

GRMN 28926/38926 The Romantic Fragment

(ARTH 28926, ARTH 38926)

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A central experimental genre of Early Romanticism, the fragment was famously (if enigmatically) defined by Friedrich Schlegel in Athenäums-Fragment 206 as: "entirely isolated from the surrounding world like a little work of art and complete in itself like a hedgehog." This seminar will consider fragments both conceptually and as isolated texts that are, however, gathered together materially in medial collections such as encyclopedias and albums. What is the relationship of the fragment to totality or coherence? What kinds of knowledge and reading practices does the fragment presuppose and generate? How can we bind the philosophical with the material text in our approaches to the fragment? What is the relationship between the literary fragment and other kinds of fragmentary artifacts such as ruins, torsos, vignettes, and cut-outs? Why do fragments possess such aura? Readings include key works of Jena Romanticism, with some side glances at the British fragment tradition, and towards inheritors such as Benjamin, Adorno, and Barthes.

Grades for the course will be based on the following elements:

participation in discussion, including weekly selections of passages for in-class meetings
presentation (20%)

final research paper, ca. 10-15 pp. due December 10 (there will be process deadlines throughout the quarter).

Monday, September 29

Introduction

Wednesday, October 1

The ruin and the torso as fragmentary forms

Read: Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Description of the Belvedere Torso of Hercules;
Rainer Maria Rilke, "[Archaic Torso of Apollo](#)"[Links to an external site.](#); Friedrich Schlegel, "On Diotima"; Georg Simmel, "Ruin."

Monday, October 6

Aphorisms, Miscellanies, Slips, Scraps

Read: Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *The Waste Books*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: NYRB, 2000), (Notebooks A-C); see [original notebooks here](#)[Links to an external site.](#); Petra

McGillen, "Wit, bookishness, and the epistemic impact of note-taking: Lichtenberg's *Sudelbücher* as intellectual tools," in *DVjs* 90 (2016): 501-28; Nicolas Pethes, "Collecting Texts: Miscellaneity in Journals, Anthologies, and Novels (Jean Paul)," in *Cultural Techniques: Assembling Spaces, Texts & Collectives*, ed. Jörg Dünne, Kathrin Fehringer, Kristina Kuhn, and Wolfgang Struck (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 243-61; Markus Krajewski, "About 1800," in *Paper Machines: About Cards & Catalogs, 1548-1929*, trans. Peter Krapp (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 27-83; Bryan Klausmeyer, "Fragmenting Fragments: Jean Paul's Poetics of the Small in 'Meine Miszellen,'" *Monatshefte* 108.4 (2016): 485-509; Jean Paul, "[Meine Miszellen.](#)" [Links to an external site.](#)

Wednesday, October 8

Aphorisms, Miscellanies, Slips, Scraps, cont.

Read: excerpts from Freya Gowrley, *Fragmentary Forms: A New History of Collage* (Princeton: Princeton University P, 2024).

Monday, October 13

Friedrich Schlegel and the Fragment as Hedgehog

Matthew Bell, "The Idea of Fragmentariness in German Literature and Philosophy,"

in *Modern Language Review* 89.2 (1994): 372-92; Friedrich Schlegel, *Critical Fragments*.

Other: Ernst Behler, "Das Fragment," in *Prosakunst ohne Erzählen: Die Gattung der nicht-fiktionalen Kunstprosa*, ed. Klaus Weissenberger (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985), 125-43;

Manfred Frank, "Das fragmentarische Universum der Romantik," in *Fragment und Totalität*, ed. Lucien Dällenbach and Christiaan Nibbrig (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 212ff.

(Hathi); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Leser (New York: SUNY Press, 1988), 39-58; Friedrich Schlegel, "Kritische Fragmente" (*Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe*, vol. 2, available via Hathi.)

Wednesday, October 15

Schlegel and the Fragment (cont.)

