Remodeling the *Frauenzimmer*:

Women-Authored Spaces in German Literature from 1770-1820

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Abstract

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"Remodeling the *Frauenzimmer*: Women-Authored Spaces in German Literature from 1770-1820" searches for a narrated space that could allow women authors to communicate with one another free from controlling forces exerted by male authors and editors and how women could negotiate their entrance into the public realm with their literary texts and the limitations they had to overcome to publish. Women authors around 1800 have historically been neglected and marginalized, but, by writing about specific spaces, women authors could narrate their own experiences and identities and share them with readers by way of their literary publications. For example, the tension between Wieland's preface for La Roche's epistolary novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) and the novel's contents demonstrate how male authors and editors

maintained a consistent presence in mitigating a woman's voices through their authorial and authoritative positions. Women authors around 1800 were particularly interested in narrating explicit moments of violence and assault, as well as the insistence of the male gaze to watch and censor women's texts and bodies. The dissertation is organized into four body chapters: the bedroom, the theater, the masked ball, and the Italian carnival. In the bedroom chapter, a close reading of Kleist's 1808 novella *Die Marquise von O…* shows how the famous dash that covers up the moment of assault likewise covers up an emerging women's discourse on violence done against them. The theater and masked ball chapters read against Lessing, Goethe, and Eichendorff to argue that even with performances and disguises, women are not free from male figures who monitor and censor them. The final chapter moves outside of Germany and looks at how women authors, in contrast to Goethe and his monumental *Italienische Reise*, describe and narrate a projection of Italy that depicts this country as a space violated and occupied by the male German imagination.

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As with most large projects that span years, this project witnessed major life changes. Above all, sixteen months ago, I lost my dear sister and best friend to suicide, and my grief has forever changed me. It seems impossible that I can be finishing this project without hearing her exclamations of joy and pride in her older sister's accomplishment. However, I did not travel this journey alone – not only has my sister remained in my heart throughout the entire process, but I have also found support from a wide range of people and communities, and here I would like to thank them sincerely for their influences on this project.

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Dedication

"Fühlst du nicht in meinen Liedern,
Dass ich Eins und doppelt bin."
(Goethe, "Ginkgo Biloba")

To my sister, best friend, and soulmate:

Danielle Amanda Quillmann Heilmann

(11.07.1988-11.22.2012)

INTRODUCTION

Karoline von Günderode (1780-1806) writes to her friend Bettina von Arnim (1785-1859) in a letter in 1805: "Ich habe mit wahrem Vergnügen Dir Dein Zimmer dargestellt, weil es wie ein optischer Spiegel Deine aparte Art zu sein ausdrückt, weil es Deinen ganzen Character zusammenfaßt" (Behrens 18). Günderode's desire to furnish this room in the likeness of her friend Bettina renders the room metonymous of her absent self.[1] According to Karoline von Günderode, the room should *mirror* von Arnim's inner self and reflect her personality and identity. This epistolary moment is representative of how a woman around 1800 could remodel a room specifically to invoke an absent friend, and this example from letters exchanged by Günderode and von Arnim, both known in their lives as authors and members of writing circles, not only enables a glimpse into a friendship between two women, but also offers a peek into two women authors' communication with one another and their participation in the public realm. Von Arnim, in particular, poses an interesting case study with her history of publication. She has been criticized for fabricating her epistolary collections, which include letter exchanges with Goethe, Clemens Brentano (her brother), and Achim von Arnim. However, this study agrees with certain feminist critics that it is not the historical accuracy of what Bettina von Arnim publishes that should be the primary concern, but rather that her work should be understood in its historical context,[2] which reveals how

[1] I use "metonymy" here instead of "symbol" because the room would be an imperfect symbol of von Arnim's self. The room fails to be a symbol of the inner self, and instead it keeps the tension between constructed selves and constructed rooms in tact. Instead of

[2] See McAlpin who discusses Elke P. Frederiksen and Katherine P. Goodman in this context (195).

von Arnim had to rework and position the materials (which include letters) she had in her possession in order to publish her works to interest a reading public.[3] Von Arnim's personal friendship to Goethe bolstered her visibility, and certainly she capitalized on this relationship in order to gain access to the public sphere, but, as a woman publishing in the early nineteenth century, yoking herself to a famous male figure was but a way to break into the public realm. By editing and reframing her epistolary documents, von Arnim *remodels* her epistolary correspondences by expanding on her source materials and offers this new format to a reading audience.

