It is quite apparent from the beginning that Tristan, the child with the sad name, is meant to bring joy and happiness to Mark's sinister court and
thus immediately contrast with Melot and the blind bard. In this way, the psychological motivation is given for future events, involving jealousy and hate, when Tristan will cause much pain to his uncle.

This fragment which was published only a few years before Immermann's Tristan is generally cheerful and gay in tone, thus being similar to Immermann's poem and contrasting with Schlegel's which is more in the vein of pathos.

Karl Lebrecht Immermann, who was born at Magdeburg in 1796, and died in 1840, can be classified as a post Romantic. He studied law at Halle and in 1827 was appointed Landgerichtsrat at Düsseldorf. Immermann experimented in all Romantic literary forms: in plays, a dramatic poem, a novel, and a romance. Later, as a producer at the theatre in Düsseldorf, he accomplished what Ludwig Tieck had attempted in Dresden: he produced the masters of dramatic literature, above all Shakespeare and Calderon, and from these experiments (1840) dates a new phase in the development of the German theatre.

In pursuing his interest in Old German literature (he had studied the Edda, Parzival, Titurel, Lohengrin), Immermann also came across Gottfried's Tristan. Being highly impressed by the story, he began writing his own version in 1831 but, although he returned to it in later years, he never succeeded in finishing the poem. It was published posthumously in 1842. In a letter
to his brother Ferdinand, dated March 31, 1831, Immermann wrote:

Das ist ein ganz herrlicher Gehalt. Es ist in mir der Plan entstanden, dereinst dieses Gedicht in neuer künstlerischer Form aufzuerwecken, und zwar so, dass nur der Stoff Gottfried von Strassburg, die Behandlung aber mir angehören möchte. Jammerschade, dass so prächtige Sachen unter den Gelehrten vermodern! man muss sie dem Volke schenken.32

Before starting his version, Immermann thoroughly investigated not only the material and background of the story itself, but also studied Germanic mythology and sagas of that period.33 In spite of all these earnest preparations and the initial enthusiasm, Immermann left the poem untouched for several years. It was only when a new love entered his own life that he returned to the epic Tristan und Isolde and finished the first part of it in 1838. He himself refers to this "revival of his heart" in the "Zueignung" and further allusions can be traced later. The "Zueignung" reads:

Gestorben war das Herz und lag im Grabe!
Dein Zauber weckt es wieder auf, der holde;
Es klopft und fühlt des neuen Lebens Gabe,
Sein erster Laut ist, Tristan und Isolde!

Immermann came further in his narrative of Tristan than Schlegel, but not as far as Gottfried; his poem ends with the scene in which Isolde schemes to have Brangaene murdered. What was to follow later is found in Immermann's sketches, so that we do have the complete plan of his epic. It is on these sketches for the final section of the narrative that Hermann Kurtz later based his version.
Immermann divides his epic into Romanzen, interspersed with numerous discourses and reflections, modelled after Gottfried, though in quite a different vein. He calls them Vorspiele, Zwischenspiele, and Nachspiele. The epic was planned in two parts: the first part was to consist of eleven and the second of ten romances. The first part ends with Isolde's arrival in Cornwall, the second part begins with Mark's nuptials and ends with the lovers' death. The sources used were Gottfried for the first part, and the Prose Romance as the backbone of the second part; for minor episodes, Sir Tristrem was used as well as the continuations by Ulrich and Heinrich.

While the number of episodes is considerably reduced, the narrative is, on the other hand, extended by lengthy descriptions of nature and by the introduction of background material. In the first hunting scene, for example (at which Mark is present), Immermann starts off by telling us of the birth and life of the stag to be hunted. After the hunt is over and the huntsmen are on the way home, Mark discovers Tristan's background and recognizes in him his nephew. From here on, Tristan's presence completely changes life in Tintayol. He makes his uncle get up at dawn and ride for hours over his land, thereby disturbing the smooth daily routine in the castle. Tristan is called "der Wildfang" and portrayed as a frisky young man full of mischief and humour, who actually is pulling all the
strings at court. He even suggests to his uncle that he should take a young wife in order to make life gayer:

Und Tristan sprach: Ihr wärt verbauert,
Mätt' ohne mich hier fortgedauert
Das simple Leben. Doch das Best
Es fehlt Euch noch zu Spiel und Fest.
... : ein Weibchen jung.
Sie bringt Euch erst zum rechten Halte
In herrlichster Erkräftigung,
Will sehn, dass auch den Trost ich schaffe!
Der König rief: Du bist ein Affe! (P. 61)

... Oheim, nehmt eine junge Frau!
Ich lass' Euch keine Ruh', bis dass Ihr
Oheim, nehmt eine junge Frau.

... Wie wird das holde Kind sich schmiegen
An Euren Leib, und lieblich wiegen
Mit süßem Wiegenlied zurück
Den guten Ohm in Jugendglück! (P. 71)

Mark does not take him seriously, of course, but Tristan later on acts quite independently in this matter.

Immermann also uses the story of the two swallows and the blond hair, which Gottfried considered improbable and discarded. Tristan takes only one voyage to Ireland: After having been healed of the wound received in the battle with Morolt (who in Immermann's version himself knights Tristan before the battle!) and found out by Isolde as the killer of her uncle, Tantris-Tristan saves himself from Isolde's wrath and revenge by declaring that he had come as his uncle Mark's deputy to ask Isolde in marriage. As such an envoy he became inviolable. In his account to Mark, "Tristans vierte Briefseite," Tristan justifies his action thus:

... Auch du, mein zweiter Vater, würdest dichten
Sähst du auf dich des Schwertes Spitze richten.
(P. 145)
As regards characterizations, Immermann wrote to Tieck in the following terms: "Das conventionell Ritterliche oder Romantische, wie man es nennen will, würde mich genieren und kein Leben unter meiner Hand gewinnen; nun dichte ich ihn mir um in das menschliche und natürliche Element und mache mir einen übersprudelnden Liebesjungen zurecht, wie er mutatis mutandis auch allenfalls heut zu Tage noch zur Welt kommen könnte."\(^{34}\)

An example of Immermann's treatment of the material on these lines is Melot the dwarf, whom he portrays with a certain fondness. To him, Melot is a funny, jolly creature, evoking sympathy in spite of his spiteful character:

Ein Männlein war's von sonder Kraft.
Er trug ein Flickenwämslein scheckicht,  
Den Kolben, und die Kappen eckicht.
Er schlug ein Rad, schnitt eine Fratz'
Und rutscht' umher, schmiss um Gefässe,  
War auch schon dreissig Jahr' am Platz,  
Und machte stets dieselben Spässe,  
Der König hatte sich gewöhnt  
Zu lachen, wenn er greint und höhnt'.

Der Fratzenhans, der Possenreisser,  
Der Rutscher, der Gefässumschmeisser,  
Das war ein Zwerglein, hiess Melot,  
Der kleine Schurk von leichtem Schrot. 
Die Hexe hat ihn einst gezeugt 
Mit einem Meister schwarzer Kunst,  
Er ward mit Hexenmilch gesäuget  
Und stand bei'm Teufel sehr in Gunst. . . . (P. 57)

An example of Immermann's change of organization and motivation is Isolde's attempt to have Brangaene murdered. Immermann is here fully aware of an inherent dramatic moment. With Gottfried, Isolde wishes to get rid of Brangaene, since she is the only person who knows her secret, and the Queen is afraid of being exposed
one day; there is no other reason given for hiring the murderers. Immermann, however (according to his sketches), intended to insert a heated argument between the two women during which Brangaene would get carried away with accusations against Isolde. Brangaene's character would thereby become raised from a rather passive one and the then following situation psychologically motivated.

Immermann's version captures our interest further through the fluent, vivid and enthusiastic language, and by his delightfully satirical and humorous style:

Ach John! Du armer Ritter!
Es geht durchs Eisen ein Gezitter.
Dein Fleisch ist morsch, die Muskel bebt,
Dein Muth ist, was an dir noch lebt:
Es hing um die verschrumpften Glieder
Der Beinharnisch unschliessend, los',
Der Helm sank bis zur Schulter nieder,
Die Schuhe waren viel zu gross,
Er stand und konnte sich nicht rühren
In diesem Schmuck von Zeiten, früh'ren.

Doch hob er auf das Schwert zum Haun,
Wie einst im Strauss von Dunbar-Town;
Allein dem Arme dürrr und saftlos
Entglitt's; er strauchelte und kraftlos
Vom Lufthieb fortgerissen, fiel
Der alte Ritter nieder prasselnd;
Zum Schutz und Trutz das Waffenspiel
Klang über seinem Leibe rasselnd;
Er lag am Boden, schluchzte schwer,
Ein Bild verjahrter Waffenehr'.

The description of the seasick Lords affords another opportunity for realistic satire:

Doch aus dem tiefen Raum des Schiffs
Wankten empor, höchst schwach, Begriffs,
Gefühls, Bewusstseins fast entblösset,
Die schlaffen Züge aufgelöst,
Grüngelblichen Gesichts, verdorben
Im Colorit, so schien's, auf lang,
Abscheu um Lippen, wo gestorben
Für ewig die Triebe nach Speis' und Trank,
Der Welten ganze Noth in sich:
Wankten die Lords, sehr jämmerlich. (P. 185)
Although better versed in the dramatic form, Immermann was able to free himself from too great an interest in a rapid development of the action and concentrated instead on its motivations and the circumstances leading up to the conflicts. A special characteristic of Immermann's poem is the great emphasis on the descriptions of nature and landscape where the personages are only of secondary importance. With these descriptions he creates the mood necessary for the ensuing action and increases the tension of the narrative. He describes, for example, the preparation of the love potion by the Queen at high noon in the midst of nature, panting under the still heat of the midday sun: "Wenn Mittags träumt der Pan" (p. 157), aptly entitling the scene "Mittagszauber." Other descriptions are there to evoke sensuous impressions through the colouring of his "word-paintings." His love of nature is conveyed in the exquisite miniatures and detailed portrayals of plant and animal life (e.g., Mark's Spring Festival, the description of the stag to be hunted [p. 33], or the seashore in the section called "Sanct Patrick's Schiff").

