THE HUMAN ELEMENT AND LOVE AS
A RELATED INFLUENCE AND INSPIRATION
IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF HEINRICH HEINE

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INTRODUCTION

Love has always been one of the most basic and important themes in poetry and literature whether it be love of nature, maternal love, patriotic love, or that special love between a man and a woman. Due to this profuse occurrence of a many-faceted theme in poetry and literature, the theme, oddly enough, has often been taken for granted by many readers. This has happened in the same way that a door is taken for granted when one acknowledges the fact that the door is there, but yet, does not bother to open it.

Please observe, however, that an implication is not being made concerning the existence of this theme as a totally untreated and forgotten entity, for this is certainly not true. The implication is meant to imply that the theme of love as a subject has not been sufficiently treated upon. In other words, the opinion is being stated that a much-warranted close analysis or scrutiny and an extensive treatment has not always been given. And, indeed, there exists sufficient grounds for warrant! For instance, no one needs to look far for the literary classic in which some aspect of the love theme runs as a vital thread through the work bringing together the various parts into a meaningful and rewarding unity. And, as we search further, it is not difficult to obtain
some idea of the many ways in which love works in providing the inspiration for the writer or poet in the creation of his works.

One very great problem encountered in discussing love is the arrival at a fairly common understanding of the term. Just what is love? A word? An emotion or feeling? An expression? If we take it at word value, then one encounters many types of love which each possess its own many facets. For example, let us call love of money, patriotic love, maternal love, etc. all different types of love. But, in probing deeper, let us examine, for example, patriotic love and see the different facets within it. These different facets could correspond to the different circumstances in which this type of love might be viewed. For example, one could view love of one's country from the standpoint of war, peace-time, etc. Perhaps the different facets within the types are not as clearly defined as the types, but there is an individual definition there all the same. But, let it be known as common knowledge that not often does a word mean and contain so much within the mere material of four letters.

And, in viewing love as an emotion or feeling as well as a word, one comes across the individual element in that there are as many emotions or feelings concerning love as there are people or individuals in the world. And, the same consideration of that individual element should be taken into account as we observe the way in which expressions of love are conveyed, for the means of conveyance is as individual as that
emotion or feeling being conveyed.

Although it is hoped that some understanding will result from reading the above discussion, it would be presumptuous to claim that the discussion is entire or complete. But, in addition to giving some understanding, this discussion also serves to give an indication or verbal illustration of the complexity of a treatment of all the aspects of the love theme by displaying the complexity of the theme itself.

In the treatment of this theme, as, indeed, in many subjects, a type of compromise must be made. It should be made in view of the fact that the treatment should not be too specific, therefore, excluding all but a few readers from being interested due to their lack of ability to associate and establish common grounds with the discussion. But, on the other hand, neither should the treatment be so general that nothing original and fresh, yet interesting and worthwhile, is made available to the reader.

Such a compromise, in the opinion of this writer, can be realized in a discussion and analysis of the works and life of Heinrich Heine in view of how love concerned him as a man and a poet. Before going any further, it should be understood that only through this writer's reading of Heinrich Heine's works and the biographies about him as a man and a poet did the realization first occur of the possibility of using Heine's life and work as a means to treat on love as a theme and an inspiration. It is not to be thought that his
works and life were merely taken for the purpose of being molded in order to conform to this topic regardless of whether they were best qualified for or representative of such a topic.

Most or many poets and writers, usually more than other people, are associated with lives of great and complex emotions and feelings because they have been motivated to record and relate these emotions in their writings. However, this association comes not only through their motivation, but also through their superior ability to express their feelings in literature and poetry, therefore bringing them to the attention and oftentimes close scrutiny of the reading public.

Heinrich Heine is himself representative of all this. He was a very emotional man much involved with the many aspects of love. And, he was, indeed, motivated by his feelings to express himself, which he did in his letters to friends and relatives, in his poetry, and his other writings. But, just as significant, the actual living of his life as seen by reading biographies about Heine provides a great insight into his many emotions, loves, etc.

But, even more important, it should be noted that Heine is not only a representative but more, much more. He is more due to the fact that through his works and his life, he can not be honestly and definitely associated with any one type of theme nor can he be rightly tied or consistently compared to any particular literary predecessor as is possible with some poets and writers. For example, Albrech von
Haller is many times considered primarily a German nationalist since he sought, through such works as "Die Alpen," to found or establish a common nationalistic feeling among a people divided by many small states. Or, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, through his works, especially "Der Messias," established himself as the reawakener of religious poetry and was hailed as a German Milton. And also, Johann Gottfried Herder became "the leading folklorist of his age as well as the German representative of Rousseau's return-to-nature movement."1

Even though Heine was certainly influenced by some ideas and people more than by others, he does not tie himself to them in his work. For example, as a young law student at Göttingen, Heine gave his poems to Professor August Wilhelm von Schlegel who in turn gave Heine some very constructive criticism. Schlegel, who was the leader of romanticism at that time, exerted a great influence on Heine even to the extent that Heine in his first essay came forward to extol romanticism as Schlegel saw it:

...a plastic romanticism; an attack on the warped romanticism that was 'a farrago of Spanish sensuousness, Scotch mists and Italian guitars'; a fight against the 'pallid nun' and 'proud maiden of noble lineage' type of romanticism... 2

But, despite this influence and the great awe which Heine had


2Ludwig Marcuse, A Life Between Love and Hate, p. 70.
for Schlegel, Heine did not hesitate to renounce him and throw off his influence as he "grew out," so to speak, of romanticism. And, later in life, Heine came under the influence of Saint-Simonianism while he was in France. Saint-Simonianism, which called for the public control of means of production, abolition of inheritance rights, and gradual emancipation of women, was receiving wide attention in France at the time that Heine became involved with it. Some of this philosophy became interwoven into Heine's work; however, when the movement began to falter and Heine was turning to other sources of interest, he discarded it, as he had previously done with Schlegel's influence.

Heine's later renouncement or abandonment of earlier influences, if these sources of influence did not keep in step with his maturing views, indicates a man and a poet striving for maturity. He strove for a maturity which many poets never reach and perhaps one which Heine himself never reached in so far as when a certain maturity is reached, no further maturation occurs or is possible--this never happened to Heine. In other words, Heine as a poet, unlike many others, did not mature to a certain level, reach a plateau, and then level off.

The most important reason for Heine's being primarily individual and for the constant growth and maturation which he underwent throughout his life lies in his inspiration.

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His inspiration came from many sources which in turn came from many places. Such inspirational sources were the many people whom Heine knew and the many to whom he wrote, whether family, friends, or enemies. The political events of the time, not only in Germany and France, but everywhere in the world, were other sources. And, not the least in importance were those conditions under which he lived—those times when his works were selling well and all seemed right with the world, and others when hardship due to economic distress and bad health dominated. In short, Heine's complex life full of multi-varied experiences was his source of inspiration.

Since his life is so complex, it cannot be hoped that the material within this paper will cover all of the sources of inspiration which involved Heinrich Heine. But, through the presentation of some of the most important human sources, some insight will be gained into the vast complexity of inspiration itself as well as into the ways in which it worked upon a man and poet as sensitive as Heinrich Heine. The ideas and forces such as nature which also served as sources of inspiration are just as important; however, they would not serve to bring in the human element as well as the human sources themselves.

Though Heine would give more attention to some sources of inspiration in his poetry and writings than to others, the many ways in which one person inspired him produced many varied tones in his work so that one cannot often detect the dull monotonous hum of over-consistency. For example, Mathilde,
Heine's wife, was a prominent and, therefore, often-used source of inspiration but the end-result of her inspiration was not always the same even though the jealous tone usually predominated. It was the spendthrift child in Mathilde who inspired her husband to bring out the humorist and child in himself by writing the following verse:

If the wife a wish expresses
For a shawl, straight buy her two;
Buy her golden brooches, dresses,
Lace and jewels not a few.4

But when Heine travels to Hamburg without Mathilde and receives no word from her, it is, in a letter to her, a worried and love-sick man who writes:

MY PRECIOUS LOVE: Since you left, I've done nothing but sigh. I think of you constantly; I suffer from my usual headaches, and these pains are heightened and fed by the unrest in my heart. I will no longer be separated from you! How terrible! I feel more than ever that I must have you with me all the time. You know how agitated I am because I have no news of you yet. Write me, I implore you, as often as you can, at least twice a week.5

The most important points to be seen in the discussion which follows this introduction are the many ways in which love in its many human aspects inspired and influenced Heinrich Heine as a man and a poet. However, merely to discuss this in terms of two categories, man and poet, would not be sufficient as they must each be "broken down" and subjected

4Marcuse, op. cit., p. 263.

to a closer analysis. The man alone is so broad a topic that one must go deeper than that in order to find love as it concerns the son, young lover, and husband.

