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Chapter 7

“The Most Outcast *Réfugié!*” Knowing Migration in Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué’s *The Réfugié* (1824)

*A réfugié is an owl among crows. It is due to the lighting which may be wrong. But we poor réfugiés must be glad that the light of these strange regions illuminates us at all.*¹

German Romantic literature is rarely associated with the political migrations at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the early nineteenth centuries. However, as I argue in this chapter, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777–1843), one of the most prolific writers of the Romantic circles in Berlin, paid considerable attention to migrant realities around 1800 and creatively examined the backgrounds, forms and effects of forced migration² in the “Age of Revolutions.”³ My

1 “Ein Refugié ist nun ein Mal eine Eule unter den Krähen. Das liegt an der Beleuchtung. Sie mag falsch seyn. Aber wir armen Refugié’s müssen doch nun ein Mal froh seyn, daß uns das Licht dieser fremdartigen Gegenden überhaupt nur beleuchtet.” Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, *Der Refugié oder Heimath und Fremde. Ein Roman*, vol. 1 (Gotha, Erfurt: Hennings’sche Buchhandlung, 1824), reprinted in Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, *Sämtliche Romane und Novellenbücher*, vol. 2, ed. Wolfgang Möhrig (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms, 1989), 430. All translations from the German are my own unless indicated otherwise.

2 Historiography has offered typological distinctions between various sorts of migration movements (for the time under investigation in this article and beyond cf., for example, Jochen Oltmer, *Migration. Vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2016), esp. 4–5. I understand forced migration [Gewaltmigration] as the “coercion to special mobility which seems to entail no alternative means of action.” Jochen Oltmer, *Migration: Geschichte und Zukunft der Gegenwart* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2017), 34. Along with Jan C. Jansen I also use “refugees” and “exiles” to refer to a broad concept which is closely connected to the administrative and political use of the terms in the early nineteenth century; it encompasses “(political) refugees as persons who stay in one or more host countries due to negative political actions or extradition in countries of origin.” Jan C. Jansen, “Flucht und Exil im Zeitalter der Revolutionen: Perspektiven einer atlantischen Flüchtlingsgeschichte (1770er–1820er Jahre),” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 44.4 (2018): 501.

3 While historiographic research until recent decades has regarded refugees as a side effect and marginal phenomenon of the Atlantic Revolutions (primarily in North America, Spanish America, France and Haiti), various studies in recent years have examined and brought to the fore the transatlantic entanglements of refugee movements around 1800, and the intricate connections to other migratory movements in this period; cf., for example, *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, eds. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (New York: Palgrave

reading takes Fouqué's novel *Der Refugié oder Heimath und Fremde* (*The Réfugié or Home and Exile*), published in three volumes in 1824, as a case in point: A descendent of French Huguenot refugees (*réfugiés*) himself,⁴ Fouqué mediates knowledges about and intertwines different (hi)stories of migration. Telling the story of the Gautier family,⁵ whose pastor lineage can be traced back to the Huguenots, Fouqué interrelates his own migratory background with contemporary issues faced by the Huguenot diaspora in Prussia, the quests for (national) belonging and the expulsion politics around 1800.

"The *Réfugié*," as Fouqué himself noted, is an "illustration of the inner and outer status [*Stellung*] of the religious refugees or rather their descendants"⁶: the novel (re)envision the last decades of the eighteenth and the first years of the nineteenth century, focusing especially on the period of the French occupation of German territories until the end of the First French Empire in 1814/15, and outlines the trials and tribulations of Robert Gautier, the son of the family, to explore issues of migrant identity and of belonging in the "siècle of exiles."⁷ Despite its sentimental, moralising, verbose character and its archaic views, which has been criticised by both Fouqué's contemporaries and literary scholarship since its publication,⁸ the novel offers productive insights into the question of knowledges

Macmillan, 2010); Delphine Diaz, "From Exile to Refugee: Toward a Transnational History of Refuge in Early Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Yearbook of Transnational History* (2021): 1–26.

4 Cf. for Fouqué's aristocratic family background and his biography see Arno Schmidt's somewhat literary, empathetic and at times factually twisted account: Arno Schmidt, *Fouqué und einige seiner Zeitgenossen* (Bargfeld: Frühling, 1993). Schmidt instructively points to how Fouqué's childhood and military experiences have become part of *The Réfugié* (cf. Schmidt, *Fouqué*, 41, 83, 191, 269, 484–485). See also Katja Diegmann-Hornig, 'Sich in die Poesie zu flüchten, wie in unantastbare Eilande der Seeligen': *Analysen zu ausgewählten Romanen von Friedrich Baron de la Motte Fouqué* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms, 1999), 98–99.

5 I am grateful to Jana Kittelmann for pointing out that Fouqué's fictive Gautier family might have been inspired by the Huguenot family Gualtieri, members of which served as pastors in and beyond Berlin. As I am not focussing on the biographical links between Fouqué's life and his works, however, I am not following the trail of connections to the Gualtieris.

6 Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué, *Lebensgeschichte des Baron Friedrich de La Motte Fouqué* (Halle: Schwetschke und Sohn, 1840), 360.

7 Sylvie Aprile, *Le siècle des exiles: Bannis et proscrits, de 1789 à la Commune* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2010).

8 Critics have found fault with the overt patriotic-aristocratic didactics and the sanctimonious, at times mawkish tones of the texts; they have also discredited Fouqué's preoccupation with medieval settings and characters (knights in shining armour and damsels in distress), which he – according to his critics, unsuccessfully – connects to contemporary events. In this respect, he has been accused of royalism and reactionism. Cf., for example, Diegmann-Hornig, *Sich in die Poesie zu flüchten*, 105, or Christa Elisabeth Seibicke, *Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué: Krise und Verfall der Spätromantik im Spiegel seiner historisierenden Ritterromane* (Munich: tuduv, 1985), 66.

about French exile/s and Franco-German relations in the “Age of Emigrations.”⁹ Fouqué participates in the creation of a *réfugié* “myth,” a euphemistic image “of the morally staunch and faithful Huguenot,”¹⁰ an elected people serving as a role model for Prussian/German identity, but also gives voice and face to migrant suffering around 1800. In a fictional account which investigates the various challenges of migrant existence in the “so-called age of revolutions,”¹¹ Fouqué’s “novel of the newer times” [*Roman aus der neuern Zeit*], as the subtitle reads, revises the “success story”¹² of Huguenot historiography and brings to the fore the political, religious and emotional struggle of refugees in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

In order to show how Fouqué – in his “idiosyncratic combination of poesy and truth”¹³ – articulates (hi)stories of migration and the different narrative responses to expulsion, I will first investigate how the novel negotiates *réfugié* realities in German-speaking countries during the coalition wars, before exploring the ways in which Fouqué ponders the future of Franco-German allegiance via narratives of exile.