We can best detect the Romantic influence in Immermann's epic by tracing the idea and effect of love. The first example still reminds us of Gottfried's courtly love ideal:

... Denn Liebe, sagt man, ist nur Hoffen,
Und wird gewährt, vom Tod betroffen. (P. 183)
but Immermann swiftly changes to the Romantic doctrine of love:

Nun kam die Zeit zu Melodein
Für Tristan auch bei Sonnenschein (P. 227)

in contrast to an earlier statement:

Tristan sang nie bei Sonnenscheine,
Er hielt das nur für Zeitverschluss. (P. 62)

Immermann views the love experience of Tristan and Isolde as progressive, beginning at Tantris-Tristan's sick bed in Ireland and reaching its eruptive climax through the love potion. A jealous, inebriated Irish courtier, Sir Donegal, mentions with reference to Tantris-Tristan "mattverliebte Blickgeblinkel" (p. 130), and in connection with Isolde the Romantics' divining "Silverblick" of the beloved is introduced:

In ihrem Angesichte blühte
Wie Silverblick, die reinsten Güte.
Ja, kühn sei die Barmherzigkeit
Geprissener [sic] gleich dem Silverblicke. (P. 133)

When Tristan later on, in order to save his life, has to resort to the invented tale about being Mark's envoy to request Isolde in marriage, she is shattered by the sudden turn of events. It is only natural that her growing affection for Tristan is outwardly changed into resentment and animosity, yet secretly weighing her heart with sorrow. The Queen has no doubt been aware of the silent bond between the two young people and contemplating the impending marriage of her daughter to an old man, "Mark ist ein Greis, Isold' ist jung,/Da muss ich stiften Festigung" (p. 157), she resolves to
turn the situation into a bearable fate and prepares the magic philtre. As proof that no dark forces have any part in this undertaking, the Queen explains to Brangaene that she concocts it in bright daylight under the "Flammenschritt der hohen Sonne im Zenith" (p. 157) in order to inject into it the spark, "Das höchste Wunder, dessen Kraft/ein innerliches Herz entbindet" (p. 157). Brangaene, who becomes the "vestal keeper" of the philtre, is awed by this "heil'gen Zauberwein" (p. 173) and before storing it in the casket on board ship, decides to have a peek at it: "... Blitzend trifft/Ihr Aug' ein göttliches Gefunkel,/Rasch deckt sie zu die Wunder-Gift" (p. 173).

On board ship, the still stunned Isolde has withdrawn into herself, gazing either high towards heaven or trying to penetrate the depths of the ocean. "Sie war wie göttliches Entsagen,/An Wunsch und Hoffnung arm und Klagen" (p. 176). As for Tristan, he too was changed: "Tristan war auch wie umgekehrt./Sein Scherz versiegte. . . . Er nahete nur mit scheuem Zaudern,/So viel die Höflichkeit befahl,/Dem Sessel der Prinzessin, . . . indessen stahl/Er sich, sobald es ging, bei Seite,/griff einen einzelnen Accord,/warf dann die Laute wieder fort." (P. 176)
It is only now that Tristan realizes the consequences for him and the whole impact of his own action. It was the peaceful life on the ship that brought the realization: "Ruh'/der Meerfahrt trug's der Seele zu" (p. 180). Tristan tells the worried Brangaene in a veiled confession that he had decided to make a pilgrimage to
Jerusalem to atone for his sins:

Ich habe, sprach Tristan, begründet
Auf Schwanke, Ränke, tollen Trug
Den ältesten Bund, den unser Buch
Mit heil'ger Zeugenschaft verbriefend,
Vom Herren selber heisst gesetzt!
So hat die Lippe lügentriefend
Der Wahrheit Uranfang verletzt,
Das Licht, das nimmer untersinket,
Stets wie der Polstern droben blinket. (P. 181)

Brangaene sympathizes with both of them, especially with her young mistress:

'S ist zu entschuld'gen, dass ihr graue
Das Rosenroth, das Lilienweiss
Zu kälten an des Greisen Eis. (P. 182)

Isolde tries to be brave and decides to live a life of duty and service for the sick and needy. She is not afraid of Mark and hopes to have a sisterly relationship with him, "Wie [es] seinem Alter ziemt" (p. 184). Brangaene admires such high and selfless aspirations, "Und klagt' im Still'n, dass nur bei Hofe/erwachse ein so schöner Sinn,/in ihrem Stande nie Entsagen/
abtödte Lust an Kusses Plagen" (p. 184).

In spite of their self-imposed self-control, Tristan and Isolde are very much drawn together. The brief scene, where the ship had docked en route to get some fresh spring water and everybody had disembarked for a short stroll on the island, illustrates this veiled love-seeking admirably:

Herr Tristan war der Letzte, der
Das Schiff liess zögernd, menschenleer.
Er ging nur, weil Isolden's Auge
Ihm sagte, dass kein Zeug' ihr tauge
Zur Aufheirtrung. Doch als er stand
Mit ernstem Gruß noch an der Brücke
Da sah er, dass sie sich gewandt,
Als suchten Entbehrtes ihre Blicke.
Er trat zu ihr und frug: Was fehlt?
Kann ich es schaffen, so befehlt.
Sie sprach: Ich mag den Wunsch auch missen,
Mich dürstet, wenn Ihr's wollet wissen. . . .

at the same time providing a link for the Love Potion scene. Actually there is no such scene described at all, we are only witnesses of its effects. The method used by the author is that of the reader following Brangaene back onto the ship, while the rest of the party still enjoys the peacefulness of the island. Brangaene is worried for having left Isolde alone so long and hurries back. She cannot see her on deck and searches below in the cabin; here she discovers with horror that the casket is open and the silver container with the magic potion gone. In panic she runs again on deck and finds the lovers in an embrace behind the screening of some sheets put up as make-shift for a tent.

. . .Da blüht das Wunder, gross und mächtig,
Leer steht der Becher auf dem Tisch,
Und, die entsagend und bedächtig
Jerusalem gesucht, der Pflicht
Sich widmen wollten in Verzicht
Auf Meer und Licht, Natur und Sonne,
Die pflegen Lust und fanden Wonne.
Das heilige gelobte Land
Zwei rote Lippen sind's, erkannt
Als Gnadentrost von Jünglingsmundes,
Ein Kranker wird da weich gepflegt
Von Weibesarmen, die zum Bunde
Zum engsten, sich um ihn gelegt!
Unlösbar, Brust an Brust gedrungen,
Stehn Tristan und Isold' umschlungen. (Pp. 197/8)

They are oblivious to their surroundings, to Brangaene's lamentations, to the rest of the party, so that Brangaene, highly alarmed, decides to draw
the attention to herself by telling some stories to the others.

Immermann describes in typically romantic terms the lovers' bliss:

... Es fasste mich mein liebes Mein,
Ich fasste, was mir war entwunden,
Wie konnt' es jemals anders sein?
Und anders wir, als so verbunden? (P. 199)

... Er mit mir und ich mit ihm.
Ich bin in dir zerschmolz, verronnen,
Und ich in dir ergrühlt, entbronnt. (P. 199)

... Das sel'ge Leide
Durchdrang mit solcher Macht sie schon,
Dass sie ein Schau'r des Todes kühlte,
Wenn eins sich nicht am andern fühlte. (P. 202)

They delighted in gazing at each other even in darkness:

... Nicht hemmte sie des Lichtes Fehlen,
Klar sahen sich die beiden Seelen. (P. 203)

Even nature is affected by the love potion:

War es das Tröpfchen, so noch drinnen,
Was Leben schuf und pflanzte Sinnen
Im ungefühl'gen Element,
Dass Nässe glänzt, Kühle brennt?
Sobald die Nacht hereingedunkelt,
Ziehn helle Streifen schmal heran,
Dann immer breiter glüh't s - es funkelt
Bald Well' auf Well' im Ocean,
Bis endlich in dem Stillen, Feuchten
Ein Glimmern ist, ein Strahlen, Leuchten!
(P. 202)

and compared with the lovers:

Ist Meereswoge worden Brand,
Wer will ermessen, hat erkannt,
In welchen heissen Innigkeiten
Zwei Herzen Wunder sich bereiten? (P. 202)

A further innovation by Immermann is the ring exchange of the lovers marking their engagement, "Also verlobte sich das Paar/bei Meergeleucht' und Sternen klar" (p. 204). Tristan gives Isolde his mother's
ring, and Isolde parts with the ring Mark had sent her as his bride! They only exist for each other and "lebten ihrer Phantasei" (p. 206), gazing enchanted into the playful waves, in which they saw "ein göttlich Schauspiel wächst und steigt/in Stämmen, Ästen, Fächern, Dolden, Kleinodien, paradiesesbunt/empor in dem Kristallnen Sund" (p. 207). Nature is full of wonders to them and Isolde ponders the mirage in the waves. "Mein Tristan,/weil es die reine Wog' umspület,/die klare Flut ihr Werk gethan/... drum triumphiert's in solcher Pracht,... es hat sich göttlich ausgegossen/ die heil'ge Flut um unser Sein,/... zur Glorie im Meer der Liebe!" (p. 209). She wants to sink into the depths of this shiny watery element, "Verschwimmen in dem süsen Gleichniss!" (p. 209), and while belonging to each other become free. Later on, shortly before the landing in Cornwall, the sea becomes "ein kühler Erretten,/die Zeugin unsres Bund's, die Flut!" (p. 211) and Isolde takes the initiative: "Fass mich und dich, und lass' uns wahren/die Treue bei der Tiefe Schaaren,... hüten wir vor Schmach/die treuen Seelen, reinen Leiber!" Tristan throws his beret into the water, Isolde her veil, when Brangaene stops them. In great despair she offers another solution, which Isolde gladly accepts, ". . . denn das Leben/ist schön vom Minneglanz umgeben" (p. 212).

In the sketches, we find that Immermann had planned that Tristan should send his sword to Isolde when he feels
death approaching, and that she had promised to come and join him; Rual was to be Tristan's messenger.

Immermann intended to portray Isolde Whitehand sympathetically: "Die Sache muss so gefasst werden, dass ihr Benehmen also natürlich, in ihrem Charakter zu entschuldigen, erscheint. Für die rechtmäßige Frau ist Isolde nur die Buhlerin, und sie glaubt für Tristan's Heil zu sorgen wenn sie diese von ihm abhält. Vor allen Dingen darf also Tristan nicht erfahren, dass die Königin naht."