Also, as has been mentioned previously, an underlying point to be seen is the true complexity of the inspiration which love and its aspects provide for a poet or writer, and the domination and form of the love themes running through Heine's work. As Heinrich Heine is made to speak in this paper, he will not only speak for himself, but, in part, for the true poet whose emotions and loves become poetic expressions.
CHAPTER ONE: HEINE AND HIS PARENTS

Heine's ancestors and present family were like those of many others--composed of varied personalities. There were those uncles who were quite wealthy as well as those who, according to worldly standards of the time, were considered failures, such as his uncle Simon de Geldern. And an earlier uncle whom Heine never knew personally constituted that one revolutionary but romantic character who seems to "pop up" in many families. His name, too, was Simon de Geldern and he had lived and travelled much in the Arabic regions where he had supposedly attained the rank of chieftain in a particular tribe. He was referred to as the "Oriental" because he wore Eastern garb upon his return visits to Germany. Discussion is devoted to him here because Heine refers to him several times, especially in his "Self Portrait," as being a great source of inspiration for his imagination as an impressionable young boy at home. And it can be seen as a prediction of the Romanticist that Heine was to become at one point in his life and career.

Heine had a sister, Charlotte, to whom he was very devoted until the end of his life. In fact, she was one of

6Ibid., p. 317.
7Ibid., p. 319.
the last to see him alive in Paris, but his love for Charlotte did not greatly inspire him or influence him as far as his work and attitudes are concerned. The term "greatly" is used because one must assume that some degree of influence was present even though it might not have seemed evident or outstanding, for everyone with whom Heine came in touch exerted some degree of influence on the sensitive poet whether they or he were aware of the process or not. For it is the true poet who incorporates all experience and stores it within himself to be used as a means to aid his creativity.

Heine also had two brothers, Maximilian and Gustav, and even though he wrote to them upon occasion throughout most of his life, and there exists no reason for doubting that a brotherly relationship existed, this relationship did not provide any prominent influence or inspiration for him.

But out of all his family, there were two members whom Heine loved intensely and lastingly. This love and the relationship produced by it led to sources of inspiration which affected both his life and his work to varying degrees. These two people were his parents, Betty and Samson Heine.

The family of Heine's mother, the van Gelderns, possessed a tradition of fabulous wealth and her grandfather Geldern, a ducal Chamberlain, was once an extravagant example. Even though this was now nothing but a tradition, it gave
Betty van Geldern special favor in the eyes of her Jewish kinsfolk, who in this respect, like the feudal aristocracy, were apt to make a cult of heredity. Also, her position as the daughter of a man who, after taking his degree at the University of Duisburg, had settled down as a doctor in Düsseldorf, added to her importance and assured her of being judged by special standards. 8

But it was her education which cast her as an outstanding individual and well above the average woman of the time. As a young girl, her father, Gottschalk van Geldern, had required her to read Latin prose to him as well as to forsake the study of music. Instead of music and romantic poetry, which were typical and fields of study much in vogue for young ladies then, she took part in the studies of her brother who became a doctor. It was, in no small part, this scientific training and constant association with men who recognized her intellectual maturity which destined her to become the mother that she was.

Thus, when Heinrich Heine was of sufficient age for intellectual "training," Betty Heine's world of practicality, in which she was most at home, combined with all the repressed desires and unfulfilled urges for recognition which survived in her, and which had been disappointed as a result of her marriage with the handsome, careless man whom she loved to form the center of her ambition for her son. This ambition

was best described by Heine when he later wrote:

...My mother dreamt of me wearing golden epaulettes and the most richly embroidered uniforms at the Emperor's court. For it was to the Emperor's service that she fully intended to dedicate me. ...  

Her ambition as might be suggested by her son's later description was, by no means, a romantic one. She plunged him into the study of geometry and statics, of hydrostatics and hydraulics, for she figured that if he could not win favor with a duke or a king, then he would have, at least, the mental equipment for a successful career in business.

But mother and son dreamt of different things—the mother of an improbable future for which she thought she was preparing the lad by a commonplace daily existence, and the boy of a past which seemed to him a marvellous escape from his barren world of tutelage. These dreams did come into conflict to the degree that Heine was never interested in the type of studies which his mother preferred for him, and he failed in all of the business ventures and apprenticeships which she procured for him through her friends and relatives.

Without taking a close look at the situation, it seems amazing that the young romantic and his mother, the sober intellectual, did not come into an open and unpleasant conflict. This, however, did not happen because Heine, most importantly, 

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recognized his mother's boundless faith in his ability. She never hesitated to show that he was her favorite, something which directed him to his conviction that he was an exceptional personality, destined for great things. And, when Heine left home and failed in his mother's carefully-secured business ventures, and then began to devote all of his time and energies to poetry and essays, Betty Heine's love for her son never ceased nor faltered.

Heine maintained a fairly close and constant correspondence with his mother despite the distance and his economic and health problems. His unstinted love for and devotion to her can be seen in an excerpt from one of his letters to her in 1850 from Paris:

... You may rely on it that I won't conceal it from you if my condition becomes much worse. If I don't write you, don't worry; it is merely that I lack a trustworthy amanuensis, or that I have no wish to aggravate my depression by giving you unpleasant news. But I think of you constantly, you may be sure. To tell the truth, I want to survive you to spare you the sorrow of hearing my death. This is perhaps my life's chief interest. When I no longer have you, I shall be able to meet death with a lighter heart. Lottchen (his sister) has her children and her husband; and as for my wife, she is so happily constituted that in the end she will be able to do without me... 10

Heine's love for his mother never acted as a significant inspiration in his work. The love which is involved in his poetry is that of the romantic and sometimes passionate kind which one associates with two lovers. However, there is

one sonnet among his works which is dedicated to his mother and entitled "To My Mother, B. Heine." Particularly in the last ten lines can one see the value which he placed on his love for her:

I looked for love on all the streets; I'd wait
With arms outstretched in front of every door--
For little alms of passion I'd implore--
But, laughing, all they gave me was cold hate.

And ever did I stray toward love, forever
Toward love; and yet I came upon it never--
And turned back home, in sickness and despair.
And there you were--I saw you drawing nigh--
And ah! the thing that swam within your eyes--
That sweet, that long-desired love, was there.

--Translated by Aaron Kramer

This sonnet was written before Heine married and found a deeply passionate and lasting love in his wife, Mathilde. But this love did not entirely replace or absorb that love for his mother, for it was still discernible in his letters to her after his marriage. His love for Mathilde might have been an important reason why his love for his mother did not appear as a significant inspiration in his work, but that can be nothing but a speculation as there is no definite proof with which to back the statement. However, this love inspired him more in his way of life. As the afore-mentioned sonnet implies, it sustained him in his early years as a poet before he found Mathilde. And, it has been put forth that his strong love for his native land was put to the test at a time when Prussia was worth nothing more than ridicule to him, when Bavaria

\[\text{\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 68.}\]
failed him in that he had almost attained a professor-ship there and then was prevented by petty circumstances and the indecision of King Louis, and especially, when most of Germany seemed to be nothing more than the lackey of Austria's Prince Metternich and a very sorry example of progress when compared to that example presented by enlightened and progressive France. And in this situation where his love was tested, it is maintained by many that Heine's mother did much to preserve his love for Germany.

Perhaps, it is this last point which is most important here, because Heine, despite his spending the majority of his years in France, and his constant disgust with the events and the people in Germany, never renounced his country, and therefore, won his way to the hearts and the ears of the German peoples. He provided them not only with many revealing and enjoyable poems, but with enlightening and revolutionary comments on and attitudes concerning the political situations of the time. These comments were destined to become very significant and helpful in combination with the economic, political, and social forces of the time in leading the way to the 1870's when "Germany" became a reality.