Superior Outcasts? Reconfiguring the *Refuge* in *The Réfugié*

Of the more than one hundred and fifty thousand members of the Reformed Church of France (about a fifth of the early-modern French population) who escaped after Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had granted religious freedom to Calvinist protestants, on 18 October 1685, it is estimated that

9 Friedemann Pestel, “The Age of Emigrations: French Émigrés and Global Entanglements of Political Exile,” in *French Emigrants in Revolutionised Europe: Connected Histories and Memories*, eds. Laure Philip and Juliette Reboul (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 205.

10 Anne Thiez, *Identität und Sprachidentität von Hugenottennachfahren: Eine identitätstheoretische und gesprächsanalytische Untersuchung* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2018), 17.

11 Jan C. Jansen, “Aliens in a Revolutionary World: Refugees, Migration Control and Subjecthood in the British Atlantic, 1790s–1820s,” *Past & Present* (2021): 3. Jansen suggests that further research is needed to understand the transnational effects of refugeeness in the Atlantic world around 1800: “scholars have been slow to recognize that the movements of loyalists, émigrés, exiles and refugees were as much a defining feature of this era as the circulation of revolutionaries and their ideas” (Jansen, “Aliens,” 3–4).

12 Susanne Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika. Migration und Integration in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2019), 498.

13 Schmidt, *Fouqué und seine Zeitgenossen*, 23.

around forty thousand of these “so-called *réfugiés*”¹⁴ settled in German-speaking territories. Most of these refugees (around twenty thousand) decided to stay in Prussia, where Fouqué’s story is set (and where Fouqué spent most of his life).¹⁵ Fouqué’s ancestors were among the many families who had been torn apart in the course of this event.¹⁶ Prussia was under Protestant rule and welcomed the refugees from France for economic and biopolitical reasons: They were valuable subjects pledging allegiance to the Prussian state and expected to dedicate themselves to work and faith (only), thus boosting the strained economic structures of the state still recovering from the aftermath of the Thirty Years’ War. The *réfugiés* were granted special rights and privileges, in terms of tax dues, for instance; as *corps de refuge*, they were allowed to settle in separate “colonies”¹⁷ (the Berlin colony being one of the biggest and most well-known)¹⁸ with their own jurisdictions, their own administrations and their own churches.¹⁹ When Fouqué, as a third-generation Huguenot, published *The Réfugié* more than a hundred years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Huguenot diaspora in the so-called *refuge* had assimilated and transformed in such significant terms that conservative “hardliners” felt their special status (chosen by God *and* by the great elector

14 Ursula Fuhrich-Grubert, “Minoritäten in Preußen: Die Hugenotten als Beispiel,” in *Handbuch der Preussischen Geschichte*, vol. 1, eds. Wolfgang Neugebauer and Frank Kleinehagenbrock (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2009), 1161.

15 Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Confessional Migration of the Reformed: The Huguenots,” <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/lotzheumannu-2012-en>, translated by Niall Williams, *European History Online* (EGO), ed. Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), 14 July 2012 (26 January 2022). Andre Jainchill reminds us that “Huguenot exiles [. . .] gave ‘first circulation’ to the term ‘refugees’.” Andre Jainchill, “1685 and the French Revolution,” in *French Revolution in Global Perspective*, eds. Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 57.

16 While Fouqué’s great-grandfather left France with two other brothers, their sister and another brother remained (and died) in France. Cf. Schmidt, *Fouqué und einige seiner Zeitgenossen*, 16–17.

17 The colony had its own rules and regulations that were distinct from Prussian laws: “that is why the term ‘colony’ in the German refuge rather meant the shared juridical and administrative realm than a special geographical space.” Thiez, *Identität und Sprachidentität*, 18.

18 Cf. Jürgen Wilke, “Zur Geschichte der französischen Kolonie,” in *Hugenotten in Berlin*, ed. Gottfried Bregulla (Berlin: Union, 1988), 54–87.

19 Susanne Lachenicht, “Renaissance in der Diaspora? Hugenottische Migration und Identität (en) im ‘Refuge,’” in *Religion und Mobilität: Zum Verhältnis von raumbezogener Mobilität und religiöser Identitätsbildung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, eds. Thomas Weller and Henning Jürgens (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 172.

Friedrich Wilhelm)²⁰ had come under immense pressure. Fearing disintegration and a loss of French-Reformed virtues as well as “the otherness of the *réfugiés*” and their privileged position in Prussia (as *Réfugié-Prussians*), intellectual elites of the *corps de refuge* started to create and popularise “narratives of Huguenot identity and superiority [Auserwähltheit].”²¹ The “Huguenots’ history myths” were a “conservative appeal to the French-Reformed *nation* in Prussia,”²² conceived to unite and commit the *réfugiés* to both their Huguenot ancestry and their special destiny. Crafting these legendary narratives meant that (hi)stories of conflict with the governments and social communities of the host countries, as well as any economic hardships faced in the *refuges*, were eradicated from the books and minds of Huguenot identity.²³ According to Étienne François, this carefully constructed Huguenot myth-making included three main points: the martyrdom of being forced to emigrate from France; the hagiographical depiction of Huguenot characters and identity; and the *topos* of the hard-working Huguenot.²⁴ These “legends” and “new narratives for group identity,” I argue, were not only conceived and promoted in historical accounts written by Huguenots and their ancestors – as can be seen, for example, in the nine volumes of *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des réfugiés françois dans les états du Roi du Prusse* (1782–1799),²⁵ edited by Jean-Pierre Erman and Pierre Christian Frédéric Reclam – but also in the fiction of Fouqué.²⁶ Yet *The Réfugié* is not only telling a *réfugié* story in order to contour and (re)write Huguenot virtues, but also makes visible the identity crises and communal conflicts which Huguenot historiography actually tried to obliterate.