Concerning the final scene, the following thoughts are found for "Rose und Rebe": "Es gibt Menschen, die nicht sterben können, weil sie ein Geheimniss drückt, was sie noch Jemand offenbaren müssen; die ein Verbrechen belastet, was sie erst beichten wollen. Auch ungestilltes Liebessehnen kann zwischen Tod und Leben festhalten" (p. 247). This must not be construed to mean that Immermann considered Tristan's and Isolde's love "ein Verbrechen," but as their longing for each other had not been appeased completely while on earth, there is still some unconsumed energy extant which craves manifestation in the material world. The entwining branches of a rose and a vine on their graves would thus symbolically depict this unfulfilled desire for an eternal loving embrace.

In conclusion, one can quote R. Bechstein's summary of Immermann's work which seems to be an adequate appraisal of his achievement:
Immermann's Tristan und Isolde is... kein Epos in strengem Sinne. Es ist selbst nicht eine Romanzendichtung wie etwa Herder's Cid, sondern eine Vereinigung erzählender und lyrischer Poesie, eine Vereinigung von Novelle und Idylle, von Genre und Landschaft. Darum ist eine prinzipielle Vergleichung und ästhetische Abschätzung zwischen dieser neuen Schöpfung und dem classischen Werke Gottfried's von Strassburg nicht möglich, wenn auch im Einzelnen die Betrachtung auf eine abwägende Gegenüberstellung führen musste. (Bechstein, p. 72)

In reviewing all the Tristan versions produced by the Romantics, we have to come to the surprising, if not disappointing, conclusion that the Romantics have not done anything worthwhile with the so promising love story of Tristan and Isolde. It is difficult to believe and one is at first at a loss for an adequate explanation. But by analyzing the various efforts of the Romantics once more and by asking ourselves what could have possibly been their motivation for tackling the legend in the first place, it is perhaps possible to offer a tentative answer.

Carl Philipp Conz chose to focus his interest on only one episode of Gottfried's epic: Tristan's Death. Since death meant to the Romantics only the beginning of the "real life" and the limitless expansion of self, the Romance by Conz centers around death—healing—love. These three motifs are key pillars for the "mission for salvation" of the Romantics, yet Conz failed to develop them into anything significant. His treatment of love is typically romantic and very sentimental, but offers no more than a conventional account of the last moments
in the lovers' life.

The scanty and erratic plan of Wackernagel's seven Romances, without the slightest trace of affinity for the subject, suggests that he had used the theme of the Tristan legend only as a mental exercise in the wave of enthusiasm for the revival of medieval material, and since Rückert's planned Tristan and Isolde epic did not grow beyond its first stage (in spite of the available whole outline), we can only consider this attempt an abortive one.

A. W. Schlegel wanted to "resurrect" the then prevalent "Erstorbeneit der Phantasie" by utilizing older literary works for the enrichment of poetic imagination. As he himself had pointed out, it was essential to understand the old poetry in its true inherent meaning and only embellish it with the more splendid garments of more highly developed language and poetic artistry now at the disposal of the Romantics. The keywords seem to be essential and true inherent meaning—and these words are the actual crux of the matter. As we have seen, even today quite a few approaches are possible towards an interpretation and understanding of the romance, with results that lie in plain opposition to each other. Schlegel takes the legend literally, ignoring any symbolism and deeper meaning, out of necessity then coming to the conclusion that Tristan is a story about immoral love, an extramarital relationship to be condemned by the moralist, in spite of the great
innocence of feeling and the final religious trend of the love.

Tieck had his doubts about the religious tone and disagreed with Schlegel regarding the basic innocent attitude of the lovers in the epic. To him, Tristan was no more than a compilation of frivolous, passionate adventures in anecdote form.

Immermann's work is the only larger effort available, although it actually belongs already to the generation following the Romantics, a fact fully evident not only in the spirit and language of the epic, but also in its form. The key to Immermann's work is contained in his letter to Tieck and in his renewed interest in Gottfried's epic through a "revival of his own heart" later in life. By reading Immermann's Tristan und Isolde, one is carried away as if on waves of a cheerful, bubbling brook, making a "scenic tour" through nature, with its beauty and moods being pointed out to us, peopled by romantic but nevertheless very human and natural characters. Joy and happiness prevail throughout, mixed with humour and irony. One could take Isolde's words as its motto: "... denn das Leben ist schön vom Minneglanz umgeben!" (p. 212). To R. Bechstein, "Karl Immermann's Schöpfung ist die Perle unter den Tristandichtungen der Neuzeit, und inmitten der gesammten epischen oder lyrisch-epischen Literatur tritt sie nicht minder hell leuchtend hervor" (Bechstein, p. 54).
It might be of interest here to mention Heinrich Heine's opinion about Gottfried's Tristan, as expressed in his Die romantische Schule. Heine finds that Gottfried had thrown off the fetters of abstract Christian virtues and self-complacently descended into "die Genusswelt der verherrlichten Sinnlichkeit." While one is free now to praise Gottfried's epic as perhaps the most beautiful of the Middle Ages, Heine is convinced that in Gottfried's time it was bound to be considered blasphemous, if not downright dangerous.36

Schlegel, Tieck and Heine are the only Romantics I have found who voiced an opinion on Gottfried's Tristan; others, like Uhland, tacitly ignored it. One wonders why. No doubt there must have been valid reasons for this. Without claiming to offer a definite answer, the following conjectures are offered as a basis for further study.

Since the Romantics appear to have understood Gottfried's epic only literally and seen in it only an account extolling sensuality, it must have met with the same rejection as Schlegel's Lucinde, although the latter was supposed to have been the vehicle for Schlegel's doctrine of elevated womanhood, love, marriage, and spiritualized relationship of the sexes. It created in fact a scandal, because it was misunderstood. (Cf. Heine's comments on Lucinde quoted above.) This one scandal in their midst was enough for the Romantics and on account of it they may have become exceedingly
alert and careful not to precipitate another one.

Then there is also the question regarding religion and God in Gottfried's Tristan. As we know, the Romantics took themselves and their philosophy very seriously and the quest for a nearer God was to them a highly important one. Since they read Gottfried only 'at face value' and understood his epic in the thinking of their own time, they could not possibly have reconciled Gottfried's comments concerning God and His image throughout the epic with their own beliefs rooted in pantheistic mysticism. Their God was not the same as Gottfried's any more. While Gottfried drew a majestic picture of the power of God as revealed in a tempest, or a more sentimental one as He sets heavenly crowns on the heads of the happy pair Rual and Florete, when they are dead, he nevertheless uses the name of God lightly in other contexts or makes a mere narrative device of it. His characters sometimes voice sentiments which most likely are his own. A case in point is Tristan's facile assumption of the role of David to Morolt's Goliath, prior to their duel. For Tristan tries to assuage the Cornishmen's fears by the argument that if a warrior who stakes his life in a good cause falls, then a swift death and a people's long-drawn agony are rated differently in Heaven and on earth. In the sequel we learn that God did come to Tristan's aid only at the last moment after a sharp reminder from Gottfried, and even then was but one ally among three.
A further example is Gottfried's alarming comment on the outcome of Isolde's judicial ordeal (in which Heaven seems to uphold her innocence), when Gottfried observes that Christ in His great virtue is "pliant as a windblown sleeve; He falls into place and clings whichever way one tries Him, closely and smoothly" (15 733 ff.). The courtly God is apparently an anthropomorphic God on the side of the characters, out of sheer chivalry, a fact that was considered blasphemous not only by the Romantics, but by critics in the twentieth century!

The Romantic doctrine of love, in which love becomes the deciding factor for growth and evolution of a personality in a reciprocal action and reaction upon the lovers, certainly could have been gainfully applied to Gottfried's Tristan. It could have been even deepened since love becomes a religious experience with the Romantics. It seems almost incredible to have overlooked this possibility. Obviously the love of Tristan and Isolde did not seem to the Romantics even remotely near to their own concept of love, since they saw in them only the main characters of a passionately amorous romp, to be read merely for the titilation of the senses (cf. Heine's comments on Tristan quoted above). In contrast, the generation that follows the Romantics did not shy away from eroticism for its own sake any more, and we can see this quite well in Immermann's version. He takes every opportunity to underscore these aspects with playful humorous joy.
The Romantics cannot be blamed entirely for not having done more with Gottfried's *Tristan*, because not many scholarly works dealing with it were as yet available and those scholars who had written about it also understood it literally and condemned its ethics. It is typical for most of them to distinguish between Gottfried's poetic art skill, the aesthetic, and his ethics. The opinion of Karl Lachmann (1793-1851) is characteristic for the understanding of *Tristan* even in the nineteenth century. While he acknowledges Gottfried's "gehaltene, verständig geschmückte Darstellungsweise," he cannot say more for the epic than "anderes als Ueppigkeit oder Gotteslästerung boten die Hauptteile seiner weiblichen, unsittlichen Erzählung nicht dar."³⁷

Georg G. Gervinus (1805-1871) mentions in his *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung* (1871) with reference to Gottfried his "unvergleichliche Dichtergabe," but regarding *Tristan* states: "was von nun an (in *Tristan*) folgt, ist nicht geeignet, etwas anderes als unseren Abscheu zu wecken" (p. 629), and he sums up as follows: "Sollen wir zum Abschluss ein Urteil über Gottfried's *Tristan* beifügen, so wüssten wir kein anderes über dieses Gedicht als Dante über solche Gefühle: man muss verdammen, aber bewundern und bedauern" (p. 633).³⁸

It need not surprise us then when a scholar such as Ludwig Uhland, so thoroughly familiar with medieval literature, makes a point of ignoring Gottfried's
Tristan, although he had translated many medieval epics and myths and a great deal of love poetry, some of it very erotic in tone (viz. Walther von der Vogelweide).
CHAPTER IV
TRANSLATIONS

As we have seen, the Romantics made several attempts to bring Tristan to the attention of the greater public by either adaptations or free versions of the medieval epic. However, as we have also seen, all of these remained only fragments.

There is another approach to the problem of presenting the epic to the public, namely in accurate translation, and it is to these we must now turn. In the early nineteenth century, there are two attempts to present Tristan in a more contemporary form by translating it into modern German: one by Hermann Kurtz (1844), and the other by Karl Simrock (1855).