The first part of this dissertation's title is "Remodeling the *Frauenzimmer*," which evokes two general ideas about women authors and gender in Germany around 1800.[4] First, the word "remodeling" captures the idea of a person with control over a room or space and the power to change its physical appearance. "Remodeling," not quite the same as "modeling," maintains a sense of being limited by the constraints of the space being altered, because one has to use what is already available. The creativity that goes along with "remodeling" is due in part to re-imagining a pre-existing world. Second, the titular "Frauenzimmer" teases out both the word's negative connotation today and its use as a more neutral term around 1800, which referred to a woman of the middle/upper class

[3] McAlpin, for example, argues, "[f]ar from a self-interested attempt to fool the public into believing that a famous writer had returned her devotion, Brentano-von Arnim's rewriting of these letters thus becomes […] a powerful esthetic attack on the very literary values that had elevated Goethe to nearly godlike status" (295).

[4] Although I use "Germany" throughout this dissertation, I am aware that the area I am referring to was not one cohesive nation, but actually separate nation-states, each with its own laws.

who behaved appropriately in society.[5] The etymology of the word *Frauenzimmer* carries with it historical traces that closely bind women with domestic space. In fifteenth-century German-speaking areas, for example, the "Frauenzimmer" was a collective of about fifty to seventy people, to which male and female participants (and servants) belonged. This included, but was not limited to, the head of the court, the chaplain, the royal knaves, the cooks, the stewards, the tailors, and the farm laborers (Nolte). In Adelung's 1808 *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch*, *Frauenzimmer* is defined as a "Gebäude, der für das weibliche Geschlecht bestimmt ist" (Bd. 2, Sp. 274), and the Brothers Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* also first defines the "Frauenzimmer" as a room: "frauenzimmer ist das frauengemach, frauenkammer, frauenstube, wo sich frauen oder weiber aufhalten, wo sie unterhalten werden, auch wo sie arbeiten" (Bd. 4, Sp. 82). What makes *Frauenzimmer* a particularly helpful term for a discussion of women and literary space is that the word connects *women* ("Frauen") with *room* ("Zimmer"). Thus, *Frauenzimmer* carries with it nuances even beyond those of class and education; it also links women to a concept of *Räumlichkeit*. Throughout this dissertation, I argue that around 1800 women were associated with space in highly nuanced and gender-specific ways that informed how women authors could enter the public sphere with their literary publications and have access the realm of publication – a place to engage in the public sphere (*die Öffentlichkeit*).

The time frame of women-authored literature around 1800 is particularly conducive to an examination of women authors and space. The eighteenth century saw a

[5] Adelung relates "Frauenzimmer" to class: "Die Gewohnheit, nach welcher das weibliche Geschlecht von gutem und vornehmen Stande von dem männlichen abgesondert wohnete" (Bd. 2, Sp. 274).

boom in literacy among men and women, and, alongside this sharp increase in readership, came a great advance in the number of men and women writing and publishing their works.[6] From Luise A. V. Gottsched (1713-1762), who assisted her husband with various translations and wrote her own plays in the first half of the eighteenth century, to Sophie von La Roche's (1730-1807) groundbreaking epistolary novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) that turned her into an immediate celebrity, to Benedikte Naubert's (1752-1819) wildly popular and anonymously published *Volksmährchen der Deutschen* (1789-93), to Bettina von Arnim's publication of edited accounts of her epistolary exchanges with Clemens Brentano, Günderode, and Goethe, the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were an era that witnessed the rise of women authors and readers, as well as a heightened public demand for words.[7] Readership around 1800 was potentially as high as twenty-five percent of the population (Blackwell 163-64) and, in 1810, the invention of the rapid printing press "contributed to the availability of reading material" (Blackwell 164).[8] In addition to increased readership, the book market's economics in the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century also opened up possibilities for women to

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[6] There were an estimated 3,000 women writers in the 1700s and 1800s (Fronius 2), and "German women writers became a force to be reckoned with in the 1790s" (Goodman and Waldstein 1).

[7] "Between 1770 and 1800 the numbers of women writing and the quantity of texts they produced far surpassed any previous period in German literary history" (Dawson 15).

[8] See Fronius for more on the economics of the book market: "It is important to recognise generally that the economics of the book market of the last quarter of the eighteenth century were propitious to women's entry in the first place: increased consumption of reading matter by women readers, growing literacy in the population as a whole, a rapidly escalating demand for non-specialist entertainment literature, especially novels, which were now widely available and affordable, were all encouraging auspices for women writers" (3). See also Goodman and Waldstein: "In sum, one can conclude that the noteworthy and rapid expansion of the literary market around 1770 was tied, at least in part, to an increased appeal to female readership. The evolution of writing as a profession for women fellows immediately upon this historical event, beginning in the 1980s, but particularly during the 1790s" (9).

access the literary domain (Fronius 2-3). Yet, this rise was not without challenges of its own, for many male publishers, editors, and educators perceived this increase in women's visibility in the public sphere as a threat.