20 Cf. Fouqué, *Der Réfugié*, vol. 2, 331: “einem Nachkommen jener Glaubensflüchtlinge, die Friedrich so schön zu lieben und zu beschirmen verstand” [a descendent of those religious refugees who Friedrich knew how to love and protect so beautifully].

21 Lachenicht, “Renaissance in der Diaspora,” 182. Cf. also Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, 496.

22 Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, 497. Emphasis in the original.

23 Cf. Thiez, *Identität und Sprachidentität*, 17.

24 Étienne François, “La mémoire huguenote en Hesse, en Allemagne et dans les autres pays du Refuge,” in *Die Hugenotten und das Refuge: Deutschland und Europa. Beiträge zu einer Tagung*, eds. Frédéric Hartweg and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1990), 233–239, as cited and translated in Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, 499.

25 The fact that Huguenot mythmaking, as François, Lachenicht and others have pointed out, is still handed down, promoted and updated today can for example be seen in Horsta Krum, *Preußens Adoptivkinder: Die Hugenotten. 300 Jahre Edikt von Potsdam. Unter Verwendung von ‘Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des réfugiés François dans les états du roi’ von J. P. Erman und F. Reclam 1782–1799* (Berlin: arani, 1985).

26 Apart from *The Réfugié*, Fouqué also wrote about refugees in other texts and was occupied with other refugee stories at that time. Cf. Schmidt, *Fouqué*, 484.

ate. In this respect, Fouqué's novel is part of but also undermines the narrative regime of Huguenot historiography.

The novel's concern for *réfugié* identity against the background of assimilation, for national belonging and (post-)migrant suffering amidst the Francophobic climate of the Napoleonic era already features prominently at the beginning of the novel. The text introduces the "pastor of *Lindenhorst*,"²⁷ the father of the Gautier family sitting idyllically in front of his house on a Sunday evening, when he is seen and spoken about by farmers passing by. It is telling that the pastor is introduced via a characterisation of the "native" population: the text thus indicates from the very start that the Gautier family is regarded from the outside and as "other." Gautier is referred to as "a proper example for all preachers [. . .], our Mr. Jottjé!" (R I, 2). The accented foreignness of the family name is a sign of the status of the Gautiers as being both stranger and estranged, renowned and respected but also remote in the social community of Lindenhorst, as the narrator swiftly explains:

This is how they were used to pronouncing the French name Gautier according to their north German dialect; they had grown accustomed to this sound for as long as anyone could remember, since it had been more than two hundred years since Mr. Gautier's forefathers had fled from France due to religious persecution and settled in this mountainous area. His forefathers had been clerics as well but only in their so-called *réfugié* colony [Refugié-Colonie]. Mr. Gautier was the first who had accepted the call to become a German preacher. (R I, 2)

Right from the outset, in line with its subtitle "Roman aus der neuern Zeit," the novel demonstrates its status as historical fiction: Both refugee background as well as the process of Huguenot dis/integration into German society are addressed in the opening scene. Gautier appears as symbol of Huguenot assimilation, epitomised in both the praise regarding his preaching skills and the amalgamated (mis)pronunciation and spelling of his name by the local population.²⁸ The Gautier family thus appears materially settled (house, job, religious community ties) in the Harz Mountain village but is still marked as "other."

²⁷ Fouqué, *Der Refugié*, vol. 1, 2. In the following, I will reference the novel with the acronym "R" together with the number of the volume (I–III) and the page number(s) behind the quote.

²⁸ Linguistic research has shown that Huguenot diasporas affected the languages of their host regions and also saw the multilingualism of the Huguenots become transformed. Cf. Manuela Böhm, "Sociolinguistics of the Huguenot Communities in German-Speaking Territories," in *A Companion to the Huguenots*, eds. Raymond A. Mentzer and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 291–322.

Issues of identity via the question “What’s in a name?”²⁹ become even more prominent when the narrator mentions Gautier’s son Robert in the local Franco-Germanic parlance, as “the little Monsieur Jottjé as they called the son of the pastor” (R I, 3), and Robert then makes a personal appearance at his father’s house bringing bad news from school. Robert has a “tear-stained and bewildered look” (R I, 10) and relates how he fled³⁰ from school after he had gotten into a fight trying to “defend” “the name Gautier” (R I, 11). Robert’s account of the events at school makes evident the fact that his German classmates have been bullying and beating him due to his name and Huguenot heritage:

“You don’t want to be called Jottjé, boy? Very well! We will call you according to the spelling of your name. But we won’t pronounce it in French. We don’t have to do that, we good German boys! [. . .] We’ll pronounce you in German, as your name is written. And then you are called Gau-thier!” “The Gau-thier!” they all shouted jubilantly. “Yes, yes, the Gauthier shall be his name henceforth.” (R I, 25)

The novel pinpoints discourses of exclusion and issues of ièclezation when Robert’s peers make him “other” as a “foreign species” – “Gau-thier” (a composition consisting of the two German nouns “Gau” and “Thier”) literally translated means “country-animal”. Apparently, Robert’s French ancestors had suffered similar hostile treatment from the locals when they settled under German rule and were being favoured by state sovereigns.³¹ Yet the novel does not reserve a special focus for the Gautier forefathers or their means of making themselves at home in Prussia. Pastor Gautier indeed mentions how his Huguenot ancestors not only had to emigrate from their Normandy home after “many a heavy persecution” (R I, 41) but that they also chose to leave behind their “ancient knightly origin” (R I, 43), represented by the name of Langallerie.³² Yet the pastor’s story breaks off at the point when his

²⁹ Cf. the novel’s repeated reference to the issue of naming and the “creation of the image of a human being once you hear his/her name,” (R I, 37) as well as the text’s eschatological stance that “in the hereafter, we all receive new names” (R III, 403).