Hermann Kurtz (1813-83) belongs with Mörike to the Swabian poets, but much of his time was spent—-from circumstances rather than choice—-in translating. He made excellent versions of the Orlando Furioso (1843) and of Gottfried's Tristan (1844). As a novelist, Kurtz was the author of a number of short stories and two excellent historical romances, Schillers Heimatjahre (1843) and Der Sonnenwirth (1855), the scene of which is laid in the Württemberg of Schiller's youth.

The first edition of Kurtz's translation appeared in 1844, a second edition, now prefaced by an extensive introduction to the history of the legend in 1847. Kurtz perused Massmann's 1843 edition and enjoyed also
the able assistance and advice of the scholar Franz Pfeiffer; consequently, his translation is quite reliable and accurate, barring the odd philological mistake. He was quite successful in recapturing in the language Gottfried's style. The whole epic is rendered in unabridged form, and as such is unrivalled even today.

His Prologue gives us a general clue as to the sources consulted: Heinrich and Ulrich, Das Buch der Liebe, Eilhart, Sir Tristrem, and Gottfried.

Bis hierher wob des Meisters Hand
Des Leides und der Liebe Band.
Es liegt verwaist: eine dunkle Hand
Zerschnitten zu früh sein Lebensband.

These words conclude Kurtz's translation of Gottfried's epic and at the same time serve as a bridge to his own version of the end. To Gottfried's 19,548 verses, Kurtz has added about 3,700 of his own independent ending by further utilizing Ulrich, Heinrich, the German Prose Romance, Sir Tristrem, as well as some ideas from Immermann's sketches:

... lass dir von ihm die Brücke schlagen,
Die dich soll zu der Mære tragen.
Noch sind uns Blätter, rasch geschrieben,
Von seiner edlen Hand geblieben,
Nur wenige, ach, und unvollendet;
Sie seien in dein Lied verwendet;
Das halbe Wort lass im Gedicht
Lebendig werden... .

Thus the unity of style was bound to suffer, due to the conglomeration of its component parts. In addition, Kurtz allows his imagination free reign, so that the final result is a completely independent version.
Kurtz begins his work with Heinrich's eulogy of Gottfried, then praises all other poets who have attempted to follow Gottfried, but especially singling out Immermann. After having considered all his forerunners, Kurtz picks up the thread of the story: Tristan's marriage to Isolde Whitehand. Immermann's sketch, centering around love between men, i.e., friendship, as a contrast to love for woman, was his main guide. Kurtz adapts Immermann's own words: "Ein Glückloses Männerherz ist wie ein Kirchhof, die Wohnung irrer Schemen. Das liebeleere Leben der Frau wie der Lauf des Jordans, leise und schleichend, zwischen öden Ufern, an denen doch heilige Geschichte geschah," in his continuation, somewhat modified, as follows:

Glückloses Frauenleben gleicht
Des Jordans Lauf, der leise schleicht
An Ufern hin, die öde stehn,
Und ist doch Heil'ges drauf geschehn.
Da glimmt ein leises Lebenswort
Im Herzen unter der Asche fort:
Ich habe geliebt! Das arme leise
Wort ist des Herzens Trank und Speise.
Das Männerherz, des Glücks beraubt,
Hat ausgelebt und ausgeglaubt:
Es ist ein stummes Leichenfeld,
Vom späten Monde trüb erhellt,
Wo Schemen sich mitternächtlich treffen,
Das Leben mit Schein des Lebens äffen.

Thereupon follows the poetic portrayal of love and Tristan's self-deception. Through the emptiness in his heart Tristan finally realizes his mistake and refuses to consummate his marriage to Isolde Whitehand under the pretext of a vow. For a while, Tristan and Isolde Whitehand appear to others as a happy young married couple; but the deceit is brought to light:
Nun sagt ein Buch, in dem ich las,  
Es sei ein Vöglein, flink und keck,  
Auf Isolden's Schulter, ihr zum Schreck  
Geflogen und habe sie gekusst.

This thought regarding the book originates with  
Immermann, and Kurtz does not want any part of it.  
Instead, similar to Gottfried's polemic in connection  
with the swallows and the blond hair, he continues:

Wann hatte ein Vogel solch Gelüst?  
Das müssten gar zahme Vögelein  
Dazumalen gewesen sein.  
Wenn's aber abgerichtet war,  
Kam's ihr nicht neu noch wunderbar.  
Die schöne Märe decke du  
Mit keinem Feigenblatte zu,  
Mein Lied! es war kein Vogel, nein,  
Es war ein keckes Wässerlein. . . .  
. . . die erschrockene Schöne schrie  
Und dann mit Lachen sagte sie:  
"Wässerlein, du bist kühn fürwahr,  
Kühner denn je Herr Tristan war."

Kurtz simplifies the rest of the story by omitting  
the journey to Cornwall and Tristan's reunion with  
Isolde, and he motivates this change with the following  
words:

. . . zu neuem Truggewinne  
Zwischen Verrath und Minne?  
O nein, o nein, das hat ein Ziel:  
Mir ist des Alten schon zu viel.  
Ich glaube auch wahrlich nimmermehr,  
Dass es nach des Meisters Sinne war'.  
Was er die Lieb' in der Scheidestunde  
Aussprechen liess mit bittrem Munde,  
Das sah nicht aus nach neuer Lust,  
Das klang so still, so todtbewusst:  
Nach Reden, die so zu Leide stehn,  
Sollman sich niemals wiedersehn.  
Sie waren, echt und herzgebrochen,  
Auf Nimmerwiedersehn gesprochen.

But then Kurtz inserts the episode of Beliagog  
(following Sir Tristrem) with the Hall of Statues and
portrays it in a very vivid and colourful manner. This episode affords one last opportunity to recapitulate the highlights in Tristan's life, as well as giving a better motivation for Kaedin's change of mind to desist from a journey to Cornwall.

As we know, Kaedin's last adventure with a married woman, for which he enlists Tristan's help as a friend, results in Tristan receiving the fatal wound. But this episode is somehow out of tune with the otherwise so dramatic action and the poetically so fascinating contents. The English Sir Tristrem offers a similar yet much nobler episode by introducing another knight by the name of Tristan, who asks the hero Tristan for assistance in the attempt to liberate his kidnapped beloved. Tristan consents; but when the young knight is killed in the adventure, Tristan wants to avenge him and thereby obtains his fatal wound. Immermann had avoided the situation altogether by eliminating Kaedin's episode. Kurtz decided to follow the German tradition. Fully aware of the unsatisfactory motivations for modern reasoning, and of the most unworthy action of stealing the key and making a duplicate in order to gain entrance, Kurtz tries to give this whole episode the character of a youthful prank, a humorous love adventure. This gives the epic a somewhat farcical quality, quite out of keeping with the original dramatic theme.
The rest of the poem follows the traditional trend—except for the motivation of the lovers' reason for their sin, since a modern poet could not possibly ascribe it entirely to the love potion. To us, love as such is already magic and miraculous. These thoughts were expressed by Kurtz at the outset of his continuation:

Zu solchem Bild der Leidenschaft
Was braucht's noch Zaubertrankes Kraft?
Den Trank, den Tristan und Isold
Getrunken, solch ein flüssig Gold,
Ich wärne, trank auch Gottfried's Mund;
Vom süßen Gift im Herzen wund,
Die brennende Wunde, lächelnd,
Mit kühlen Scherzen fädelnd,
Drängt er des Minnezaubers Hort,
Den ganzen, in sein Zauberwort,
Und wird, verzaubert von Minne,
Ein Zaubrer aller Sinne.

For Kurtz, the key to the answer lies in Mark's hands: He becomes aware that he himself has caused the tribulations and errors of the lovers:

Rief nicht, als das herrliche Zwillingspaar
Aus dem Schiffe trat ans Gestade dar,
Rief's nicht in meinem Herzen laut?
Das ist der Bräutigam und die Braut!
Die sind von Gott erkoren,
Sind für einander geboren. . .
... das war kein Paar,
Wie man's in losen Gedichten trifft,
Das willig greift nach dem süßen Gift.
Des bessern Rechtes sich bewusst,
Der Minne Stachel in der Brust,
Ging schweigend jedes seine Bahn,
Keusch und kühl bis ans Herz hinan,
Bis sie den Feuerbecher tranken
Und kämpfend in die Gluthen sanken,
Ach rettungslos dahingerafft
Vom Zauberrasch der Leidenschaft.

Mark's monologue of self-accusation (which is an innovation by Kurtz) culminates with his passionate plea to God to forgive him his sin.
Denn ihnen hast du schon vergeben:
Sie büssten ihre Schuld im Leben.
Was blöde Menschenaugen sahn,
Das war ein Schein, das war ein Wahn.
Du aber sahst den wahren Lauf,
Zu dir stieg nur das Wesen auf.
Die Opfer grausen Menschenspottes
Stehn frei vor den Gerichten Gottes.

This self-accusation by Mark reveals to us the message of the legend: the warring between faithfulness and faithfulness, between honour and honour, inevitably leading to conflicts and a tragic ending. The misdeed—so inevitable in tragedy—is not focussed on robbery or murder, but is out of necessity the sin of adultery, since love is the theme of Tristan. The culprits suffer their death, but find mercy and compassion by the one whom they betrayed.

Despite all the tribute that we have to give to Kurtz's beautiful and ambitious continuation, it seems that it could have gained by a more frequent use of simple narrative and lyrical moods, instead of his too broad use of rational justifications.

Kurtz intended a second transcript of the legend which would have been more adapted to the feeling of his time, but only a few sketches remained, indicating an outline that was later on carried out by Wilhelm Hertz.

Karl Simrock (1802-1876), born in Bonn, studied law and German literature. He was professor of German language and literature at Bonn University from 1850.
to his death in 1876.

He was exceedingly productive as a scholar, translator, editor and lyric poet. Based on old legends, he composed his own version of the epic *Wieland der Schmied* (1835), *Das Amelungenlied* (1843-49); then he turned to the *Nibelungenlied* (1827), *Der arme Heinrich* by Hartmann von Aue (1830), Walther von der Vogelweide (1833), *Parzival* and *Titurel* (1842), *Kudrun* (1843), and *Heliand* (1856).

In 1855 appeared Karl Simrock's translation of Gottfried's *Tristan und Isolde*. A short epilogue attempted to touch upon the ethics of the medieval epic, trying to present the love story as morally justified. He also mentions related sagas of Hero and Leander, Romeo and Juliet; the motif of the black and white sails, and the burial of the lovers as appearing in other legends.