In all the world there was no one I loved as much as him. He has been dead for over twenty-five years. I never thought that I would lose him; and even now I can scarcely believe that he is gone. It is so hard to convince oneself that people we love very much are really dead. But they are not dead; they live on within us and in our souls.12

12Ibid., p. 325.
These lines were written by Heinrich Heine in memory of his father, Samson Heine, some twenty-five years after his death. They serve to give some indication of the depth and the enduring nature of the love which Heine had for his father.

Although he certainly loved his mother as has been indicated in the preceding pages of this first chapter, Heine had a very special kind of love for his father. He loved his father as many sons love and have loved their fathers, but he also saw in Samson Heine a man who had much in common with himself. And when he said that he had loved no one as much as his father, he was speaking not only as a son, but also as a man who was expressing a bond of sympathy between two creatures each of whom lived in a world of his own imagining. In order to understand this, it is necessary to examine some of what the two found in common. Much of this can be seen by reading the following excerpt concerning his father which comes from Heine's own "Self Portrait":

"... Boundless love of life was his dominant trait. He was pleasure-loving, gay, and full-blooded. His mind was a perpetual carnival. The dance music was never too noisy, and the violins were always in tune. Within him always dwelt the cheerfulness of the blue sky and fanfares of light-heartedness. He was carefree--always forgetful of the day that was gone and never giving a thought to the day that was to come..."

Indeed, the son was like his father, because, he too, threw his energies to love of life. Especially as a student.

13 Ibid., p. 324.
in Germany, he danced, drank, and often worried more about his love affairs than his studies. But, even when Heine had a wife to support and was experiencing economic and health complications in Paris, he was still, to many, the entertaining and delightful personality around whom they gathered in the popular and fashionable literary salons of the city.

And, unfortunately, in the description of his father, Heine's words "forgetful of the day that was gone and never giving a thought to the day that was to come" show too much of a similarity between father and son, especially when the last years of each of their lives are considered. For instance, due to Samson Heine's mismanagement in business and lack of a businessman's foresight, he was forced ultimately to move his economically depressed family from Düsseldorf to Duisburg, a smaller town where costs were not so high and where they could no longer consider themselves in a position either socially or economically to entertain their accustomed circle of friends.

Heinrich Heine, too, lacked even an elementary foresight with regard to money. This can be seen in the way he handled or managed the money which his Uncle Solomon Heine granted him. He repeatedly spent these grants in a relatively short time and usually on that thing which was exactly opposite to what the money was intended for. And when his mother procured several business apprenticeships for him through Solomon Heine, he had no ability to succeed in them. But, his troubles came to a head when he married Mathilde.
The adoring husband did not have the wish, if not the will-power, to restrain his wife from spending the majority of all the money which he was granted for his works which many times were few and far between. Mathilde spent most of this money for herself buying jewelry, silks, laces, and dresses—the cost of one dress sometimes equalling the sum earned from one of her husband's poems. But, Heine permitted her this over-indulgence both when times were prosperous and when they were not, only to suffer from this liberal permissiveness in those days of increasing want. Even though it seems so apparent, he never emphasized this as a major or partial reason for his ultimate financial deterioration.

It has been said that Samson Heine thought more with his heart than with his head; therefore, the element of imagination prevailed over that of reason and the romanticist in him dominated the realist. It is here that the great contrast between him and his wife can be seen, for they did contrast greatly personality-wise. Betty Heine, even though she was able to express herself from the heart, felt more at home with reason and practicality. And, here, once again, Heine is more closely tied to his father in nature in that he, too, thought and wrote mainly from the heart especially with regard to his poetry.

Since Samson Heine died when his son was relatively young and Heinrich had not yet maintained a close correspondence with his parents, there is no great amount of personal letters available between the two men. Had there been the
amount of France-to-Germany correspondence which exists between Heine and his mother existent between him and his father, there would be, doubtlessly, much more material available. And from this material, a better understanding of the two men and how they related to one another could have been obtained.

Heine's love for his father, as is true of his love for Betty Heine, did not serve as a direct inspirational source in his work in that there is an appearance of frequent reference to them in his prose and poetry. But both father and mother were inspirational in that they exerted an indirect influence. Betty Heine served to stabilize and to give some reason to the poet who was so often romantically inclined. Samson Heine, if he did not preserve the imagination as well as strengthen it in the young boy, at least influenced it to the extent that a possible weakening or elimination of the romantic element was avoided. In other words, he countered the influence which was being exerted by his wife.

It is interesting to note that the influences exerted by his parents, though certainly conflicting in nature, did not result in a struggle for dominance within the poet as oftentimes occurs in similar situations with other literary figures. Instead of conflicting, they were assimilated to some extent so that his inspiration benefited from the blending of the two elements, but yet they dwelt side by side in another respect, in that some inspiration was only affected by one or the other. The following words can better explain this state which existed in the poet and man:
In the character of Heinrich Heine the most conflicting traits dwelt side by side as peaceably as they did in the couple at No. 602 Bülkerstrasse (the residence of the Heines in Düsseldorf). He had reasoning power combined with an instinct for emotion; the enjoyment of the present with keen anticipation of the future; an indestructible capacity for illusion, which sprang from his innate optimism and invariably led to confusion of issues; a shrewd ability to judge both men and circumstances, and above all, a capacity for plunging into the joys of life whilst still retaining the full vigour of ambition. 14

14 Vallentin, op. cit., p. 10.
Heinrich Heine had inherited the same need for affection and flattery which he notes in his father, and which he himself described as that of a child begging his mother to flatter him—too flatter more than enough, even. This inherited tendency, deepened by his upbringing, made it possible for him to live only if surrounded by flattery and affection. And his sensitiveness exaggerated every interference with this crying need of his being. He was not of those born fighters whose strength is increased by the obstacles which they encounter. Cradled in affection and admiration, he either lay defenseless when opposed by indifference, or he would plunge into convulsions of hatred and wild schemes of revenge.

It was this tenderness of susceptibility which led him early to seek in the admiration of women its most easily attained satisfaction. In later years too he frequently soothed his acute susceptibility by consorting with that class of women which is most extravagant in the bestowal of its flattery. A precocious sexual instinct is not uncommon among Jewish boys, and Heine was no exception in this respect. It seems, too, that he must have experienced that sexual impulse which exists before puberty and is now recognized by psychoanalysts, for there is evidence in one of his last poems, "Citronia," that even at the age of six vague erotic desires were
present and stirring in the child's mind.\textsuperscript{15}

Heine himself has described in his \textit{Memoirs} the awakening of his regard for the opposite sex. The story, however, is placed in a setting of such wild romanticism that its truth must be doubted. It is the tale of "red-haired Josepha," the executioner's daughter, an apparition surprising enough in the bourgeois world of Heinrich Heine's Düsseldorf, even without the dramatic description he gives the girl. He talks of her clothes clinging to her long thin body, her face being of a transparent color was framed in a mass of the deepest red hair, which she drew together under her chin, so that her white face seemed to float in waves of blood, like the head of a beheaded person. The whole account of this first love-affair is in similar strain, and appears to resemble the early efforts of a romantic novelist more than the first adventure of a Don Juan.\textsuperscript{16} There are secret visits at night to the house of an old witch, Josepha's aunt, mixed up with references to the contents of the superstitious world, and a vision of the girl standing with her father's shining sword in her hands. Except for Heine's own account in the \textit{Memoirs} no trace whatever has been found in the local archives concerning Josepha, or any daughter of an executioner in the neighbourhood, for that matter. It seems, to the highest degree, improbable that the boy of sixteen could have concealed an affair with the

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 214.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 234.
daughter of an executioner and the niece of a witch from the
watchful eyes of his mother.

For the origin of the pale, flower-like face in a mass
of red hair we must search in the poet's mind rather than in
the archives. Josepha is a creation of that vague "border-
land" between the real and the imaginary, where dwell the
creatures born half of book memories and half of those moments
of fleeting reality where true emotion passes so swiftly that
it can't be captured entirely.