³⁰ The text negotiates different semantic dimensions of flight and refuge when the narrator first introduces the reader to the Huguenot refugee legacy of the Gautiers and then has the pastor call his son “a fugitive” in the sense of a “deserter,” a person on the run: “Dear God, my son, a fugitive [Flüchtling]! Someone by the name of Gautier, a fugitive” (R I, 11); cf. Johann Christoph Adelung, “Flüchtling,” in *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart* vol. 2, ed. Johann Christoph Adelung (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Compagnie, 1793–1801), 226.

³¹ For a historical reconstruction of the “harsh rejection” and “openly discriminating behaviour” the Huguenots encountered when they tried to settle in Germany, see Andreas Reinke, “Die Kehrseite der Privilegierung: Proteste und Widerstände gegen die Hugenottische Niederlassung in den Deutschen Territorialstaaten,” *Comparativ* 7.5/6 (1997): 39–55.

³² As Schmidt (*Fouqué*, 484) remarks, the name “Langallerie” can be found in Fouqué’s family tree.

forefathers found themselves at the right-hand side shores of the Rhine “in full safety” (R I, 41): Conflicts between locals and foreigners are not spoken about in detail.³³ In contrast, Fouqué’s novel not only repeatedly revolves around Robert’s Francophobic experiences and his (eventually only partially successful)³⁴ quest for belonging to Prussia as a patriot and “Prussian *citoyen*[],”³⁵ but also dwells on the enmities prevailing against and the persecution suffered by third- and fourth-generation Huguenot refugees from members of both French and Prussian societies, and intertwines these issues with reflections on forced migration.

When Robert’s hometown in the Harz Mountains is invaded by Napoleonic troops, his identity conflict exacerbates. Addressed as “still enough French [. . .], little *réfugié*,” by a French officer who demands to be accommodated by the Gautier family, Robert highlights his self-image as German: “Of course, I am German on my mother’s side, and my father is proud to say that he has also already become German [. . .]; dear sir, even if you perhaps cannot understand how great a joy it is to be German, do not mock those to whom God has given such an uplifting feeling.” (R I, 183–189) Robert clings to his faith in God and believes in his divine feelings of being German, a Prussian partisan-citizen to be precise: “Dear Lord, I praise you and rejoice that I am a human being! Also for the fact that I am German! But also for the fact that I am Prussian!” (R II, 53).³⁶ Yet time and again the novel brings to the fore that this belief is neither firm nor undisturbed. Just like his father – whom it pains to hear his fellow-brethren speak with “wild-tempered, spiteful, unfortunately often crude outbursts [. . .] on everything that was called French” and who acknowledges that “nobody can get rid of his original roots” (R I, 211–212) – Robert’s loyalty to the Prussian state and his plea for German integrity are repeatedly challenged. His feeling of being “*Outside*” (R II, 285), of not belonging among his fellow students (at the university), to the aristocratic circles of these fellows or to his comrades-in-arms (in military service) all become tantamount when he enlists to fight against Napoleon’s troops. Stationed in a village where “a bunch of poor refugees

33 Father Gautier sketches how his forefathers buried the arms and certificates that could identify them as members of the Langallerie family (and adopted the “ancient Christian name of the family: *Gautier*” (R I, 45–46)) but refrains from going into detail about what has happened after the escape. He only hints at “many painful aspects in the lives of my fathers” (R I, 33).

34 Robert dies “for Prussia” in a battle against Napoleon shortly after he has learnt his “real” name. Shortly after his death is announced to the parents, his father dies ending the (patriarchal) Langallerie lineage.

35 Pestel, “Age of Emigrations,” 209–210.

36 Robert defines himself as both “ein Deutscher und ein Preuße” (a German and a Prussian), “weil das am schönsten für mich paßt” [because this suits me best] (R II, 53); cf., in this respect, Fouqué’s self-description as “*Refugié* [. . .] und als Preuße seit meinem Großvater her” [a *réfugié* [. . .] and as Prussian since my grandfather]. Fouqué, *Lebensgeschichte*, 155.

[armer Flüchtlinge]” of German origin relate the “horrors” (R, III 150) they have suffered when the French raided and looted their towns, scenes of war from which they have only narrowly escaped, Robert is confronted with the French (family) ghosts of his past: the “wrath” and “fury” of the German refugees and the people listening to the atrocities committed by the French “enemy” (R III, 151) result in the proclamation that “whatever bears a French name is appalling and abominable in Germany for all time, and every French sound in the liberated lands must be forbidden” (R III, 152). Robert is dismayed by the furious call against French names and subjects: “Robert Gautier grew paler and paler. In this distraught moment, he hardly knew clearly for what cause he had actually gone out to fight. Or his fencing for the peaceful German cause suddenly seemed to him like a kind of gruesome suicide.” (R III, 152) Although his compatriot Kraus takes his side and defends both Robert’s name and his origin against any reproach of “buonapartism” (R III, 156) – “rejoice in the brave *réfugiés*” (R III, 156) – Robert’s feeling of being (made) different remains. It becomes apparent that the degradation and bullying he has been subjected to throughout his youth keep haunting him even in his sleep: In one of his nightmares, he finds himself in a battle, when suddenly his horse turns and takes him away from the battlefield

away and further away, into the most shameful, most ignominious flight, and [. . .] scornful voices were calling from all sides: “Jottjé, where the hell are you going?” – and sometimes, as if laughing, from the enemy’s side: “Monsieur le Marquis de Langallerie! Halt! Is this then the illustrious bravery, which you have inherited from your invincible ancestors? Halt, Monsieur le Marquis!” (R III, 145)

The novel desperately tries to make Robert – confronted with the need to fight against the French – known as a character who has been deeply and lastingly upset by social marginalisation and who is constantly trying to negotiate his French ancestry on the one hand and his Prussian-German national belonging and state of mind on the other. Against this background, Robert’s self-stylisation as a “victim” (or his self-victimisation), which he connects to his Huguenot background, cannot only be read in the context of a Huguenot need to manage the aftermath of the French Revolution as a definite “break with former home country [France],” or as part of the work of a “collective memory making a hero of the fathers”³⁷ of the Huguenot diaspora at a time of social and cultural disintegration. Fouqué’s story rather suggests that Robert has also fled into the “vocabulary of victimhood”³⁸ to

³⁷ François, cited in Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa*, 498–499.