Women were frequently discouraged from reading, for it presumably kept them from their domestic duties, and some critics even feared women would succumb to *Lesesucht*, a phenomenon that eighteenth-century society saw as an addiction to reading, the victims of which were mainly thought to be young men, women, and those from the lower classes (Baldwin 27). It was believed that women writers neglected their domestic, feminine duties, and, in doing so, also "betrayed the fatherland" (Kontje 7).[9] However, by the later eighteenth century, most of the readers would have been women (of the privileged classes), because they benefited from an improved education and had more leisure time than men (Brown, "Naubert" 10). Even more than these particulars, it is clear that the fear surrounding women authors and readers was that they could upset a system that increasingly articulated a woman's domain as her home (and the private sphere), and her role as mother and wife (which was supposed to be her duty to the state, as well).[10] This societal pressure made every woman's foray into the public realm a delicate process,

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[9] "Women were not only responsible for the emotional well-being of the family, but also expected to remain effective care-givers to their family members, thus fusing work and love. These intermingled functions within the domestic sphere shaped women's identity, while men's identity split more distinctly into separate functions that disassociated the emotional sphere of the family from the rational sphere of work outside of the house" (Wurst, "Hazards" 328).

[10] See Krimmer on how women's "their triple role as wives, mothers, and housekeepers [was] likely to be greeted with suspicion and ridicule" (239). See also Fronius, who points out how women were so tied to the domestic sphere that "it is indeed easy to assume that women writers in particular were trapped in the very narrow sphere ascribed to them, and that their attempts to write faced practically insurmountable obstacles, such as the abortive careers of Rahel Varnhagen and Caroline von Günderrode seem to suggest" (2).

one in which women had to negotiate with their male peers for publications in their journals, discuss their texts with male editors, and attempt to appeal and appease male critics. Many women had to publish their works anonymously or under male pseudonyms (like Naubert, whose identity was revealed in 1814), whereas others (like von Arnim) made clear their relationships to well known male literary figures in order for their works to gain credibility and validity.[11] Many women writers maintained personal and professional relationships with male mentors who could help to establish correspondence with publishers.[12] Women who negotiated their own publishing deals transgressed the norms of feminine behavior (Brown, "Naubert" 11). Even with the "relatively women-friendly cultural environment of the early Romantics," men still regulated women authors, for it remained a fact that women did not have the same educational opportunities as men and they "were not equal before the law" (Goodman, "Shadow" 22). Thus, even though the number of women authors and women-authored works around 1800 grew considerably, they and their works were still monitored and controlled.[13]

One example of how women had to negotiate with male editors to have their works published is Naubert's correspondences with male publishers, which allow for a rare look into how women authors around 1800 could interact with male editors and

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[11] See Goodman and Waldstein, who reiterate, "It is not surprising, then, that many romantic women writers, like many of their precursors, published anonymously or under their husbands' names when their writings did in fact appear in print" (23).

[12] Krimmer points out that "[f]emale authorship constituted a transgression against contemporary gender norms. Consequently, women writers strove to downplay or hide their literary activities" (237).

[13] See Fronius, who argues that "the mot surprising aspect of many of these letters [written by women] to Göschen and Nicolai is their tone," for they "write confidently, in a self-assured manner," which is "a contrast to women's prefaces which are full of demonstrations of modesty" and "they might mention that they are childless, or in other ways try to reassure the reader that their writing has not resulted in the neglect of domestic duties" (6).

publishers. Naubert's astounding oeuvre consists of historical novels, fairy tales, and numerous translations, which were read, admired, and reworked by both men and women (notably Clemens Brentano and the Grimm brothers) (Brown, "Naubert" 17). Although Naubert began to publish her texts in 1779, she did so anonymously or under pseudonyms, and it was only in 1814 that her identity became public against her will (Brown, "Naubert" 16). Naubert worked with at least four publishers throughout her career (Göschen,[14] Beygang,[15] Weygand,[16] and Rochlitz), but only letters between Naubert and Rochlitz are extant. Naubert was sensitive to the politics behind women's writing, which can be seen in her written correspondences,[17] and she maintains a modest, formal, and at times near sycophantic tone in her letters to Rochlitz, even when their business relationship became a friendship. An examination of her letters shows that she collaborated with Rochlitz in the writing process. In 1805, for example, Naubert writes to Rochlitz, "Hier ist denn auch der Roman, so eng zusammen gedrängt, als möglich, denn ich bin völlig Ihrer Meynung, daß eine solche Kleinigkeit verliert, wenn sie im Druck getheilt werden muß…" (Dorsch 29). By incorporating Rochlitz's suggestions, Naubert

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[14] Göschen, who published the first edition of *Faust* in 1790 in Leipzig, only published a dozen female authors, which included Naubert and Karoline Luise Brachmann (Naubert's friend and correspondent) (Fronius 23-24).