Josepha does not seem to be the only feminine member
of this border-country of dreams who floats through Heine's
Memoirs, for there are others such as the beautiful but fool-

ish Gertrude, the beautiful, gentle Catherine, and the beauti-
ful and pious Hedviga. They all, perhaps, serve to illustrate
Heine's attempt to bring them back to his memory. But through
this attempt, we can see the changes, if these relationships
were true, that these relationships have undergone when they
have been brought back as sources of inspiration and as the
subject of his works. They have transcended the borders of
reality to the lands of imagination and romanticism where
the truth is somewhat shrouded by Heine's own brand of fantasy.

The truth is that Heine throughout his life jealously

 guarded the real secrets of his early passions. The poet who
sang most eloquently of love is, with few exceptions, the

poet who is most careful in hiding the identity of those to

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whom his lyrics are addressed. It would seem that he sought to generalize the character of his sentiments the more by veiling the actual sources of his inspiration. The most indiscreet of men where hate is concerned, he is in love the most secretive.\textsuperscript{18} The very way in which he speaks of the objects of his passion seems intended to make us doubt their existence. Whereas, without a moment's hesitation, he gives posterity, through his writings, every detail of his early enemies, down even to their actual names, the least little incidents of his experiences in love are carefully locked in silence.\textsuperscript{19}

But there can be little doubt that it was some real and early love-affair which awakened the urge for self-expression in the immature boy, and thereby vaguely indicated his vocation as a poet. For even in consideration of Heine's early talents as a poet, he could not have presupposed such a relationship and indicated such depth of experience merely on the basis of his child's imagination.

One part of his "Dream Pictures" is based on the last years he spent at Düsseldorf, and on that first experience of an unhappy passion which bears the mysterious sign of Josepha. It is romantic poetry with all the accompanying features—ghosts, churchyards, lost souls, evil temptation, and so on—expressed in the language of the period by a Heine

\textsuperscript{18}Marcuse, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 118-119.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 120.
still in his late teens. In later editions these poems were included in the larger collection as *Sorrows of Youth*. What is found expressed there is the vague, general unhappiness of youth with its intolerable overburden of love. For example, in his poem "Die Linde blühnte, die Nachtigall sang," can be seen the presence of rejection which always went with Heine wherever he ventured:

The leaves came down, the raven's cry  
Was hollow, the face of the sun turned wry;  
And then we frostily said: 'Good night!'  
And the curtsy you curtsied was most polite.  

---Translated by Aaron Kramer

And, in another poem entitled "Sag, wo ist dein schönes Liebchen," there is that note of disappointment and unfulfillment which recurs so often in his romantic poetry:

Tell me, where's your pretty girl friend,  
Who once had your prettiest praise,  
When the magic fire seized you,  
Setting all your heart ablaze?  

Ah, my heart is cold and gloomy,  
No more does that fire burn--  
Look! My love has turned to ashes,  
And this booklet is its urn.  

---Translated by Aaron Kramer

But despite the banal theme and borrowed metaphors, the extraordinary intensity of feeling clearly carries the mark of the later Heine. One note recurs throughout, and it is

\[\text{---References---} \]

the note which eventually becomes the leit-motif of all his work: 22

Warren waren wir im Leben
Und mit toller Wut ergeben
Einer tollen Liebesbrust. 23

At the time Heine came to Hamburg his haughty reserve and superior airs were nothing more than an instinctive defense against his own feeling of helplessness. He was acutely aware of his position as the poverty-stricken nephew, allowed into the family circle on sufferance and out of racial solidarity, and at the same time being made to feel the gulf that separated him from his cousins. Whilst he was full of resentment, other visitors and strangers to the house envied him his relationship with "the great and wealthy Solomon Heine." It was during this period of humiliating experiences that he fell a victim to his first violent love-affair.

Heine was seventeen when he met the eldest daughter of Solomon Heine, Amalie—or Molly, as they called her—during one of his uncle's visits to Düsseldorf. The girl was then just fourteen, and in many ways they were alike. Both were of a delicate, fair type, with regular features and a high-pitched, rather metallic voice. In addition, the boy probably sensed the same early maturity in the young girl which he himself possessed. In any case, he built up a whole romance on this first fleeting encounter, and during the two years

22H. Walter, Heinrich Heine: A Critical Examination of the Poet and His Work, p. 120.

23Ibid., p. 121.
which followed, his love for her took such hold of him that the imprint never faded from his mind.

"A golden star draws me northwards," he wrote in a poem towards the end of 1816, when his parents had decided to send him to Hamburg.\(^{24}\) At the moment of his arrival, Amalie was away from home. On her return, when the long and ardently awaited meeting took place, her cousin realized with a shock that his hopes had deceived him greatly. During the two years that he had been dreaming of her, Molly had forgotten his existence. She had grown up, become the true daughter of her father, and, as such, fully conscious of her social position. She was coldly polite but unapproachable. Her fascinating bluish-green eyes glanced at him from under their arched brows and met his challenging gaze with faint surprise and something like disdain. The rather long hooked nose accentuated her haughty manner, and her thin, firm mouth would have been forbiddingly cold but for an occasional fleeting smile, which Heine likened to "the tail of a disappearing lizard."\(^{25}\) It was a face which had not yet made up its mind whether to be distant and reserved, or vivacious and seductive, and therefore tried both expressions with disturbing frequency. Molly knew very well the effect which she had upon her cousin, but it did not go any farther than that in that she cared nothing for his admiration. Heinrich Heine was for her just a poor relation, sometimes coming in handy

\(^{24}\) Vallentin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 88-89.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 90-91.
when she needed him, and at other times, be something halfway between a human being and a piece of the furniture. It was said that she used him as she used her mirror—to reassure herself of her charms. She herself felt in no danger, for she possessed all of her father's proud assurance, the same virile character, and the same calculating temperament which kept her normally affectionate nature well under control.

The life she led corresponded with her position as daughter of the house. She felt at home amidst all the luxury, and knew how to shine in brilliant company. Heinrich, on the other hand, fresh from the middle-class environment of his own home in Düsseldorf, felt clumsy and out of place in his uncle's mansion. He considered the way in which everything was done to be overly stiff and formal and would have liked to see it the very opposite. Perhaps, Heine best described this feeling with a few lines written to a friend--"The independent poet is often guilty of sinning against etiquette."26 It is more than likely that it was this wretched experience of society which sowed the seeds of bitterness which later colored so much of his work, alienated his friends, and turned opponents into mortal enemies. In his uncle's salons the unhappy boy was left alone to struggle with his awkwardness; he was ignored when he wasn't being used as the object of his cousins' raillery and jokes.

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26 Norbert Fuerst, The Victorian Age of German Literature, p. 79.
One person alone showed him occasional sympathy—Betty Heine, his warm-hearted, but vague preoccupied aunt (not to be confused with his mother who bears the same name).

In such surroundings Amalie was more unattainable than when distance had separated them. Heine sought refuge and sympathy in correspondence with Christian Sethe, a friend from his Düsseldorf days. The letters show clearly the agony of mind of which the sensitive and precocious boy was capable. Through page after page he pours out his heart in terms which vary between touching sincerity and literary affection:

...To spend years far from her sight, with passion for her tearing at one's entrails, that is the torment of the damned. But to be near her and yet still have to languish for her company, craving it the while as a benediction from heaven, and...

...and...ah! Christian, it would force curses against God from the purest and most pious soul on earth....27

Heine had sense enough to see in the first few weeks that she did not love him. Nevertheless, the rest of his body did, always correspond with the feelings and desires of his heart and the magic of her charm continued to hold him under its spell. It is a faculty of illusion common in one of his years, consisting partly of the urge to love but caused chiefly by the coquetry of the girl herself.28 Amalie gave him no peace and she used her mirror recklessly, one moment smiling upon him, the next mocking him heartlessly. If she

27 Walter, _op. cit._, p. 65.

28 Ibid., p. 71.
bestowed upon him a lock of her hair or a light kiss, the gift would be followed at once by a retreat to an icy reserve. One must see in Heine's frantic struggle to make Amalie love him more than just a young man's efforts to woo the heart of a girl. Unconsciously, as far as we know, he felt her to be symbolic of all that he desired most in life—acceptance by the society which spurned and sometimes deplored him, and, even more, the attainment of a regular, ordered existence, which he instinctively felt was beyond the reach of his unaided efforts. The turmoil of all of this, added to a passion which he felt with the vehemence of his twenty years, left marks upon his mind and character which were so permanently ingrained that their effects can be distinctly seen throughout his work and his life.