³⁸ David van der Linden, “Histories of Martyrdom and Suffering in the Huguenot Diaspora,” in *A Companion to the Huguenots*, eds. Raymond A. Mentzer and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 350.

cope with and meet the expectations of his father and forefathers as well as the rejections of the Germans. It is with the painful feeling of being (made) an outsider that Robert starts to embrace his singular but distinct status as *réfugié* and to conceive his identity as both Huguenot “outcast” and Prussian patriot – a social imaginary commonly referenced in historical research as “Huguenot borussophilia.”³⁹ This self-image is passed down by patrilineage but also reinforced by Robert’s peers: from the outset of the novel, his father insists on a special *réfugié* status – “old Frankish” [altfränkisch] – and even more: “old French ancestral glory” [altfranzösische Ahnenherrlichkeit] (R II, 214), in contrast to the “new” French invaders – until his very last breath.⁴⁰ Instilled with a belief in the divine order, in Providence as well as the providential distinction of *réfugié* identity, Robert adopts the role of Huguenot martyrdom and renunciation: “My people and I were born to be at a standstill in this world; you are called to walk over it. And we will be happy if you remember one or the other *réfugié* body that helped pave your way to a more comfortable march forward!” (R II, 352) Considering himself an eternally “homeless person” [Heimathloser] (R II, 355) without any “relations,” a sort of foreign object “blown in like a snowflake from a completely different country” (R II, 356), Robert sees himself as the walking dead: a person “akin to a corpse” (R II, 355) living a sad, lonely life,⁴¹ a life “like someone buried alive!” (R II, 360). In his melancholic-fatalistic view (which foreshadows his “sacrificial” death on the battlefield against Napoleon), Robert likens his homeless life to the image of the Eternal Jew, characterised by “a dismal wandering” (R II, 362) that can only be endured thanks to God.⁴² In this respect, Robert distinguishes himself as outsider after he has been repeatedly reminded that he has to act as “real *réfugié* son” who has to suffer in the same way as “his forefathers” (R II, 332). It is a continual honing in on *réfugié* identity that results in Robert’s self-stylisation as both distinguished and stigmatised: “Let us *réfugiés* do what we can, and do not reproach us for doing it differently than you.” (R II, 364).

Robert’s socialisation means an internalisation of the experiences of being humiliated and cast as outsider. Even his best friend Heinrich, enflamed by the

39 Fuhrich-Grubert, “Minoritäten in Preußen,” 1212. Cf. Sam Seitz, “French Huguenots in Berlin: Acculturation and Nationalism,” <https://politicstheorypractice.wordpress.com/2019/03/24/french-huguenots-in-berlin-acculturation-and-nationalism/#comments>, *Politics in Theory and Practice*, 24 March 2019 (28 January 2022): “The traditional German narrative lauds the Huguenots for their Borussophilia, devotion to the Hohenzollerns, elite sophistication, and cultural contributions.”

40 Cf. R III, 402.

41 See, for example, R II, 356–357.

42 Cf., for instance, R II, 362.

salvation campaign of “suppressed Germany” (R II, 283), is unable to see his friend for who he is – a comrade fighting against the French and for “the German cause” – and thus reveals his prejudiced, Francophobic attitude: “What a pity, such a beautiful soul! But those who are not rooted in the German land on their father’s and their mother’s side can never feel the great matter in a proper, serious way!” (R II, 308)

Robert is made to feel different and eventually accepts his otherness. As he is being reminded by his family and friends (as well as the narrator)⁴³ that, as “poor *réfugié*,” he remains “an owl amongst crows” (R II, 430), a “foreign species” “not rooted” (R II, 308) in “German lands,” it comes as no surprise that he incorporates the metaphoric expression of being uprooted when he identifies with an uprooted poplar tree.⁴⁴ The novel shows that Robert eventually takes pride in his *réfugié* status as both distinguished and despaired, a “bad faith” that he manages to turn into a perspective of self-esteem: “The poor, uprooted refugee is already humiliated enough by others. He does not need to also drown himself in soft tears” (R II, 339–340). The novel demonstrates that it is not only the patriarchal narrative of Huguenot persecution of more than a hundred years ago, but also the suffering inflicted by Robert’s German peers in post-revolutionary times of conflict with France that have played a significant role in transforming Robert Gautier into a staunch *réfugié* and Prussian patriot: an ultimately tragic character who is unable to connect to a life in dialogue and happiness with others. Seeking comfort and belonging, he embraces a divine cause as (eternal) refugee, coming home only in death; that is, in the afterlife.⁴⁵

Expulsion and Displacement: Lives in Exile

Fouqué’s novel not only empathetically investigates how Francophobic attitudes and German nationalism co-emerge and affect Huguenot refugee (hi)stories, but also explores the entanglements of various displacements and the complex challenges of

⁴³ Fouqué’s narrator aligns with and tries to evoke sympathy for Robert Gautier in various instances, cf., for example: “Each of us, thank God, has similar memories from our earthly lives, and similar forebodings for the future. Everyone! And even if he were the most unhappy and most unknown [der Allerunglücklichste und Allerverkannteste] on earth! – The most outcast *réfugié* [allerausgestoßenste Refugié]!” (R II, 392–393).

⁴⁴ Cf. R II, 287.