The second edition twenty years later, in 1875, was complemented by Simrock's own adaptation of the continuation. While Simrock's knowledge of the Middle High German language is better than that of Kurtz—as proven by his adaptations of the bards' heroic songs—he shows no affinity whatsoever for Gottfried's *Tristan*. Consequently, his translation is very dry and a far cry from Kurtz's soulful empathy for Gottfried's epic. Simrock's own version of the continuation is a complete failure stylistically, since it reverts to the level of the bards after Gottfried's lofty, courtly vocabulary and style—not to mention the abominable
mixture of Middle High German and New High German.

Simrock's continuation is considerably shorter than that by Kurtz; it is obvious that he is not interested in the further development of the narrative but in its ending. Following Kurtz, he too leaves out the journey to Cornwall, but then he also eliminates the Kaedin episode, through which he avoids an unfavourable turn of events in the legend, but this fact nevertheless also robs him of a tragic ending. Simrock invents a phantastic reason for Tristan's fatal wound: while looking at the statues in Beliagog's Hall of Statues—including his own, which depicts him lying down wounded by Morholt's sword and Petitcreiu licking his wounds—the pain in his old wound returns and the wound begins to fester. In this way, Tristan's last suffering is supposed to have its origin in the emotional impact of an occurrence in the past—an incident of chance. Petitcreiu becomes the symbol of a death-messenger (based on German mythology). All these latter alterations are not only unfortunate and contradictory to the earlier episodes to which they refer, but also greatly weaken the tragic outcome.

The short final part is in keeping with the general outline of the story with the exception of one detail: There are slight differences in the various versions as to who told King Mark about the power of the love potion of which the lovers had partaken. With Ulrich von Türheim and in the Prose Romance, it is just generally stated
that the King was told about it. With Heinrich, it is Kurvenal, with Immermann and Kurtz Brangaene. But with Simrock it is Isolde's court maiden Gimele von der Schirnle, since Brangaene had died of a broken heart when she heard about Isolde's sufferings. So Brangaene, too, had found her punishment in death. However, Simrock had still another reason for choosing Gimele as the bringer of these news: he wanted King Mark also to find out about the deceit of the wedding night in which Brangaene had played the major role, and that she, in fact, had become his wife, while Isolde belonged to Tristan until their death. Brangaene herself would never have been able to confess all this, nor would Kurvenal have been a suitable informer. Since both Eilhart and Gottfried only refer to one such substitution, namely on the wedding night, Simrock has taken a greater liberty than was permissible for a continuation of Gottfried's epic, especially since this necessitated a series of other unfavourable deviations in the narrative.

Wilhelm Hertz is very lenient in his judgment of this weak attempt when he says: "Mit Kurtzens hoch-poetischer Kraft hätte Simrock sich im Greisenalter nicht mehr messen sollen."

Neither of the two translations were really successful attempts and it is only with Wilhelm Hertz that a version was produced that is considered even today as the classical translation. It is for this reason that
we shall also consider Wilhelm Hertz, although he does not belong to the Romantics any longer.

Wilhelm Hertz (1835-1902), who was one of the original contributors to Geibel's *Dichterbuch*, continued the work Karl Simrock had begun and with a rare power for reproducing the atmosphere of the Middle High German poets, he translated both Gottfried's *Tristan* (1877) and Wolfram's *Parzival* (1898).

In the Preface, Hertz points out that among all the poets of the medieval period, Gottfried von Strassburg comes closest to present-day thinking and feeling, and although his epic, the saga of Tristan, constantly inspires our modern poets to new adaptations and independent creations, he is by no means duly recognized and valued. This is then Hertz's reason for presenting his own translation: he wishes to win new friends for this masterpiece, in spite of the meritorious translations by Hermann Kurtz and Karl Simrock. "Es galt mir hiebei vor allem, dem Gebildeten von heute einen möglichst frischen und reinen Eindruck des Gedichtes zu gewähren, und diesen Zweck schien mir eine freie, aber pietätvolle Bearbeitung eher zu erreichen als eine philosophisch treue Uebersetzung vom ersten bis zum letzten Wort" (Pref.V).

Hertz shortened the unimportant events which might minimize or even be detrimental to the enjoyment of the story (the Gandin episode, Petitcreiu), as well as numerous
discourses, observations, polemics, etc. Lengthy descriptions are abbreviated (hunting episode, the cave of the lovers, descriptions of clothing and knightly outfit), relying entirely on his own feeling and judgment, of which, in his own opinion, he had done rather too little than too much.

He also felt the need to restrain himself regarding the frequent thought and word repetitions, in which Gottfried revels, and which are to our present way of thinking somewhat too ebullient. By the same token, French words and verses were cut down to a minimum. Some of Gottfried's tropes were changed, because they affronted the present-day good taste. "Von mittelhoch­deutschen Wörtern wurden, abgesehen von den Kunstaus­drücken, nur solche zugelassen, welche unsrem Sprach­gefühl noch lebendig sind. Bei Übersetzungen von alt­deutschen Dichtungen ist häufig eine eigentümliche Mischsprache zur Anwendung gekommen, welche aufgehört hat mittelhochdeutsch zu sein, ohne darum neuhochdeutsch zu werden. Mein Bestreben war, das Gedicht des 13. Jahrhunderts in die Dichtersprache des 19. zu über­tragen" (Pref. VIII).

In order not to present to the readers only a torso, Hertz had added some verses in free adaptation of Thomas' poem, Gottfried's own source, covering the period between Tristan's marriage to Isolde Whitehand and his death. Thomas' style needed an even freer
adaptation than Gottfried's to suit the present-day taste. Here, too, Hertz proved his fine artistic sense. Since he is equally independent in his approach to both Thomas and Gottfried, Hertz succeeds in presenting quite an artistically unified Tristan, in spite of his two sources. Since Thomas' poem is only preserved in fragments, and Gottfried did not finish his, Hertz's adaptation is the only complete form of the courtly Tristan epic, as created by Thomas and adapted into German by Gottfried.

Apart from having a most fortunate quality, that of temperamental kinship and inner affinity to Gottfried, Hertz was also greatly assisted by his thorough knowledge of Old German and Old French. The latter enabled him to understand and follow his sources in the original in the minutest details, and his poetic talent supplied the forceful expressions with which he so adeptly conveyed the meaning and feeling of the old legend in a new attire.

Hertz's Tristan had three editions: 1877, 1894, and 1901; only minor changes were undertaken in the two latter ones.
CHAPTER V

RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMA TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Just as the versions of the Romantics, the early translations also failed to produce any lasting interest in the legend of Tristan and Isolde. But they at least provided material for one very influential re-creation of the story, namely by Wagner, who perused Kurtz's translation. Wagner's Tristan version is the only one which has kept the general public's interest in the legend alive. This has been due as much to the controversies, discussions and writings which the libretto provoked, as to the music or symbolism. Our study of the treatment of the legend in the Romantic period and after would not be complete without at least a brief look at Wagner's version, what he had made out of Gottfried's epic and how it was received.

Richard Wagner was born on May 22, 1813, at Leipzig. He received a sound academic education, but his formal training in music did not amount to much more than one year with competent teachers. He wrote some musical compositions and an opera before being appointed as chorusmaster at Würzburg. For a number of years, he was employed as conductor in several provincial German opera houses, until his move to Paris in 1839, where he had a very trying time for two and a half years while he sought to advance his career as a composer. In 1842, Rienzi was successfully performed at Dresden, and his
fortune suddenly improved. Der fliegende Holländer (1843), Tannhäuser (1845) and Lohengrin (1850) followed and were well received. But after becoming involved in the Dresden May Revolution of 1849 (led by a Russian named Bakunin), Wagner had to flee from Germany and he settled in Zurich until 1859. Here he composed most of his Ring and began Tristan. Again in Paris in 1861, he saw an elaborately prepared production of Tannhäuser end in fiasco because of the machinations of his political enemies.

His fortunes declined again, but several years later he found a patron in Ludwig II of Bavaria, and his future was assured. Tristan was performed at Munich in 1865, Die Meistersinger in 1868. In 1870 he married Cosima Liszt von Bülow, and two years later established his residence in Bayreuth. Here, in 1876, the entire Ring was performed and Parsifal was given at the next festival in 1882. Wagner died in Venice, at the age of seventy, on February 13, 1883.

Wagner's principal prose writings were produced between the years 1848 and 1851, a period of profound crisis in both his external circumstances and his development as an artist, a period during which he wrote no music. As a thinker, Wagner is both original and derivative. But even when his basic ideas were borrowed from pure philosophers—Feuerbach in his early writings, Schopenhauer in his later work—Wagner assimilated these
ideas in such a manner, that he made them not only part of his theory but formulations of what he had most deeply experienced. What is more, in his proper sphere as a critic and theorist of the arts of theatre and music, Wagner was an exceedingly resourceful and versatile thinker. He pioneered in the study of symbols, myths and primitive legends; he was a brilliant exponent of Beethoven, and a penetrating analyst of the technical problems of conducting, acting, musical declamation and theatre design.

When in the early 1850's Wagner stopped theorizing about the artwork of the future and began composing the Nibelungenring, he suddenly realized that he was involved in a fundamental philosophic contradiction. As an artist he was intent on projecting a tragic vision of life; yet as a prophetic thinker he had committed himself to an optimistic faith in Utopia. The immediate practical result of this realization was not another theoretical treatise, but some significant changes in the design of the final opera of the Ring. Consequently, the vigorous controversy that has gone on for many decades concerning the revolution in Wagner's thinking centers upon the nature of these changes and the motives that prompted them.

Wagner at first held that the evil of the world was the effect of an evil god (Wotan) and that a new and righteous world could be created by new men without fear. Then, after reading Schopenhauer (in 1854),
he began to understand how his essential artistic nature had for long been functioning in opposition to the willed optimism of his intellect. Thus Wagner arrived at an understanding of his own art works through the help of another who had provided intellectual concepts that corresponded to his intuitive promptings. The evil of the world, in this new view, was irremediable. The artwork of the future, therefore, could redeem the world only by illustrating with inevitable logic the necessity for the world’s destruction. Thus Wagner reversed his values of life: art is now a "noble illusion, a turning away from reality, a cure for life which is indeed not real, which leads one wholly outside life but raises one above it." (Wagner, On Music and Drama, Introd., p. 22)³⁹

Wagner's philosophical problem stems from the basic incompatibility of classical tragedy and the Romantic spirit. Romantic tragedy had been tragedy inverted: the heroes go from conflict through suffering to ultimate triumph and peace. Wagner aimed, in contrast, at the revival of the Greek tragedy, and in addition was determined to use only those legends that could be made to encompass the sufferings and the moral dilemmas of the modern world.