After his failure with Amalie, he established a new hope for himself in her younger sister, Therese. This new hope came to him as a result of a meeting with Therese four years after he had last seen her. At once he was struck by her resemblance to Amalie:

Die Kleine gleicht der Geliebten,
Besonders wenn sie lacht;
Sie hat dieselben Augen
Die mich so elend gemacht.29

One wonders why Heine even pursues a relationship with her, because there are so many indications that were surely made aware to him concerning the fact that this affair would likely

29Ibid., p. 73.
turn out in the same way that the one with Amalie had. But Heine cannot seem to help himself and it becomes a case where-in once again the hateful past is revived and takes possession of him in another form, but with the same disastrous effects. And they were disastrous, because even though Therese was certainly more considerate of Heine, she had no intention of marrying him or even becoming involved with him, and eventually wed a businessman of Hamburg who was both approved by Solomon Heine and above the station of Heinrich.

So much discussion is devoted to Amalie and Heine and their relationship because this affair is one of the most violent, if not the most violent, of those which Heine ever had with the exception of his wife. But, even though it stands out in this respect, this relationship contains so many things which are characteristic of almost all of his affairs. In most of Heine's affairs he is usually rejected. For example, Heine tried to establish the image of Amalie in Amalie's younger sister, but he failed with her also. And, in those relationships which we don't know anything about other than what Heine relates to us, Heine almost always creates the picture of himself experiencing the pain of rejection, death of his lover, or other types of unfulfillment. And, such circumstances give a sad note to his love poetry which has been seen in selections included in the previous part of this chapter. It is here that sometimes a type of monotony results in that the lover is always unfulfilled, but yet varied in the sense that the types of unfulfillment are different.
Most of Heine's romances had something in common in that they all, in some way or another, exerted an influence and became sources of inspiration. Despite the fact that the romance with Molly, or Amalie, overshadowed most of the other romances which Heine had before his marriage, it is not to be thought that Germany was the only place in which Heine experienced the influence of a woman. In April, 1827, Heine embarked for England in order to study the political ideas and ways there in his capacity as a political observer. He had become by now a fairly successful and well-known poet, but when he reached England he experienced some degree of boredom and, more importantly, some degree of humiliation. The boredom resulted from the fact that he knew not many people there and the humiliation from the situation wherein no one seemed to care about the successful poet so recently become a hero of liberalism. In order to evade the boredom and to wash the humiliation from his thoughts, Heine plunged into amorous adventures as usual. He wrote in one letter to Germany that it would not be the fault of the English women if he returned to Germany alive.30

Only one of his love episodes in England has left traces in his work, and, by chance, it is one of the rare exceptions in which we know the name and even the address of the charmer. The series of poems known as the "Kitty Cycle" concerns a certain Miss Clairmont, of 26 Osnaburgh Street, Regent's Park, as is shown by a letter of Heine's dated Ramsgate, 30Ibid., p. 172.
August 19th, 1827.31

This letter, however, is a farewell, and sounds the knell of the little adventure in terms which say plainly that Kitty was being jilted by the poet—a situation which seems rarely to have occurred in his life as he seems to consider himself the most frequent occupant of the "jilted seat." It is written in French, and in formal terms thanks her for the kindness which she had shown him during his short stay. He excuses himself for not having called upon her before leaving London, and winds up with the lame assurance that he "would certainly not return to London without knocking at her door."32 It seems probable that Heine had left this letter to be posted after his departure from England, and that he had already placed the sea between himself and Kitty Clairmont's kindness before she had a chance to read it.33

For a time, however, "she was his 'lady of the white and slender limbs,' the girl with the 'doe-like eyes' whose 'dark hair hung in curls about her face;' she whose body was 'the fragile shell of a yet more delicate soul.'"34 But even here a note of bitterness creeps in—a note which is so often seen in his writings concerning his German feminine inspirations:

31Vallentin, op. cit., p. 172.
32Ibid.
33Ibid., p. 177.
34Walter, op. cit., p. 179.
But in this case at least it was Heine who proved the deceiver. At the time he wrote his lame excuse for not returning to see Kitty in Osnaburgh Street, he seems to have been in Ramsgate with another woman, with whom "he walked the sands and rhapsodized about the waves lapping the cliffs and the path of the moon across the water 'like a silver bridge stretched to the Promised Land.'" ³⁶

The letter from Ramsgate does not seem to have proved the end of the episode, however, which may have been deeper than he would have us believe. Some eight years later, when he was assembling the poems of the "Kitty Cycle" for the composer Hiller to set to music, Heine seems to have added to the mystery of this affair by including a verse which obviously was not inspired by Kitty. But from hints elsewhere it would appear that Kitty, whom Heine in a poem had described as weeping bitterly when they parted, and begging to see him again, had in fact gone to see him some years later in Paris. ³⁷ When, at the end of this visit, she announced her intention of returning home, Heine warned her that the separation would be hard:

³⁵Frederic Ewen, op. cit., p. 351.
³⁷Ibid., p. 184.
Doch den Leibern, armen Leibern
Wird die Trennung sehr verderblich,
Haben keine Flügel, haben
Nur zwei Beine und sind sterblich.

Das bedenke, schöne Kitty,
Sei vernünftig, klug und weise;
Bleib in Frankreich bis zum Frühling,
Bis ich mit nach England reise.38

But the tone is affected, and smacks of a cynical play­
ing with sentiment. Then suddenly, in this most ordinary of
love-affairs, there sounds a note of tragedy.39 There is only
one short poem about it--less a memorial than a somewhat cal­
lous record, it would seem.40

Kitty stirbt! und ihre Wangen
Seh ich immer mehr erblassen.

Kitty stirbt! und kalt gebettet
Lieg sie bald im Kirchhofsgrunde.
Und sie weiss es! Doch für andere
Sorgt sie bis zur letzten Stunde.41

There follows a passage which no man could have imagined
in such circumstances without a woman's prompting. Kitty begs
that next winter, when she is gone, he will wear the stockings
she has knitted for him! Whatever may have been the truth of
this mysterious affair, Heine at least seems not to have been
deeply affected by the episode which, begun during an English
summer, ended so tragically in the course of a French winter.42

This affair serves to show another side of Heine which
almost always is missing in his poetry. He would have us think

38Ibid. 39Ibid., p. 185. 40Ibid., p. 186. 41Ibid.
42Ibid.
that he is constantly rejected when this is not always the case, and this affair serves best to illustrate the fact. It is evident, however, that Heine was apparently plagued by the fear of rejection in that he even mentions it here when he says that Kitty will please him abundantly with emotion and kisses and then betray him as usual. Thus, it is when Heine seems to have the "upper hand" in the affair, that this fear is still with him. And the reader of his poetry is sometimes forced to wonder if this was a fear or an obsession.

It is indeed fortunate that so much of Heine comes out in his poetry concerning his love affairs. Heine's love poetry was not inspired merely because he loved beautiful women or because he wished to be fashionable—perhaps it would have been had not other forces been at work. But Heine was more or less forced, due to his nature, to use his affairs as inspiration for his poetry even though they were often unfulfilled and tragic. He used them because he kept carefully concealed any knowledge or discussion of them from even his best friends. And rarely, is there even an accidental indirect reference to them in his recorded conversations and letters. It is only in his poetry that he could find it in himself to communicate them.
CHAPTER THREE: HEINE AND MATHILDE

Crescentia (or Crescence) Eugénie Mirat was not quite nineteen and Heine was thirty-seven when he first saw her in her aunt Maurel's little glove- and shoe-shop in the Passage Choiseul in Paris. She was an illegitimate child born in the province of Seine-et-Marne in the village of Vinot, and she had been in Paris only four years. She was Heine's opposite in almost every way. She was French, Catholic, lazy and ignorant; she could not read or write; she had no sense of humor; she was shrewish without being shrewd, quick without being clever. All that she and Heine had in common were their egotism and their sensuality, the burning core, the thing which D. H. Lawrence called "the eternal life-flame." It was this which Heine often resented, fought against, and even cursed at times; but it was also this force which blazed, so to speak, between them and bound them to one another. She was a childish person, a slovenly housekeeper, an incompetent manager especially in the realm of finances, and a somewhat hopeless cook. And she was not what one could really call beautiful either. She had the grace and power of young womanhood when Heine first

44 Ibid.
met her, impetuous youth, and little else. Some biographers have tried to supply her with glamour by conjuring up large soft eyes, cute dimples, lovely ivory teeth, an irresistible smile, and skin like satin. But Heine himself speaks of her only as "round and rather chubby, cheerful, high-spirited, honest, and faithful." A more disinterested reporter, granting a measure of charm, wrote, "She usually looked as though she were afraid of water." The majority of Heine's intellectual friends saw about the same and only the same thing in her.