⁴⁵ “Foreign and home – he felt it – on earth, the two are always in wondrous interplay, [. . .] both pointing the way to our eternal home [ewige Heimath]!” (R II, 381).

exiled lives in the “age of refugees.”⁴⁶ As mentioned before, the novel contributes to Huguenot myth-making but also shows how Robert Gautier comes to cling to the image of a victimised but distinguished Huguenot identity only after he is both indoctrinated by his father and repeatedly subjected to humiliation by his peers. The novel thus conveys knowledge about the history of confessional refugeeism in France – the Huguenots featuring “Mr. Gautier’s forefathers, fled from France due to religious persecution” (R I, 2) – but also negotiates a more recent history and a more contemporary memory of flight and exile in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Imagining the lives of the Gautiers, Fouqué brings into dialogue multiple (hi)stories of displacement and the means of sustaining life in exile. Considering the migratory fates of people who have suffered persecution due to their beliefs, and social and political affiliations, Fouqué fosters alliances between different exile (hi)stories and biographies, which I will sketch in the following: the Gautier family (1), the theologian Paul Gerhardt (2), the French *émigrés* (3) and the *réfugiés* in the Berlin colony (4). The novel thus not only offers sympathetic views on French migrants from the past and the present, but also interlinks forced migrations of the French to German (hi)stories of exile and examines the creative role of literature in remembering migration and transregional alliances for the sake of a peaceful European future.

(1) Fouqué’s novel installs the Gautiers as a prism that brings other exiles into view. Robert’s self-image as a Huguenot refugee becomes even more persistent when the Gautiers are confronted with the French invasion of their hometown in the Harz Mountains. As soon as it has become clear that the provinces on the west side of the Elbe have been “handed over” (R I, 242) to the French, Robert – appealing to his father – envisions political exile, connecting the prospect of emigration to both his ancestors and the biblical Exodus: “Father, we are *réfugiés* through our fathers. Why not become so a second time through our own pious resolve? The Lord led our fathers out of Egypt [. . .] before us also lies the heavenly Canaan, which we are called to seize as our fathers did.” (R I, 253–254) While the pastor decides to remain in town to support his communion, the situation changes when the new government not only removes the pastor from office but also expels the Gautiers from their home: “To put it briefly: You are dispelled, my friend, and banished to the right bank of the Elbe. And so – be gone and get away!” (R I, 268). Just like their forefathers, the Gautiers are not tolerated in a

46 Maya Jasanoff, “Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Emigre Diasporas,” in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, eds. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37–58.

political landscape that has changed overnight and has transformed them into “emigrants” [Auswandernde] (R I, 279), “displaced persons” [Vertriebene] (R I, 285). Opening the letters of recommendation written by the pastor’s supporters, his wife is confronted with the vocabulary of exile that has suddenly become part of their identity – again – as history repeats itself: “Oh Jottjé, here someone calls you *exsul* in all his great love and admiration! And *exsul* – I still understand that much Latin – *exsul*, that means an emigrant, a displaced person, an *émigré* [ein Ausgewanderter, ein Vertriebener, ein Emigrant]!” (R I, 293–294). The pastor responds to his wife’s despair first by connecting their fate to the genealogy of exile within the family line, and secondly to the case of the Lutheran minister Paul Gerhardt, whom Gautier stylises as another exiled subject. In this respect, Gautier seeks to find and take solace in narratives of migration: Instead of adopting the designation “*exsul*,” he embraces the identity as *réfugié*. To his wife he thus replies: “‘A *réfugié!*’ Mr. Gautier answered and smiled mildly. “‘Shall I moan and whine just because I have become what my honourable fathers had also been?’” (R I, 293). Gautier proposes walking in the shoes of his forefathers: clinging to family tradition, he makes sense of the verdict of expulsion and takes pride in his heritage. As he notices that his family, and his wife especially, is in need of comfort, however, he adds another migratory narrative to the family’s refugee story.

(2) Comparing the conditions and effects of displacement to the circumstances that brought about the change of domain in Paul Gerhardt’s life (1607–1676), Gautier imagines migration for consolatory purposes. Gerhardt, a staunch Lutheran preacher, Berlin court chaplain and poet, whose hymns and poems, set to music by J.S. Bach, are still part of Protestant song books today, abstained from signing an edict issued by the Elector of Brandenburg.⁴⁷ Gerhardt, unwilling to both accept syncretism at church and subordination to royal demands, was removed from office in 1666 and shortly after left for a post in Lübben (Saxony). In contrast to the Gautiers, however, Gerhardt had not been officially expelled from Brandenburg. Yet pastor Gautier transforms Gerhardt into both a displaced and betrayed fellow refugee:

The one who drives us away is a foreign, imposed man, completely unknown to us, for whom there is no appeal in our souls other than that of human love in general. But the one who drove Paul Gerhardt away was his sovereign and elector, whom he greatly admired

47 Cf. Waltraud-Ingeborg Sauer-Geppert, “Gerhardt, Paul,” in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 6, ed. Historische Kommission, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1964), 286–288.

and loved with all his heart, and before whom he felt an innate reverence in his deepest heart. (R I, 302–303)

Gautier imagines Gerhardt as both refugee and migrant poet whose songs instil confidence and hope in other exiles, including the Gautiers.⁴⁸ According to Gautier's version of (hi)story, exile was vital and productive to Gerhardt as both a preacher and a poet: if the "good, displaced preacher" had not been "very worried" about his future, "Gerhardt would not have been able to compose the song" (R I, 309). Displacement is envisaged as a source of creative production, a dismal situation that is both being coped with and metamorphoses into art.

Yet as Robert's father elaborates upon the similarities between Gerhardt and the Gautiers, he finds himself questioned over the ornamentation and the personal "twist" he adds to the story of Gerhardt's life.⁴⁹ His wife complains: "You have told the story in its smallest detail, and yet you cannot know it so precisely. How would it be if you [. . .] met the dear preacher in heaven, and he said: 'well, dear colleague, the thing happened quite differently, and I know how to tell it to you much better!'" (R I, 321). Gautier defends his spin on the story by referring to the freedom of art and poetry on the one hand, and to a divine inspiration informing poetic creation on the other hand:

Behold, my friend, the much-used word 'poet' means in its ancient Hellenic origin as much as 'one who creates something'. But we poets, with our little mirrors – [. . .] we must not be afraid of the mirror beam of the eternal creator. Even if our little images melt and fade away before His glorious formations, well then, in all of us seeking Christians (as St. Paul writes) the Lord's clarity is reflected with unveiled face from eternity to eternity. Hallelujah! (R I, 323)

Addressing the Platonic credo "all poets lie," which his wife touches upon, Gautier endorses his refugee story as authentic if not true – a creation of the mind reflecting and catering to God's eternal truth and inspiring confidence in those listening to and identifying with the story.