Lacking any literary precursor in this bold endeavour, he took his warrant from a musician: Beethoven. Wagner's hopes for a rebirth of tragedy in the modern world sprang ultimately from his awareness of the great new power that had been released into that world through
Beethoven's music. Beethoven's contribution to the artwork of the future was twofold: he had demonstrated the unique capacity of music to project the inmost content of the tragic myth—the myth of the hero's struggles, victories, and death—and he had pointed the way in the final movement of his Ninth Symphony to the use of language in conjunction with symphonic music. Beethoven had thus invested music with undreamed-of powers of dramatic and philosophic implications. To Wagner, it pointed the way for his artwork of the future: the symphony orchestra would sound the mighty themes of the hero's sufferings, triumphs, loves, and death, but instead of these themes conjuring up phantasms in the listeners' minds, the figures of the hero and the heroine would actually appear, acting out the content of the music in verbally pointed pantomime. The music would in this way be freed to a high degree from its own abstract unity through formal devices of repetition and recapitulation, and could flow on in endless melody, enfolding the entire drama in a rich fabric of closely woven symphonic motifs.

As a dramatist, dramatic theorist and composer, Wagner set himself the task of creating a situation that would stir the audience profoundly, overwhelm it, and bring it to a state of wider or deeper awareness by exploring the depths out of which the emotions arose. Wagner's solution was to reduce motivation in order to spend most of the time exploring a single strong emotional situation. Recognizing the power of music to
create excitement instantly, he relied upon the orchestra to set the mood and prepare the audience for the dramatic climaxes to come. However, since music could express only emotion but not the reason for this emotion, musical expression and dramatic motivation had to be made to serve each other. To him the truth lay more in emotions than in motives, and he sought to capture the movements of the soul: love itself or jealousy itself, and not the complicated actions in everyday life that gave rise to it.

The main story of Wagner's Tristan opera is based on Hermann Kurtz's translation of Gottfried. Wagner had no doubt given Kurtz preference over Simrock not only because it was by far the better rendition and more in the spirit of Gottfried's epic, but also because Kurtz had studied thoroughly and compared the ancient myths, expressing his views in the Preface to his translation. In the 96 pages of this essay on myths, Kurtz refers as far back as the Egyptian archetypal myths and traces and compares them through the history and culture of nations, ascribing to them the very same meaning and values as Wagner.

Only the archetypal situation could serve Wagner's aim of presenting life as resulting from eternal laws, and such archetypal situations could be found only in myths. Therefore, Wagner thoroughly studied the old myths, not in order to modernize them, but to learn from them, to share their wisdom, and to project them into
the present. This attitude is the key to an understanding of Wagner's whole system of thought. For him the universe was composed of forces rather than of things; seeing the truth meant understanding these forces. In the depths of our individual minds and souls are the roots that connect with the primordial unity. What we share with every other living creature is the energy that drives us; whatever produces a certain response in the depths of one person should produce much the same response in the rest of the people. Thus communion of feeling counts more than communications of ideas. Consequently, the Wagnerian drama has the depths of the soul as its setting. Explaining the genesis of *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner said:

I too, as I have told you, felt driven to this "Whence and wherefore?" and for long it banned me from the magic of my art. But my time of penance taught me to overcome the question. All doubt at last was taken from me, when I gave myself up to the *Tristan*. Here, in perfect trustfulness, I plunged into the inner depths of soul events, and from out this inmost center of the world I fearlessly built up its outer form. A glance at the volumen of this poem will show you at once that the exhaustive detail-work which a historical poet is obliged to devote to clearing up the outward bearings of his plot, to the detriment of a lucid exposition of its inner motives, I now trusted myself to apply to these latter alone. Life and death, the whole import and existence of the outer world, here hang on nothing but the inner movements of the soul. The whole affecting action comes about for reason only that the inmost soul demands it, and steps to light with the very shape, foretokened in the inner shrine.

(Page 270, Wagner, *On Music and Drama*.)

Wagner's most original contribution to the dramaturgy of the nineteenth century was the perfection of a drama
where the characters are meant to serve as media between the audience and a larger, profounder and truer world. The basis for this concept was given by combining and amplifying the ideas of Novalis, Görres, Schelling, and the brothers Schlegel, who all agreed that the heart of the universe lay within each man's soul, and who also regarded the myths as repositories of eternal truths. These concepts too are crucial for an understanding of the Wagnerian drama.

Wagner always wrote and sometimes published his poems before he began to compose the music. But in the case of Tristan, the music began to assert its chromatic pattern even before Wagner had drawn up the dramatic scenario; it was born out of the spirit of music. In a letter to Franz Liszt, dated December 16, 1854, Wagner wrote:

... As I have never in life felt the real bliss of love, I must erect a monument to the most beautiful of all my dreams, in which from beginning to end, that love shall be thoroughly satiated, I have in my head Tristan and Isolde, the simplest but most fullblooded musical conception; with the "black flag" which floats at the end of it I shall cover myself to die. (Wagner, On Music and Drama, p. 272.)

Wagner's Venice Diary and his letters to Mathilde Wesendonck convey to us the emotional state and mental frame of mind in which Tristan was written. Mathilde Wesendonck was the author of the five poems which Wagner set to music in the winter of 1857/8, two of which became part of Tristan. From the music to "Träume" evolved in Venice the Love-Night of the second act; the melodies
of the "Treibhaus" with its heavy, sad mood, were used for the Overture to the third act.

As far as the content of the music drama is concerned, Wagner drastically reduces Gottfried's epic to three acts; in the first, we witness Isolde's journey as Mark's bride to Cornwall, in the second, her secret meeting with Tristan at night in the garden, while Mark is supposedly away hunting, and in the third, the death of the lovers. There are only three main characters in the opera: Tristan, Isolde and Mark, supported by three minor ones: Brangaene, Kurvenal and Melot.

Compared to Gottfried's epic, not much is left of the legend in Wagner's opera. There is no mention of Tristan's parents, or his youth. We learn about the Tantris episode when Isolde discloses to Brangaene the reason for her tumultuous disquiet on board ship. Morolt is in Wagner's version Isolde's betrothed, whom Tristan had killed. Isolde discovered in Tantris the slayer of her fiancé and rushed to kill him but his eyes met hers and rendered her powerless: in a flash her heart was empty of hate and an overwhelming love welled up. But the following turn of events which destined Isolde to become Mark's bride, outraged Isolde. Rejected love, injured personal and national pride (for she imagines that Tristan, who had relieved Cornwall from tribute to Ireland, was now gratifying his ambition by bringing her as Ireland's tribute to Cornwall), detestation of a loveless marriage to an old King, all these
fierce emotions are seething in her heart. She resolves to die and to force Tristan to join her. She commands Brangaene to prepare the poison. Under the pretext of desiring Tristan to ask her forgiveness, Isolde summons him and suggests they drink together a cup of reconciliation. Tristan is aware of her true reason and consents to drink. But Brangaene has disobeyed Isolde's instructions and instead of poison, the cup contains the love-potion. After a moment of bewilderment, the two fated ones are in each other's arms, pouring out an ecstasy of passion. Then the maids of honour robe Isolde to receive King Mark, who is coming on board to greet his bride.

The second act brings the lovers' nocturnal meeting, their hope and despair, their love fulfilment and ecstasy. On the King's sudden return, Tristan is accused of treachery and ingratitude. From the King we learn that he had been forced into the marriage with Isolde by the disturbed state of his kingdom, and that he had not consented to it until Tristan had threatened to depart from Cornwall. Tristan's only reply to this is his plea for Isolde's promise to follow him into the "wondrous realm of night." Then he makes a feint of attacking Melot, but permits the latter to injure him with his sword.

Act three is mournful, full of despair and longing. Tristan is dying in his ancestral castle in Brittany and it is only the hope of seeing Isolde again that keeps
him alive. She was sent for by Kurvenal to come and restore Tristan to health once more. But upon her arrival, Tristan's life endures only for one short embrace, one word, "Isolde!" and he dies in her arms. Isolde also faints over Tristan's body. Mark arrives on a second ship, for Brangaene has told him the secret of the love-potion and the King has come to unite the lovers. But he comes too late; Isolde, ignoring everything, sings out her broken heart and expires.

In contrast to Gottfried, for whom the climax was the grotto, Wagner's climax is the death-scene. Death, however, has an entirely different connotation with Wagner than it had with Gottfried, for Wagner's Love-Death is the threshold to "utter and divine oblivion" (Nirvana) of the senses, wherein love is no longer personalized and finite but becomes universal and eternal. In Gottfried's epic death was welcome because it released the lovers from their love-sufferings by finally permitting them an eternal, blissful union.

The essence of Gottfried's epic is contained in: The Love Potion, the Cave of the Lovers, and in the Lovers' Death. Since in Wagner's opera the meaning of the love potion is distorted and the Cave of the Lovers non-existent in order to concentrate everything on the Love-Death, Wagner's version cannot be said essentially to represent Gottfried's Tristan und Isolde at all; he is, in fact, very far from it. Wagner is much closer to the Romantics' concept of love and uses their motifs
of life and death, night and day, the death-wish and love-death. To enter into a further analysis of the meaning of Wagner's opera is not within the scope of this study, but it will be relevant to mention briefly the effect of his work.