It was her sprightliness, her casual earthiness, that attracted Heine first; he was fascinated by the impudent banter that held more than a hint of suggestiveness. He was prepared for many traits in her, but her boldness which scarcely concealed her desires, startled him. Heine had written previously and then reiterated several times in his works that he was attracted by opposites and there seems to be no exception in this case with her. She met him more than halfway in the advances which are involved between two eager lovers, and they became ardent ones quickly. Heine found a clandestine affair inconvenient, and she disliked the separations of the night so they decided to live together. The aunt was complaisant; she "sold" the girl for a sum, said to be three thousand francs;

45Ibid., p. 266.
46Marcuse, op. cit., p. 251.
47Ibid.
and in the autumn of 1834 Heine set up the first of the many domiciles he was to occupy with Crescentia, or Mathilde, as he decided to call her, because, he said, "Her real name sticks in my throat."\textsuperscript{48}

At first Heine loved Mathilde exactly as she was. He did not try to educate her, he only wanted to enjoy her. Mathilde responded with rustic vigor and her own expertness; she was at times a spirited young animal and at others a surprisingly sophisticated courtesan. Heine was delighted with her abandon; but as the weeks went by he began to suffer from her hearty energy. What began as eager acquiescence had become passionate co-operation and then irresistible demand.\textsuperscript{49} Heine had started out to possess the girl and now ended up the one who was possessed.

This much is apparent: Mathilde had a real sense of owning rather than of being owned, and Heine could not seem to bear the reversal of the roles--indeed, he had never played this role before. That Heine, feeling himself enslaved, resented his slavery is obvious because, in spite of imagined or real threats, he ran away. It took time and determination for Heine to do this, and the escape was as illusive as it was transitory.\textsuperscript{50} For a while--for six months, to be exact--Heine wanted nothing more compelling than Mathilde's urgent breast and her soft, insinuating arms. Mathilde seemed to have but two passions, and the

\textsuperscript{48}Untermeyer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 271.
\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., p. 272.
second was dancing, which Heine detested. Night after night she called him; Heine could not hope to match her ardor and the intensity of it, but he could not help to succumb to it. The outside world came confusedly, faintly into their room. He felt disturbing apparitions about him; sickness, trouble, the very struggle for life rang brokenly in his ears, but he had no strength for debate; he almost stopped writing altogether. It is at this point in his life that we can see the great contrast of the roles which Mathilde was to play regarding inspiration. The woman who was to become such a source of inspiration was, at first, the source which blotted it out.

But Heine could not live like this always for the woman who had at first seemed a self-sufficient garden which enclosed him before, now became something of an imprisoning hold. He needed air, fresh air; he needed talk, the exchange of ideas, the contact of men's minds, not of women's bodies and lips. In other words, he needed to be something of himself again, a person, not merely an erotically muscular response, the fulfillment of another's "self lust." It was the end of April and he had had about all of spring's awakening that he could consume, so he, in a sense, took a breath and ran away.

Characteristically, he ran away to another woman, to his friend the Princess Belgioioso. She was happy to welcome him.

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51Ibid., p. 273.
52Marcuse, op. cit., p. 257.
53Werner, op. cit., p. 345.
in her palace near Saint-Germain in France; Heine had told her about his infatuation and his inability to extricate himself. The intellectual Princess from Italy did not understand how a genius like Heine could wish to mate, much less stay, with a creature he could not respect, with whom he could scarcely converse; but she did not mock him. She pitied him, comforted him, and allowed him to talk about his problems with her. She made him stretch himself under the trees, and restored him with the stimulation and the ease of the surroundings. Within a few short weeks, Heine was so relaxed that he could think of work again. On July second, 1835, he wrote to his publisher Julius Campe in Hamburg, prefacing his letter with the significant scrap of verse:

Before the poet tries to sing,
The man must learn to live—poor thing! 54

Heine wrote Campe from his retreat at Princess Belgiojoso's:

I use these words as an excuse in every way: I have been living so wildly for the last few months that it was practically impossible for me to think of you, much less write to you. I thought (poor fool) that my time for passion had gone, that I could never again be plunged into the raging vortex, and that, like the classical deities, I was serene, calm, and continent. Suddenly I lost all control and became a man again—a youth... Now I have regained my peace of mind; my soul is my own once more. The wild senses have been curbed, and I am living quietly and confidently near Saint-Germain, at the chateau of a beautiful friend, in the society of cultured and important people. I

54Ewen, op. cit., p. 456.
think that I have purged myself of everything that is shoddy. I now have a real disgust of anything that is cheap, vulgar, and ignoble.55

The concluding sentences have a fine ring, but they seem to have been written out of wishful thinking rather than conviction. The battle between sense and spirit, between will and emotion, went on.56 All Heine's reason told him that he had written Campe the literal truth, that he was well out of the "maelstrom of passion,"57 but his nerves, the dark and unreasoning blood, cried out in rebellion. His days were diverting and entertaining, the Princess and her company were witty and well-informed, there was music in the evenings. But the nights were agony. Heine lost interest in arguments and polite conversation; the cultured and important people suddenly seemed an odd lot of twitched marionettes.58 Every submerged and irrational impulse urged him to return, and at last he knew he could not pretend that the atmosphere there had given him the Olympian calm and detachment which he had assured Campe as being his. He knew that he must leave, but he still had a surviving caution which told him not to go back to Mathilde, at least, not yet.

He decided to go to the sea in order to find himself there. He had previously gone there when he wished to find the

55Ibid., p. 459.
56Ibid.
57Werner, op. cit., p. 422.
58Ibid.
comfort which no human could give him. But the sea turned away her old lover as if she knew that someone else had taken her place of priority. It was September and cold, and Heine was not comforted, but confronted with failure—the failure of his will. The unruly desires had been repressed, but they were not dead. His pride was gone, his isolation had been beaten down, and he confessed this to Heinrich Laube, a literary friend, in one of his letters:

In spite of every atom of will-power, we are sometimes overwhelmed with a passion that robs us of vision and that clarity of thought which we hate to surrender. When we are so overpowered—our senses captured and our minds shaken—we cease to be one with the gods... For nine months now I have been assailed by furious storms; my spirit has dwelt in the shadows.59

Finally, Heine, who had at first been so sure of himself had to admit that he no longer wasn't. He repudiated the wishful words which he wrote to Julius Campe about his new-found self-control; his peace of mind, and his purgation of all that is low and common. He burst out, "I am condemned to love only the stupidest and the lowest. Imagine what torture that must be for a man with pride and intelligence!"60

Heine was still not prepared to give up, and he stayed on several months in Paris and in Boulogne, but it was of no use. While at these places he had composed a few lyrics, written a

59Ewen, op. cit., p. 462.
60Ibid.
few articles, and had sent off the manuscript of Die Romantische Schule, but they were all lifeless in a sense. They were lifeless in that they had no true inspiration. Mathilde had taken control of his source of inspiration, especially in his love poetry, and Heine could not overcome this fact. It was almost too simple—Heine found that without Mathilde, his writing had no vigor, and that he did not find any satisfaction in writing.

By the middle of December, Heine had used up his power of resistance and the last defense went down. He no longer thought of his passion as a curse nor of Mathilde as a shopgirl. He determined that the flesh was no less holy than the spirit, and Mathilde was its elemental votary.61 It was no longer a question of whether he admired or despised her, for she was his need. He no longer cared how she might appear to others, what she lacked, or what she was—he knew only that she completed him. Before the end of December, he was again with Mathilde, and he was never to leave her again.