(3) But the novel tells yet another refugee story, which reflects on how the French Revolution effected the displacement and dispossession of various (innocent) individuals across both France and Germany. Before Napoleon's troops invaded German territory, around 150,000 people – most of them with clerical and/or aristocratic background – had already fled from France after the Jacobine seizure of power. The

⁴⁸ Cf. R I, 295, 298–301.

⁴⁹ Gautier imagines Paul Gerhardt on the run from the authorities with his "female companion," (R I, 318) although Gerhardt's wife had actually died before the preacher left Brandenburg.

departure of these so-called *émigrés* has been acknowledged as “the first instance of political emigration on a European, if not indeed a global, scale.”⁵⁰ Right from the start of the novel, Fouqué suggests and promotes alliances between *réfugiés* and *émigrés* – Huguenots who fled from France in the seventeenth century and French elites, clerics and monarchists leaving the country amidst and in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The narrator introduces and positively describes the only person supporting Robert and defending him against the bullying of his schoolmates: “the brave emigrant Roussillac, [. . .] master of language and fencing in one person” (R I, 21).⁵¹ Scholarship has pointed out that *réfugiés* and *émigrés* came into contact when the latter went into exile in German territories.⁵² Until recently it has been claimed that these contacts usually resulted in conflicts, yet new findings suggest that *réfugiés* and *émigrés* often met on friendly terms and supported each other in exile, recognising their shared (hi)stories of displacement.⁵³

Although Roussillac is not a main character of the story, his appearance at the beginning and the end of the novel suggests his significance as a figure both framing and embodying issues of migration. The favourable depiction of the *émigré* representative makes evident the sympathetic stance of the novel towards those French aristocrats forced to live in exile while also fighting against Napoleon and for the freedom of the German people. Thus, at the end of the novel, both confessional and national differences have dissolved for ideological reasons and the joint venture of opposing Napoleonic rule. As comrades-in-arms, Robert and Roussillac find common ground not only in their migrant backgrounds, but first and foremost in the context of a war for “our heart of Europe, our beloved Germany” (R III, 328). To his parents, Robert writes about the joint preparation

50 Friedemann Pestel, “French Revolution and Migration after 1789,” <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/pestelf-2017-en>, *European History Online*, ed. Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), 11 July 2017 (20 December 2022).; see among others also Thomas Höpel, *Emigranten der Französischen Revolution in Preußen 1789–1806: Eine Studie in vergleichender Perspektive* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2000); Friedemann Pestel, *Weimar als Exil: Erfahrungsräume französischer Revolutionsemigranten 1792–1803* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2009).

51 Although not explicit, the novel suggests that Roussillac is an *émigré* – rather than an economic migrant who has sought work in Germany as a schoolteacher. Cf. also the similarities between Roussillac and the “dignified emigrant” or the “brave emigrant, Mr. Bousmard, former Prussian engineer” whom Fouqué describes in his autobiography (Fouqué, *Lebensgeschichte*, 165, 274).

52 Cf. Pestel, “Age of Emigrations,” 208; Jansen “Flucht und Exil,” 503.

53 Cf. René-Marc Pille, “Chamisso und die Berliner Hugenotten: Eine Beziehung zwischen Emigration und Refuge,” *Comparativ* 7.5/6 (1997): 142; Pestel, “Age of Emigrations,” 209–210: “[W]e can conclude that although the arrival of the *émigrés* questioned the peculiar ideas of Huguenot belonging as ‘Prussian *citoyens*,’ mental dispositions towards the new arrivals were more complex and thereby more open.”

for war: “Roussillac knelt next to me during church service. The emigrant next to the *réfugié*! The Catholic next to the Protestant! Surely, this was already a kind of church union [Kirchenvereinigung]?” (R III, 328–29). Bowing to God and devoting themselves to serving the country that has been or has become their home, Robert and Roussillac unite in faith and for Franco-German solidarity. A decade after the liberation wars during which the novel is set, Fouqué’s historical fiction reminds readers of both the forms of Franco-German cooperation in the war against Bonaparte rule and the (hi)stories of exile that bring both pre- and post-revolutionary migration within German territories into focus.

(4) Connected to the memory of *réfugiés* and *émigrés*, Fouqué’s novel reflects on the social and cultural relevance of the *refuge* in general and the Huguenot diaspora in Berlin in particular.⁵⁴ Calling on readers to sustain and serve the memory of *réfugié* practices, the novel memorises the values of Huguenot culture at a time during which it had gradually been disappearing. In this respect, the novel yet again participates in Huguenot myth-making, in which “facts amalgamated with memories and euphemisms.”⁵⁵ Already at the beginning of the novel, the decline of a distinct Huguenot identity is reflected in Gautier’s pioneering turn from preaching in the French “*réfugié* colony” to accepting a post as “German preacher” (R I, 2). In fact, Gautier’s reference to Huguenot culture anticipates what happens to his own Huguenot family line at the end of the novel: It becomes extinct.

Oh, who knows whether we poor *réfugiés* will help ourselves through the world any longer! See, most of our knightly families are dying out. Those who still live in the colony, may well flourish brightly and cheerfully, nurtured by your hospitality, you brave German compatriots, but they either adopt your ways to the point of forgetting their own origin or – take heed! – they die out without a trace at last. (R I, 52–53)

Fouqué tries to counter the process of “forgetting” *réfugié* history by narrating the Gautiers’ lives and their own practices of story-telling. The novel dwells on how the Gautiers keep the memory of their ancestors alive⁵⁶ and renders perceptible the process of Robert’s re-encounter with and (re-)identification as *réfugié*: While studying in Berlin, Robert happens to walk into a church by accident and finds himself in a group of *réfugié* worshippers celebrating mass in French. As the

54 Cf. Manuela Böhm, “Hugenottische Netzwerke in der Berliner Wissenschaft, Verwaltung und Kunst um 1800,” in *Netzwerke des Wissens: Das intellektuelle Berlin um 1800*, ed. Anne Baillet (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2011), 283–309.