While the deeper meaning of Wagner's Tristan, in particular its symbolism, was recognized by only a very few contemporaries, the majority was and still is somewhat puzzled (including some critics), offering some interpretations of their own both regarding the plot and the music. Thus we can observe some quite contradictory opinions. The majority of critics seem to concur that Tristan was Wagner's "monument to Love" written to fulfill Schopenhauer's ideal. "Wagner's private meditations on Schopenhauer seem like studies for the text of Tristan without the rhyme" (Zuckermann, p. 4). Nietzsche and Thomas Mann also belong to this clan; the latter discourses at quite some length about this point in his Essay, Leiden und Grösse Richard Wagners (pp. 96-99):

... Man findet in wagneroffiziellen Werken allen Ernstes die Behauptung, der Tristan sei unbeeinflusst von Schopenhauerscher Philosophie. Das zeugt schon von sonderbarer Uneinsichtigkeit. Die erzromantische Nachtverherrlichung, dieses erhaben morbiden, verzehrenden und zaubervollen, in alle schlimmsten und hehrsten Mysterien der Romantik tief eingeweihten Werkes ist freilich nichts spezifisch Schopenhauerisches. Die sinnlich-Übersinnlichen Intuitionen des Tristan kommen von weiter her: von dem inbrunstvollen Hektiker Novalis. ...

After this statement, Thomas Mann compares the influence of Novalis' Hymnen an die Nacht as well as Fr. Schlegel's
Lucinde on Wagner's Tristan and concludes:

Wenn nun aber die Wagnerschriftsteller erklären, 'Tristan und Isolde' sei ein Liebesdrama, das als solches die höchste Bejahung des Willens zum Leben in sich schliesse und darum nichts mit Schopenhauer zu tun habe; wenn sie darauf bestehen, die darin besungene Nacht sei die Nacht der Liebe, "wo Liebeswonne uns lacht," und solle dies Drama durchaus eine Philosophie enthalten, so sei diese das genaue Gegenteil der Lehre von der Verneinung des Willens, und darum eben sei das Werk unabhängig von Schopenhauers Metaphysik,—so herrscht da eine befremdende psychologische Unempfindlichkeit.

Ernest Newman's opinion about the love triangle situation in this opera is voiced in his work The Life of Richard Wagner, Vol. 3, p. 329:

The medieval Isolde is the mistress of Tristan and the wife of Mark. Wagner's Isolde is neither. It is possible, of course, to find in the text vestigial indications that the lovers have met illegally before their Night of Love. But Wagner's simplification of the legend requires us to think of this night as not only archetypal but unique. And here Tristan and Isolde merely sing together, at a time when we can be fairly certain that she has not yet shared the bed of the King of Cornwall.

Elliott Zuckermann has a similar statement (p. 22):

Tristan and Isolde never consummate their union. Of the two sexual climaxes that are unmistakably depicted in the orchestra, one is interrupted by the entry of Kurvenal on an unnamable discord, and the other occurs after Tristan has been dead for twenty minutes. The subject of Tristan is unconsummated passion. The legend tells of passion as desire and passion as suffering—and of what Rougemont calls the "dark unmentionable fact" that passion is associated with death. Without the Liebestod the story has no point.

The Wagnerites Albert Goldman and Evert Sprinchorn are of the following opinion (p. 28):
Tristan and Isolde, the artistic product of Wagner's romance, is built entirely on the dualism of life and death, of truth and illusion; with the everyday world being represented as an illusion. . . . At the end of the first act the love potion is exchanged for the death potion, suggesting not only the transformation of hate into love but also the equivalence of love and death. In the second and central act of the drama, a long and explicit depiction of the sex act itself, physical passion carries the two lovers through the night to the point where the coming of morning and a return to the everyday world of individual existence is unthinkable. Eternal night, eternal love, pure feeling, unconsciousness suggest the primordial unity out of which the individual emerges briefly to live his "strange interlude" before sinking back whence he came. . . . In the final, sublime moments of the drama, Isolde, standing over Tristan's body, sinks ecstatically into oblivion. . . . This final scene reveals a radical difference between Schopenhauer's way of dealing with the universal will and Wagner's. Where Schopenhauer advocates withdrawal and noncooperation in order to impose one's own meaning on the essential meaninglessness of life, Wagner's lovers rush to embrace this will with such abandon and vigor that it is difficult to tell whether the force is overcoming the individuals or the individuals are momentarily mastering the force.

In the opinion of some very prominent music critics, such as Lawrence Gilman, Wagner had not only grasped in his Tristan the whole depth of true love, but also conveyed it through his music:

. . . this music is the last word that any art has spoken about the anguish and the ecstasy of human passion. But to look upon Tristan as nothing more than a glorification of passionate and tragic human love is scarcely to see below its surface. It is that, of course; and one might reasonably feel that that, in all conscience, should be enough to satisfy anyone. But Wagner happens to have made Tristan something more than a lyric tragedy of passionate and fateful love. He conceived it as a drama of the inner life of man; and unless we realize that truth and
are moved by that reality, we get only the exterior of the work—overwhelming as it is.

In spite of the variances in the interpretation of the music drama's meaning, or purpose, or symbolism, Tristan exerted a magic of its own on opera lovers and avowed Wagnerites. It became almost a cult, which as often as not, was based on misconceptions. In contrast to 'Wagnerism,' however, the 'Tristanizing' is based on a direct response to the music. It is the result of a personal infatuation rather than an ideological commitment; it is an entirely private matter. While the Wagnerite must learn theories and cultivate habits, the Tristanite only has to be overwhelmed. Gabriele D'Annunzio expressed his emotional experience in impressionistic prose poetry. Gabriel Chabrier and Arnold Schoenberg, to name only two, found the music of Tristan recurring in their own compositions. Or an infatuation with the music could lead to a pondering of the myth, later resulting in the use of it in a writer's own stories—as in the case of Thomas Mann. With him, the legend is ironically retold, and enacted by characters for whom the music is unwholesome as well as overpowering. In this respect Thomas Mann was recapitulating the experience of Nietzsche, who found the music fascinating but at the same time more dangerous than any form of ideological Wagnerism. Nietzsche recorded the importance of the Tristan music in Ecce Homo (Kaufmann, N. II, p. 6):
All things considered, I could never have stood my youth without Wagner's music... When one wants to rid oneself of an intolerable pressure, one needs hashish. Well, I needed Wagner... From the very moment when there was a piano score for Tristan—my compliments Herr von Bülow—I was a Wagnerian... To this day I am still looking for a work of equally dangerous fascination, of an equally shivery and sweet infinity, as Tristan—and I look in all the arts in vain... This work is by all means the non plus ultra by Wagner;... The world is poor for those who have never been sick enough for this "voluptuousness of hell": it is permissible, it is almost imperative, to have recourse to a formulation of the mystics.

All things considered, Tristan cast a strange spell and fascination; some loved it, some rejected it, some called it dangerous—but it affected them all.
After Gottfried, the Tristan legend was only considered as material for popular entertainment throughout the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Only with developing interest in the past and particularly through the Romanticism was it 're-discovered.' But whatever the reasons, there was no successful re-creation of the story by either poets, translators or scholars. The revival of interest in the Middle Ages was actually more a "romanticizing" than a genuine approach to the art and literary treasures of that period. The Romantics were merely in search of adequate material onto which they could graft their own ideas and philosophies. One could aptly paraphrase C. G. Jung and say, "The Romantics were in search of a Soul"! The result was that although the Romantics found the very thing they needed, they did not recognize it as such.

The Romantics could have found a great deal in Gottfried which related to their own ideas if they had understood his epic and its symbolism. The thoughts of both Gottfried and the Romantics revolve around a doctrine of love and both consider love a power which becomes the deciding factor for the growth of personality, reveals the inner centre of self, and enables one to obtain harmony and partake of God. The formulation here is that of the Romantics, but essentially it is the same idea.
with Gottfried. He too ascribes to love the power of
growth but he sees the deciding factor in the acceptance
of the suffering brought by love. The terminology may
be different, but the meaning and the goal are the same.
Another point in which the Romantics concur with Gottfried
is in the positive attitude towards the physical union
of the lovers, because to such a union is given a higher
connotation for its enjoyment becomes an essential element
in the full expansion of the inner self, based on harmony
and the complete blending of souls. In order to extend
such an ideal experience indefinitely—eternally—the
lovers wish for death together. To Gottfried death would
release the lovers from their suffering and afford an
ideal eternal love fulfilment. To the Romantics death
would fully open the gates to eternal bliss for the lovers,
freed from bodily fetters.

Gottfried's Grotto alone could have offered a tre-
mendous challenge to the Romantics, had they but seen it
in the right perspective and sensed the inherent possi-
bility of interpreting it as a temple—a Temple of God,
as they might have called it. Before being worthy to
enter the Grotto, the lovers have first to overcome
certain stages of inner development, of spiritualization
in the gradual ascent on the path of perfection. Then,
having entered, spiritual harmony reaches an intensity
which is underscored by their being only spiritually
nourished. This elevating experience is to be considered
as God's grace bestowed upon the deserving lovers for a
short while as a respite from suffering. One wonders what Novalis would have done with this theme.

We have seen how the Romantics revolutionized the general outlook on marriage: their doctrine of love based every true marriage on harmony and soul unity of the partners. Didn't Gottfried advocate the same? In his time, of course, he could only portray an ideal to be striven for, because marriage was often only a social arrangement, a business or political contract without consideration for feeling, something that persisted right up to the Romantics!

Although superficially they seem to have the same attitude to life, Gottfried's love of life is expressed in an anecdotal fashion, which the Romantics misunderstood as being a farce, whereas the Romantics expressed their joy of living in serious episodes which had a function. Since the Romantics did not have the knowledge about symbolism in Gottfried's epic and did not receive any help in this line from the scholars either, they were unable to see the sense in Gottfried's series of gallant adventures and his manner of narration. The Romantics saw in the various experiences in life a deeper meaning and an important stage in the all-over evolution of man, therefore, in their way of thinking, Gottfried's Tristan did not mean more than a romance about passionate love, fully indulged in for its own sake, and narrated in a frivolous manner.
It was only with Wagner that the legend was re-created in a form which has become artistically extremely important. While it is not Gottfried at all, Wagner's Tristan has been so influential that it affected all succeeding attempts for re-creation of the legend: Wagner's music drama has come to be identified with the popular meaning of romantic love.
FOOTNOTES

1 The older French epic version.


7 The Buch der Liebe is a collection of Prose Romances in thirteen volumes, printed in 1578 and illustrated with crude woodcuts. It contained mainly courtly stories, frequently including those of foreign origin (chiefly French), and German medieval epics and ballads in prose.

8 "A romantic could become a Catholic if he had been born a Protestant, but could hardly be a Catholic otherwise, since it was necessary to combine Catholicism with revolt," said Bertrand Russell in his essay on The Romantic Movement, in A History of Western Philosophy and its connection with political and social circumstances from the earliest times to the present day (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1945), p. 679.