Since it was inevitable that he must live with Mathilde, Heine decided to try to educate her. It was often said that he spent more than ten thousand francs in order to give her some sort of schooling. But Heine could only attempt it, for Mathilde resisted education, or avoided it, so transparently and with so many cute and amusing devices that Heine could not help but forgive her. Even in her thirties, she read with difficulty, and the letters which she wrote were badly misspelt, and only

61Marcuse, op. cit., p. 159.
childish scrawls. Her husband (they did ultimately marry and legally secure the bond) spoke a language which was queer and totally incomprehensible to her, and she knew nothing of the fame which he enjoyed in Germany. As a side note, it has often been thought that a bad situation would have resulted, indeed, had Heine taken the same view concerning his wife's native language!

This lack of understanding pleased Heine from the beginning. As early as 1836, he told another friend, Lewald, that one of Mathilde's greatest assets was her comprehensive ignorance of German literature. "She hasn't the faintest idea of what my friends and enemies have written, or what I myself have composed," he informed Lewald.

It was a mad combination in every way! The wittiest man in Europe was living with the stupidest child. Mathilde's unconcern about his work continued to fascinate Heine and he never ceased to be glad that his name and reputation meant nothing to her. Living with Mathilde had the charm of living incognito. Not that Heine considered himself a fairy-tale prince—that early illusion had been discarded with the publication of the "Dream Pictures." But it gave him a wry satisfaction to feel he was leading a double life—a famous writer feared by a great part of the cultured world, and a lover held lightly by a capricious woman.

62 Ewen, op. cit., p. 467.
63 Untermeier, op. cit., p. 134.
64 Ibid., p. 145.
As the years went on, Mathilde's power over her lover became more open and aggressive. She seemed to know instinctively that though Heine often found it difficult to live with her, he would have found it harder, even impossible, to live without her. She was as selfish as she was indifferent, and she always had her way. When Heine granted her wishes—a new dress, a dance, a spendthrift champagne supper—she was charmed and charming; when he occasionally stood out against her caprices, she was not above making scenes.

Mathilde went with Heine to Paris in 1837. Heine who had been suffering from excessive soreness of the eyes, wrote to his friend, Herman Detmold:

Although my eyes are somewhat better, I am in a really bad way. My passion for Mathilde has grown into an obsession, a chronic illness... I am troubled more by fancies than by actualities, by nightmares and fears for the future; it seems I must taste all the sorrows of possession. Recently I was in the village where she was born, and I was unbelievably moved. It was all so pastoral-innocent. Her mother gave me Mathilde's baby chemise, and the tiny scrap of linen lies in front of me as I write.65

One reads this unblushing sentimentality—the pastoral-innocent setting, Mathilde's first chemise, the sanctified baby linen—unable to believe it was uttered, and put on paper, by the most cynical man of the age.66

Part of the new paradox, the inconsistency of Heine's

65Ewen, op. cit., p. 473.
66Untermeyer, op. cit., p. 141-142.
sentiments concerning Mathilde, is explained by jealousy. It was a feeling shared by both, differing only in degree. As she grew older Mathilde tolerated Heine's occasional infidelities, even his entertainment of casual mistresses. She knew that a passing amour flattered his vanity, and that, in itself, the sexual act was without profundity. She was never jealous of her equals or inferiors—the milliners, the seamstresses, and the other "grisettes" of their acquaintance—but only of those whom she considered superiors. If Heine spoke about these grand ladies, or, worse, mentioned them in print, she attacked him with tirades of bitterness and tears. Once, after she had heard so much about Heine's "Pictures of Travel," she obtained a copy of the French edition. She began reading it laboriously, but after the first few pages she stopped. According to Heine, she grew deathly pale, her whole body trembled, and she begged him to take the book away.

She had chanced on a love passage, and she could not bear it that I should ever have paid homage to another woman before the time that she dominated me. Finally I had to promise that I would never again write a love poem to any 'ideal woman.'

It is superfluous to add that Heine did not hold this against her; he forgot the promise as soon as he had made it.

67Ibid.
68Ibid., p. 144.
69Ewen, op. cit., p. 333.
70Untermeyer, op. cit., p. 144-145.
But with Heine it is quite different; his jealousy was deeper and it had a more somber tinge. One thing which made it different was the fact that he was nineteen years older than Mathilde; for another, his experiences had made him abnormally fearful. He had lost so much, and so many times, that the thought of another loss—the most intimate and hence, the most affecting—sent him into actual frenzies. Besides, he admitted morosely that any Frenchwoman could be seduced in five minutes time. His frenzy inspired such verses as:

They were in love, but neither
Would let the other know;
And while they were dying of passion,
Hatred was all they'd show.72

And when Heine thought of losing Mathilde after he died, he wrote "To the Angels," which expresses in the first stanza his sense of futility:

This is the wicked Thanatos,
Upon a fallow steed he goes;
I hear the trot, the beating hoof,
The shadow-horseman bears me off—
He drags me from Mathilde; we're torn apart.
And oh, this thought is too much for my heart.73

--Translated by Aaron Kramer

And in the last stanza of the poem, a note of care with perhaps a jealous tone is inserted by the poet—a note which could have been inspired only by his intense love for Mathilde:

71Ibid., p. 145.
72Ewen, op. cit., p. 85.
73Ibid., p. 114.
By all your tears that ever ran
For the unhappiness of Man,
And by the sacred word that’s known
To those of priestly caste alone,
Who name it shuddering; by your grace and beauty,
I charge you, make Mathild’s care your duty!

--Translated by Aaron Kramer

When Heine went to Hamburg in order to meet with his publisher and to visit with family and friends, Mathilde did not go with him, but planned to leave later from France. In the few days that he was away from Mathilde, Heine became obsessed with the day-to-day activities of his wife as can be seen from some excerpts of his letter to her on November 19th, 1843:

"...I am ill and bored, for I think of you constantly. I am almost mad when my thoughts turn toward Chaillot. What is my wife, that crazy madcap, doing now? I was crazy not to bring you with me. For God's sake, do nothing to make me angry when I return. Stay as quietly as possible in your little nest; work, study, suffer virtuous boredom, spin wool like the upright Lucrece, whom you saw at the Odeon. ..."

--Translated by Frederic Ewen

Ten years later when he is again in Hamburg without his wife he writes to her:

My Precious Love: Since you left, I've done nothing but sigh. I think of you constantly; I suffer from my usual headaches, and these pains are heightened and fed by the unrest in my heart. I will no longer be separated from you! How terrible! I feel

74Ibid., p. 115.
75Ibid., p. 459.
more than ever that I must have you with me all the time. You know how agitated I am because I have no news of you yet. Write, I implore you, as often as you can, at least twice a week... Stay quietly in your nest, my poor little dove. Don't show yourself in public, so that none of my acquaintances may know that you are in Paris without me.76

--Translated by Frederic Ewen

Even after Mathilde had grown so stout as to be formidable, after he had been living with Mathilde for ten years and illicit passion had cooled into marital acceptance, Heine was never complacent or secure. Even though this was bad in some respects, it was good in others, especially for the reader, because even though he was growing old in years, his feelings for Mathilde kept his writing young and alert as well as somewhat passionate.

It is the same young and passionately jealous Heine, except for chronological years, who constantly warns Mathilde, especially when he is gone, that he knows everything that she does, and what he doesn't know, he will certainly find out!77 Whenever she laughed in company— and she laughed continually— Heine looked around for a possible betrayer. Mathilde made scenes at home, but Heine made them in public. Once, at the "Boeuf à la Mode," where there was general drinking and dining, one of a group of students, with whom Mathilde was most likely flirting, lifted his glass to her. Heine threw over his chair and attacked the youth. A duel in the Bois de Boulogne

76Ibid., p. 460-461.

77Marcuse, op. cit., p. 137.
was frustrated only by the persuasion of Heine's second.