[15] Beygang owned over two thousand French, English, and Italian works, which, in all likelihood, were available to Naubert (Brown 32).

[16] Less is known about the Weygand publishing house (Brown 32), except that Weygand attracted a relatively high number of women writers: forty-two titles by women (Fronius 3). Naubert comments on the "ruthless pressure" she felt from Weygand in a letter written in 1806: "Gleiche Kämpfe habe ich mit W. gehabt, den unsre muthwillige Freundinn K. immer mit dem Drachen in der Offenbahrung vergleicht, der das Weib in die Wüste verfolge um das neugebohrne Kind flugs zu verschligen" (Brown 33).

[17] See Brown for a discussion of how "Naubert's surviving letters bear testimony to her awareness of her position as a woman writer. Many are addressed to Friedrich Rochlitz, who edited some of the periodicals in which Naubert published short stories. Rochlitz became a firm friend over the years, but the tone of Naubert's letter remains self-deprecating" (16).

affirms his opinion, which, in this situation, allows her to keep her text in full. This one example illustrates how all textual choices had to be mediated and approved by male editors and publishers.

Women authors remained censored and controlled when they were told which genres they could publish in (if they could publish at all) and which were deemed "acceptable" for women.[18] The German novel became increasingly popular in the 1770s, but even then women authors had a precarious relationship to this genre (Kontje 3).[19] Although novels were eventually considered a "feminine" genre later in the eighteenth century, in the 1770s, aside from two novels written by Sophie von La Roche and two written by Maria Anna Sagar, novels were authored by men (Dawson 25). Other "putatively humble genres" that were considered acceptable for women around 1800 included the letter, the short story, and the novel (Brown 11). From Sophie von La Roche's *Sternheim* to Elise Bürger's one-act play *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* (1814), women wrote in a variety of genres to narrate their forays into the public sphere, and they continued to create forms of communication that would appeal not only to other women readers but also challenge the system that tried to keep them inside the home, silent, and subservient.

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[18] Dawson, for example, discerns between "public writers" and "private writers," a designation she carries over to an exploration of the genres women wrote in. "Public writers," shows Dawson, "experimented both with nonliterary forms, such as cookbooks and housekeeping guides, and with all the literary forms popular in their day: verse tales, tragedies, love lyrics, novels, essays, travel books, and more" (23). She adds that public writers "were typically prolific letter writers, as well" (23).

[19] See Krimmer: "Women writers tended to favor the genre of the novel which did not gain in prestige until the emergence of Goethe" (240). "During the thirty years between 1770 and 1800, women's choice of genre changed decade by decade, as an examination of new titles published during those years shows" (Dawson 25).

Terminology

The uneasy category and term "woman" weaves throughout this dissertation, and it may appear that the use of "woman" as a stable category presumes one ascribed meaning, but this term is invoked in a specific and nuanced way. The advent of feminist and queer theories maintains that the category "woman" is constructed and presupposes a binary between man and woman.[20] Although "woman" and "women" have limitations, the terms are helpful when discussing how women (in general) and women authors (specifically) were suppressed around 1800. Even with the obvious problems of using this word at all, the terms "woman" and "women" give voice to those who self-identified as women (as "Frauen" or as "Frauenzimmer") around 1800 and were thus pushed to the margins of public discourse and encouraged to remain subservient to the overarching male powers that desired women to stay at home, bound to the private sphere.[21] Women's writing around 1800 is often presented as *in opposition* to men's writing, which bolsters the existence of further categories, such as "masculine" and "feminine." Thus, this study negotiates a path that preserves women's writing and shows how their texts exist in conversation with the more well-known and canonical texts of their time, not isolated by the gender/sex of their author.[22]

Trying to label the variety of intense women's relationships around 1800 remains problematic, but emphasizing different types of women's relationships that fall outside of