Monday, October 20

The Collaborative Fragment Project

Athenäum Fragments (F. Schlegel, A.W. Schlegel, Schleiermacher) (German, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe*, vol. 2, available via Hathi.); Anthony Phelan, "The Content of

Silhouettes," *Paragraph: The Journal of the Modern Critical Theory Group* 21.2 (1998): 150-68; Maurice Blanchot, "The Athenaeum," in *Studies in Romanticism* 22.2 (1983): 163-72.

Wednesday, October 22

The Collaborative Fragment Project - A New Genre?

Monday, October 27

Novalis and the Fragment as Seed

Novalis, *Blüthenstaub (Pollen)* and *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopaedia: Das Allgemeine Brouillon* (first set, 1798); Chad Wellmon, "Touching Books: Diderot, Novalis, and the Encyclopedia of the Future," *Representations* 114.1 (2011): 65–102. Additional: Rahel Villinger, "Gedankenstriche Theorie und Poesie bei Novalis," *DVjs* 86.4 (2012): 547–77; Winfried Menninghaus, "Vom enzyklopädischen Prinzip romantischer Poesie," in *Vom Weltbuch bis zum World Wide Web - Enzyklopädische Literaturen*, ed. Waltraud Wiethölter et al. (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), 149-63 (available via Hathi).

Wednesday, October 29

Novalis and the Fragment, cont.

Monday, November 3

Women in Pieces: Otilie von Goethe, Bettina von Arnim, Karoline von Günderode
Elena Pnevmonidou, "Between Homage and Transgression: Cosmopolitan Cultural Practice in Otilie von Goethe's Journal *Chaos*(1829-1832), in *Seminar* 54.1 (2018): 195-214; *Chaos*, no. 1; Bettina von Arnim, *Die Günderode*, in *Clemens Brentanos Frühlingsskranz/Die Günderode, Bettine von Arnim*, ed. Walter Schmitz (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1986), read Teil I (includes Günderode "Apocalyptic Fragment," 312-14; available via Hathi); Bettine von Arnim, *Günderode* (English), available via archive.org.

Wednesday, November 5

Women and the Fragment, cont.

Monday, November 10

Fragment Poems, Fragment Novels

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "[Kubla Khan](#)"[Links to an external site.](#); William Wordsworth, "[Nutting](#)"[Links to an external site.](#); Marjorie Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of Form* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1986), Chapters One and Five (Hathi).

Wednesday, November 12

The Romantic Fragment Novel

Novalis, *The Novices at Sais* (available via Hathi, in German, and ProQuest, in English).

Monday, November 17

Romantic Legacies

Walter Benjamin, *Passagenwerk* (excerpts; Convolutes A and B, in module); Richart Sieburth, "Benjamin the Scrivener," *Assemblage* 6 (1988): 6-23; Theodor Adorno, *Minima*

Moralia (excerpts); Ian Balfour, "The Whole is Untrue: On the Necessity of the Fragment after Adorno," in *The Fragment: An Incomplete History*, ed. William Tronzo (Los Angeles: Getty, 2009), 82-91.

Wednesday, November 19

Romantic Legacies, cont.

Monday, December 1

Student projects

Wednesday, December 3

Final discussion

Final project due: December 10

Some Further Reading:

Ernst Behler, *Die Zeitschriften der Brüder Schlegel* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983).

Matthew Bell, "The Idea of Fragmentariness in German Literature and Philosophy," in *Modern Language Review* 89.2 (1994): 372-92.

Emily Eastgate Brink and Marika Takanashi Knowles, eds, "The French Fragment," spec. issue *Word & Image*, 2021.

David Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis and the Genre of the Romantic Cycle* (esp. Ch. 3, "Schlegel's Fragments and Schumann's Cycles"), (New York: Oxford UP, 2000).

Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: U P of Virginia, 1994).

Deidre Lynch, "Walter Scott's Loose Leaves: Books, Scraps, and Dispersive Reading," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 55.3 (2022): 480-500.

Linda Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994).

Susan Stewart, *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2020).

Johannes Weiss, *Das frühromantische Fragment: Eine Entstehungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Paderborn: Fink, 2015).