9 In: Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders. Wackenroder's art interpretations are the most typical of the Romantic School's tendencies. Whatever the brothers Schlegel or Tieck may have added to them, they are based substantially, in matters of beauty, upon Wackenroder's tenets. (Robert M. Wernaer, Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany (New York/London, 1910), p. 97.)

10 Friedrich Schlegel had written a number of important essays on Greek literary subjects: Von den Schulen der griechischen Poesie, Vom ästhetischen Werthe der griechischen Komodie; Ueber die Grenzen des Schönen; Ueber
die weiblichen Charaktere in den griechischen Dichtern (all in 1794). Ueber die Diotima (in 1795).

August Wilhelm's Lectures on Literature and Art, translations of Shakespeare's works, as well as those of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese writers. Together with Tieck, A. W. Schlegel introduced Calderon to German literature and thus started a greater influence of the Spanish drama on the German.

Thus Halle und Jerusalem has as its source Andreas Gryphius' tragedy Cardenio und Celinde embellished with many personal experiences; Die Grafen von Gleichen and Die Papstin Johanna deal with legend material; Der Strählauer Fischzug, Die Appelmänner, and others are dramatic "Schwankstoffe" from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, revamped, with a very good eye for the effects of the 'Puppentheater' and 'Volksbühnenkunst.'

Klopstock expressed in his ode "An Gott"—as no other poet had done before him—a longing for spiritual and physical union with the beloved created especially for him, and implores God to be allowed finally to meet her. Bodmer sharply reprimanded Klopstock and could not understand "dass ein so grosser Geist so stark in den Körper verliebt sei," affronted chiefly by the audacity to be contradicted in his own concept of dualism.

Klopstock's relationship with Meta Möller (who later became his wife) was also based on natural human feelings and desires, which in fact deepened their bond rather than 'defiled its sanctity.' They were both of the opinion that love was not a matter of chance but founded on the similarity of the hearts and virtues. This kind of love becomes to them marriage even without the sanction of the church.

Goethe did not write theoretical works about love, he lived it and expressed its effects in his works. He did not set up any doctrines, but from the thoughts inherent in his works and the characters portrayed therein, especially women, it is quite obvious that he did not subscribe to the dualism of his time. Simmel (in: Goethe, 1913, pp. 193-209) states: "Sein Vertrauen auf das Sinnvolle im Realen war zu gross, als dass er den Leib als Gegensatz zum Geist empfunden hätte, und das Sittliche vom Sinnlichen hätte absondern, die liebenden und begehrenden Empfindungen hätte spalten wollen. Früh denkt er darum schon nach über sittliche Sinnlichkeit." Goethe's works as a whole have underscored the close relationship of the spiritual and physical aspects of love.

The speculative philosophy of the German Romantics is based on the firm, unshakable belief in a divine Principle, the source of the visible world about them and of
the spiritual life within them. But they were not seeking the traditional God of Christian religion, but a pantheistic God: a nearer God who dwelt in nature as well as in man, and who would reconcile in his own person the antagonistic systems of philosophy.

Endowed with the consciousness of special powers, such as the philosophy of Fichte and Schelling bestowed upon man, the Romantics felt instinctively called upon to penetrate farther into the realms of the universe than pure religious faith had heretofore thought possible: if not empirically, then intuitively, if not with the help of understanding, then with that of feeling, spiritual perception, theosophy.

In their creed there was in God's mind a humanity without sex—as it had existed before it assumed the form of man and woman—and which they hoped would come once more into being. When humanity was born it came into the world in the body of man and woman, and while humanity lives on this earth, it will and must have this double body. Whatever may be therefore the spiritual endeavours of man, only by means of his physical body can they be carried out; only by the means of the body, by the bodily union of man and woman, can the race, and with it the perfection of humanity, go on. God created the body of man and woman as He created the whole visible nature which lies in all its beauty before us. It must then be holy just as much as man's spiritual part is holy, for it is the dwelling place of the divine, the temple of the soul, and therefore divine itself. Therefore, all sex relations are clean and sacred, and when the two bodies of man and woman meet, when the two separated halves join, we have in this marvellous union a symbol of, and return to, the divine human oneness which was and will ever be. (R. M. Wernaer, Romanticism, pp. 144 ff.; pp. 237 ff.)


Heinrich Heine's comments on Lucinde in Die romantische Schule are quite revealing of the opinion about the book: "Es hat seiner Zeit nicht an Lobpreisern dieses Romans gefehlt. . . . Es fehlte sogar nicht an Kritikern, die dieses Produkt als ein Meisterstück priisen und die bestimmt prophezeiten, dass es einst für das beste Buch in der deutschen Literatur gelten werde. Man hätte diese Leute von Obrigkeitwegen festsetzen sollen, wie man in Russland die Propheten, die ein öffentliches Unglück prophezeien, vorläufig so lange einsperrt bis ihre Weis sagung in Erfüllung gegangen. Nein, die Götter haben unsere Literatur vor jenem Unglück bewahrt; der Schlegel sche Roman wurde bald wegen seiner unzüchtigen Nichtigkeit
allgemein verworfen und ist jetzt verschollen. Lucinde
ist der Name der Heldin dieses Romans, und sie ist ein
sinnlich witziges Weib, oder vielmehr eine Mischung von
Sinnlichkeit und Witz. Ihr Gebrechen ist eben, dass
die kein Weib ist, sondern eine unerquickliche Zusammensetzung von zwei Abstraktionen, Witz und Sinnlichkeit.
Die Muttergottes mag es dem Verfasser verzeihen, dass
er dieses Buch geschrieben; nimmermehr verzeihen es ihm
die Nusen." (Heinrich Heine's Werke (Hamburg, 1887),
Vol. VII, p. 160.)

15Cf. Schleiermacher: Grundlinien einer Kritik der
bisherigen Sittenlehre, and Friedrich Schlegel: Philosophie
des Lebens.

16In Part II, Appendix (IV.445 B-V.471 C) and
Chapter XV and XVI (IV.445 B-V.457 B) of The Republic.
Translated with introduction and notes by Francis MacDonald
Cornford (New York/London: Oxford University Press, 1966),
pp. 144-168.

17Friedrich Schlegel. Seine prosaischen Jugendschriften,

18In Manuscript of the "Ideen" by Fr. Schlegel, in
Dorothea's handwriting. Goethe-Schiller Archives. (As
quoted by P. Kluckhohn, Die Auffassung der Liebe im 18.
Jahrhundert, p. 385, since the original was not accessible
to me.)

19Cf. Nachlassheft: "Die mystische Synthesis der
Individuen in der Liebe besteht im Zusammensterben; das
ist das Geheimnis des Todes." (Quoted in P. Kluckhohn,
Die Auffassung der Liebe, p. 391.)

"An die Freundin," "An Selinde," "Der Glühende," "Der
Zürrende."

21Dorothea von Schlegel und deren Söhne I. und Ph. Veit,

22Jakob Böhme, der schlesische Mystiker, Goldmanns

23It is the symbol of the "Divine Feminine," the "Ur-
Mutter," Isis, or Anima, in man. This maiden is the
"Goddess of Sais," Rosenblütchen, in the novel Die Lehr-
linge von Sais (1798-99); it is Sophia and Julia in
Hymnen an die Nacht (1798-1800); Mathilde, Cyane, Zulima,
in his Heinrich von Ofterdingen (1799-1800).

24See Böhme, Von den drei Prinzipien, Chapter XIII,
Subdivision 24 ff. and Aurora. To understand the origin
and growth of these mystic conceptions, it is necessary
to turn to Adam and the creation of the world. When Adam fell in the garden of Eden, he suffered a great irreparable loss. He lost his Eve, and with her, so Böhme develops in his mystic philosophy, his spiritual life. Certainly, another Eve remained with him, but she was not the old, spiritual, divinely given Eve, but the simple, plain, earthy, human Eve. The real Eve withdrew and veiled herself and remained in heaven. Deprived of his spiritual life, Adam went out into the world, and groped about like a blind man. But he had, nevertheless, a mission, and man has the same mission even to this day: Man must find what he had lost, he must regain his former spiritual life—his Eve. How to regain her is revealed in Böhme's philosophy. (Original not available to me, therefore quoted in English.)

25 Cf. Raich, Novalis' Briefwechsel, pp. 29-30. (Letter to Fr. Schlegel, dated April 13, 1797.)

26 Cf. Fragment II, 237: "Alle echte Mitteilung ist also sinnbildsam—und sind also nicht Liebkosungen echte Mitteilungen?"


28 A one-act "fate tragedy," Der Verschollene (1822), the popular comedy, Das Auge der Liebe (1824), based on Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, Das Trauerspiel in Tirol (1828), whose hero is the Tyrolean patriot Andreas Hofer, and the play is full of supernatural episodes in the Romantic manner.

29 Merlin, eine Mythe (1832), which the author himself called "die Tragodie des Widerspruchs," the last of the attempts which the German Romantics made to adapt to its ends the great secular mysteries of the Middle Ages. Merlin, the son of Satan and a Christian Virgin, is a kind of Anti-Christ who is racked by the antitheses of life; the spiritual and the sensual, renunciation and pleasure, are at war within him, and he dies, baffled in his efforts to reconcile them.

30 Die Epigonen (1836). This work describes the relations in which a young man of good family in Bremen stands towards several women, and contains many autobiographical elements. Die Epigonen is written in the vein of Wilhelm Meister, but has a more modern background than Goethe's novel, being concerned essentially with the conflict between the rising middle class and the old aristocracy. By bringing such problems into debate, it inaugurated the social novel of the next generation.

31 Münchhausen (1838), full of satirical attacks upon his own time; obviously under the influence of Jean Paul
or even E. T. A. Hoffmann.

32 Quoted by Bechstein, p. 55 (the original was not available to me).

33 Immermann studied Grimm’s Rechtsalterthümer, Mythologie und Sagen. The latter were the source for his chapter "Mittagszauber."


35 Just as freely as Immermann treated his characters and situations, he also invented some new characters without any particular reason. "Ritter John," the "Seneschall" is such a character in whom the author spoofs the knighthood.


38 Gottfried Weber, Gottfried von Strassburg, p. 46.

39 Trans. Goldman. (The original was not available to me.)
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