55 Lachenicht, “Renaissance in der Diaspora,” 497.

56 Cf. the pastor’s vivid narration of his forefathers fleeing from France as well as his story about Paul Gerhardt as a relative in mind and exile (“we have something very much Gerhardian about us.” R I, 302).

“*ancient*, named according to French fashion,” (R II, 378) tells Robert: “We are *réfugiés* – what is usually called the colony here” (R II, 377). It is in this context and when attending the French service that Robert is shown to ponder the means of Huguenot assimilation and to find ways of reconnecting himself to his *réfugié* genealogy. Stepping into the church, listening to the French sermon, singing the French hymns, he is moved emotionally but also imaginatively towards his exiled ancestors until he thinks he sees “his pious emigrated forefather” (R II, 380) handing the hymnbook over to him:

It almost seemed to him as if he had been transported to the earnest, wistful time when his pious fathers first found protection and hospitality in these lands. At that time, only a few listeners could take part in the so-called French service in the hospitable, spacious churches. Many, who certainly longed fervently to come here to the fraternal congregation, were still swimming in the wild seas, or groaned sorrowfully at the French borders, which did not want to open up for them to escape. And now it was so comfortable to be here, but almost no one came to the old-fashioned assembly anymore. “All honour to the beautiful German language! And all honour to the beautiful worship in it!” Robert thought to himself. “But it is and remains wrong not to cherish such sweet and serious memories more faithfully than I have done to this day!” (R II, 378–380)

Via Robert’s imaginative visualisation of a Huguenot past connected to forced migration – a past that has direct links to both his own experiences with forced migration and his desire to belong – the novel calls for an active engagement with and remembering of *réfugié* culture beyond cultural and linguistic divides, in uncertain times yet to come. The juridical privilege of the Berlin colony was dispelled after Napoleon’s troops had taken over the city in 1806 and the *réfugiés* were unwilling to pledge allegiance to France (instead, they emphasised that they had become “good Prussian citizens”).⁵⁷ Publishing his novel in 1824, Fouqué taps into the history of the Huguenot *refuge* and launches a didactic appeal for a *réfugié* future that both commemorates the hardships of Huguenot life in exile and creates new visions of Huguenot-Prussian identity in German lands.

⁵⁷ Wilke, “Zur Geschichte der französischen Kolonie,” 85. Nonetheless, religious and administrative freedom were still granted to the Huguenot diaspora by the new authorities. As Lachenicht (“Renaissance in der Diaspora,” 180–181) emphasises, the French colony was sustained until 1809, yet its institutions had become “empty nutshells,” since *réfugiés* had increasingly left these separate communities in social, linguistic, economic and religious terms.

Coda: Knowing Migration in the Romantic Novel

Recent scholarship in the history of migration has stressed the importance of “adopting the perspective of the refugees themselves.”⁵⁸ Not only in terms of its capacity to integrate and make acknowledgeable multiple perspectives, characters and stories, narrative fiction can serve as a valuable means to account for refugee viewpoints.⁵⁹ Fouqué’s *The Réfugié* illustrates the contribution of literature for gaining insights into the production, distribution and transformation of knowledge about migration in the Romantic period. Fouqué’s novel intertwines the history of *réfugié* migration dating back to the late seventeenth century with his own migratory background as well as the recent history of displacement and exile faced by both French and German citizens in the aftermath of the French Revolution and during the Coalition Wars. Moreover, the novel also makes evident the way in which literature responded to the decline of *réfugié* communities and culture, and thus can be acknowledged as a medium preparing and anticipating the “Huguenot renaissance,”⁶⁰ beginning around 1870. *The Réfugié*, a novel available in many public libraries which were, of course, not only frequented by a Huguenot readership,⁶¹ served as a reminder to and idolised Huguenot allegiance to the Prussian state in the fight against the French invasion twenty years after this invasion had taken place. Furthermore, the novel not only supports recent findings about the problematic processes of Huguenot assimilation into German societies but also mediates individual suffering and national belonging as one of the significant reasons

58 Jansen, “Flucht und Exil,” 518.

59 German historiographic accounts of the age of emigrations, I find, still make little use of fiction and literary analysis. Paradigmatically, Oltmer (*Migration*, 24) refers to literary fiction only implicitly as “emigration literature” [Auswanderungsliteratur] read as one of the decisive media distributing information and advice on migration for those willing/needing to migrate in the nineteenth century. Pestel (*Weimar als Exil*, 162) only mentions Goethe’s refugee drama *Hermann und Dorothea* in passing when he looks at the books taken from the lending libraries in Weimar by French *émigrés*.

60 Fuhrich-Gruber, “Minoritäten in Preußen,” 1218.

61 Cf., for example, Joseph Lindauer, *Bücherverzeichniss der Joseph Lindauer’schen Leihbibliothek* (Munich, 1825), 226; Rudolph Deuerlich, *Universal-Katalog der Leihbibliothek: Wissenschaftlich und alphabetisch geordnet* (Göttingen: Weenderstraße Nr. 59, 1830), 31. The novel was not only included in public libraries but also made subject of different reviews in renowned literary journals. Mixed critical responses to *The Réfugié* can be gathered, for instance, from the anonymous review which lauds the “pleasing spirit of authentic religiosity” [wohlthuende[] Geiste echter Religiösität] of the third volume but thinks the novel overall aesthetically “mannered” [manierirt] and too much occupied with the aristocracy. Cf. “*Der Refugié. Oder Heimath und Fremde* [. . .],” *Leipziger Literatur-Zeitung* (3 Aug. 1825). Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel [year of publication missing]. 1481–1485.

for Huguenot myth-making. It thus takes part in but also critically compliments the euphemisms and distortions of Huguenot historiography. Finally, the novel reflects on the structures and functions of story-telling regarding life in exile. Fiction and imaginative approaches to migration provide the means of fostering alliances between different times and stories of expulsion and exile; in this respect, Fouqué’s novel auto-reflexively dwells on its own terms of conception, its didactics and desired effects and serves as a reminder for both literary and historical studies of how narratives and rhetoric pertain to knowledge about migration at the turn of the eighteenth century.

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