Such bondage forced the inevitable resentment. In one of his letters to Lewald, he says:

I used to think that love was possession, and the last thing I believed in was the theory of abnegation. But there is much to be said in favor of Platonic love. It lets you sleep at night—and it is so inexpensive.78

The expense of Heine's passion was growing too great in every sense. There were times when Heine hated not only his jealousy but Mathilde herself, when he turned against the very thing which bound them together. He declares, in "Celimene," that Mathilde is his curse and his cross, his sin and his purgatory; he complains equally of her unchecked whims and her shameless arms.79 In excess of revulsion he cries out in another poem:

The star that sparkled happy and high
Has fallen suddenly out of the sky.
What's love, you ask, that's so richly sung?
A star, my child, in a heap of dung.80

Or, in a quieter tone but an even deeper nostalgia for the past, he continues in another poem:

O Germany for which I weary,
Thinking of you I have to weep;
This madcap France grows dull and dreary,
This light folk puts my mind to sleep.81

78Ewen, op. cit., p. 89.
79Ibid., p. 467.
80Ibid., p. 91.
81Untermeyer, op. cit., p. 226.
From such confessions Mathilde inspired him to turn to the more cynical and equally revealing "For Domestic Peace," "Good Advice," and the bitter stanzas entitled "Domestic End" written much later in life:

This is the end—and just as well—
Passion has swept itself to hell,
Free of love's turmoil, pain, and din,
At last the better days begin
As domesticity comes in.
At last one can enjoy one's self
With just the proper touch of pelf;

Pamper the stomach with delight;
No longer turn: and toss at night
With feverish love, but slumber warm
On a consoling wifely arm.82

--Translated by Frederic Ewen

But these are the expressions of unhappy doubt, miserable self-torture, and dry resignation. The poems written to Mathilde toward the end are full of tenderness, compassion and kindness surprising to everyone—to everyone except Mathilde, who always regarded her Henri as a spoiled, even petulant child, but an essentially sweet-natured one.83 Nothing that Heine ever wrote evokes more warmth than the unaffectedly affectionate "Night Thoughts," the pathetic "To the Angels," or the bantering "In the Morning," whose touching tribute begins:

O little lamb, take comfort; see
I am the shepherd meant for thee

82Ewen, op. cit., p. 92.
83Marcouse, op. cit., p. 141-142.
and ends:

Let the new green be quickly spread
With a blue heaven overhead;
And let her sleep, when she is fed,
Serene as when she took her rest
Sleeping securely on my breast. 84

--Translated by Frederic Ewen

But Mathilde did not remain securely sleeping on his breast. In the end, when death was coming near and Heine's physical ability only amounted to being able to prop his one good eye open with his fingers, he once again was provided with a more ideal and pure inspiration concerning love— an inspiration that he had not experienced since he was an unmarried youth.

This inspiration came in the form of a young woman who climbed the stairs to Heine's apartment in Paris in 1855. In order to leave some music composed for his poems by one of his great admirers, Baron Vesque von Puttlingen of Vienna, she had been sent there.

She handed the parcel to the servant and was about to go when Heine, in his bed and overhearing a conversation outside, rang the bell impatiently and told him to bring the lady in. The lady possessed a beautiful face which was the very essence of life in comparison to the old and worn faces of his friends who came to see him on his deathbed. She came more and more often; the miracle of an unknown woman in his life had again

84Ewen, op. cit., p. 110.
had been realized. He knew nothing of her, neither where nor how she lived. Only later did she tell him something of her story, a mixture of scraps of experience and melodramatic romance, the truth of which seemed to be demonstrated by its obvious gaps.\(^8\) He did not even know her name because the name she bore at the moment was only one of the many pseudonyms adopted by her in the course of her life. She loved the element of mystery and spent her whole life living in the atmosphere of it, but later, when she had become the mistress of Taine and wrote the widely read story of her life, she used the name Camille Selden.

Heine during this year before his death was slipping towards the deepest pit of all his suffering; his life was so bare of joy that he no longer even dared to express his hopes with which he had still played during the first years of his illness:

Noch einmal, eh' mein Lebenslicht
Erlöscht, eh' mein Herze bricht—
Noch einmal möcht' ich vor dem Sterben
Um Frauenhuld beseligt werden.\(^8\)

This joy to which he aspired, whilst hardly daring to hope for it, came about at the same time that he met Camille Selden. He became aware of an acute sharpening of his senses and a sudden return of physical desire, in awful contrast with the utter impotence of his body. As Mouche leaned towards him

\(^8\)Marcuse, op. cit., p. 151.

\(^8\)Untermeyer, op. cit., p. 236.
(he called her thus on account of a seal she always used, in which a fly was engraved), his paralyzed fingers would tremble with desire to caress her. But what he could not do in physical and verbal action in order to express his inspirations, he did through such verses as this:

Lass mich mit glühenden Zangen kneipen
Lass grausam spüren mein Gesicht,
Lass mich mit Ruten peitschen, stäuben—
Nur warten, warten lass mich nicht!87

Mathilde lived on in her own house like a queen de-throned. She would not deign even to reply to Mouche's friendly greetings; an evil look would come to her face as soon as she heard her enemy's step approach, and she would at once leave the sick-chamber. She who in former times had so strangely tolerated infidelities which were far less platonic, had, in the course of her years of supremacy, acquired her own ideas concerning her rights as a wife, and those she clung to with a childish but fierce tenacity. She felt the power of Mouche upon her husband and she did not dare to forbid her the house, as formerly she had done with visitors whom she disliked. But outside the sick-room Mouche was not admitted. Despite all Heine's supplication or his angry demands, Mouche never once stayed to eat at their table; that last symbol of her rights, at least, Mathilde defended successfully.

In the book which Mouche wrote after Heine's death, her sole comment upon Mathilde is: "It would be idle to seek to

87Ibid., p. 238.
transform into the heroine of an idyll one whom the poet himself never wished to make an idyllic personality." It is in the relationship between Mouche and Heine that we can see the release from Mathilde which Heine finally achieved. It was not a literal or physical release, but ever since his marriage to her, Heine had been tied to Mathilde even in his works, in that she had influenced them all. But through Mouche, the ideal and pure inspirational form of love influenced Heine, and he wrote in a different vein than he had done for many years. Whether this is good or bad is not the question, nor does a question even need to be raised and then answered. Here, the relationship is important because it meant that Heine was ultimately a free poet tied to no one—his inspirations coming from his experience—an experience which was Heine's and no one else's!

88Walter, op. cit., p. 219.
CONCLUSION

In comparison to the vast amount of material which has been written on the subject of the human element in Heine's inspiration, the preceding pages afford only a brief glimpse. However, this glimpse gives some idea of the complexity of Heine's inspirational sources. But more important than this, it gives an idea of the complexity of the poet and of the man. Without saying it in so many definite words, the discussion creates the impression that Heine is a man living in an atmosphere of many extremes—an atmosphere which influences and inspires him, and ultimately becomes a part of his character and his soul. This can be seen first in his life as a child. His parents, as has been mentioned before, were extremes—a very practical and reasonable mother countered by an imaginative and somewhat irrational romantic for a father. Thus, in this way, Heine was himself forced to live within extremes: he studied geometry, law and other such practical and concrete subjects while, at the same time, he devoted himself more gladly to romantic ideals, poetry, and literature—the world where not everything had to echo practicality and reason. And, later in his life, one can see the best example of all with respect to extremes, Heine's marriage to his almost exact opposite, Mathilde.
This point concerning extremes should be well brought out and kept in mind when one wishes to arrive at some understanding of Heine's somewhat complex and varied life as well as a comprehension of his work which is of a like nature. It is here when one surveys the human element which influenced and inspired Heine in his way of life and his work, that one may get the key to this understanding and comprehension.

In other words, when a man exists such as Heine exists—so very sensitive and receptive to the world and its many and varied experiences—he becomes representative of them all, a many-faceted individual made up, so to speak, of all the people with whom he interacts in that all these experiences become absorbed and processed within him. And in this way, he really belongs to no one experience or inspirational source whether it be the result of an individual or an event. And when he writes, or merely lives, this composition of complex extremes forms his words and guides his actions. And, in this way, we have Heine.

Finally, it should be reiterated that the human element is but one part of the influence and inspiration concerning Heine's life and works. For the current events and conditions of his time made him one of the most cynical men of the period. Therefore, let this illustrate the fact that, if one wishes to attempt an understanding of the "whole" Heine, one had best try to understand as much as possible everything and everyone which became a part of him.
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