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[20] See the introduction to Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter*.
[21] Dawson makes the following analogy: "Just as one can study 'witches' without believing in them in the way that seventeenth-century people believed, one can study 'women' of, for example, the eighteenth century, without accepting that period's (or any other's) definition of the category as an adequate description of some underlying reality" (14).
[22] See Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society* for how using the term "sexuality" before 1815 is "anachronistic and methodologically misleading" (6).

a heteronormative paradigm shows how women could upset the existing patriarchal system in place in Germany around 1800. In this exploration of women authors, women's relationships arise that are emotionally intense and sometimes physical, relationships that today might be termed homosocial, women-identified, or lesbian. A preliminary problem that scholars who work with the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries face is that homosexuality, as understood today, had not yet been codified.[23] In Naubert's fairy tale *Der kurze Mantel* (1789), for example, the protagonist Rose and the veiled queen of the underworld have not only an emotionally intimate relationship, but they also have a physical one, for they kiss and share a bed. Amalie, in Marianne Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788), also spends the night in a female friend's bed, and the two embrace under the cover of night. These two examples depict physical relationships between women more explicitly, but other examples of intense women's relationships abound in women-authored literature around 1800. Epistolary novels, containing letters shared by women, are another example of how women could communicate their thoughts and desires with one another through textual formats. Long-term and long-distance women's friendships could also allow for women to strengthen their relationships with one another on emotional and intellectual levels. Letters allowed women to speak of love and friendship, especially by those "who sought to define their own same-sex rapport" (Kord, "Eternal" 236). Friendship could refer to "the sincerity of the relationship," whereas love emphasized intense emotionality (Kord, "Eternal" 236).

[23] As Sha argues, "Rather than understanding the absence of sexual identity as an ontological given before 1869 when the word homosexual was invested, we need to think about the obstacles and disincentives to thinking about a sexual identity" (286). Kord also point out that "prejudice and legislation" around 1800 "almost exclusively targeted homosexual men, while lesbianism *alone* was condoned or ignored" ("Eternal" 230).

Women's relationships (epistolary, emotional, physical, or otherwise) remain at the core this study, for it is women's communication that allows for an alternate reading of gender and space around 1800.

Some of these women's relationships in the texts analyzed in this study fall under the umbrella term "lesbian," and Terry Castle's positions on the lesbian subject as articulated in *The Apparitional Lesbian* (1995) allow for a more in-depth investigation of this term. Castle's overarching claim is that "the lesbian" has been ghosted, by which she means "made to seem invisible–by culture itself," and that, even though the lesbian has been "there, quite plainly, in front of us," she remains unseen (4).[24] Castle correctly spots "the lesbian" as a "threat to patriarchal protocol," for the lesbian represents "women indifferent or resistant to male desire" (5), which is due in no small part because the figure of the lesbian "challenges the moral, sexual, and the psychic authority of men so thoroughly" (5). Castle likewise identifies the realm of literature as the primarily realm of the "work of ghosting" the lesbian (6). In more positive thinking, Castle suggests that, despite the lesbian's invisibility, she "has always been integrated into the very fabric of cultural life," and she has managed "to insert herself into the larger world of human affairs" (17). This study likewise identifies women's relationships that today might be labeled "lesbian," which contributes to a project of making lesbian identities and relationships visible.

Instead of trying to assume that "lesbian" has a stable definition, Castle lays out four provocative statements of what she believes the lesbian is *not*: 1. She is not a recent

[24] Kord, for instance, begins "Eternal Love or Sentimental Discourse" with a nod to Maggiore, who has found what has been "an almost total obliteration of the lesbian in history," which Kord argues "doubly appertains to German scholarship, where the subject seems to be even more taboo than in English-speaking cultures" (228).

invention; 2. She is not asexual; 3. She is not a gay man; 4. She is not a nonsense ("Lesbian" 8-15). With her first point – the lesbian is not a recent invention – Castle challenges Michel Foucault's assertion that "holds that lesbianism, at least in the flagrantly sexualized sense that we usually understand the term today, is by and large a fabrication of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century male sexologists" (Castle, "Lesbian" 8).[25] Castle's confrontation with Foucault as well as Eve Sedgwick's comments on homosexuality bolsters her third point – the lesbian is not a gay man – in that the comments that hold steady as pertaining to male homosexuality do not directly transfer to female homosexuality.[26] I expand on this final point – that the lesbian is not nonsense – in these readings of German women authors around 1800 to return power to women's friendships, even though the male-ordered society views them as a threat and tries to control and silence these types of relationships.[27] Although lesbian relationships are not necessarily always at the core of my work, they consistently remain on the

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[25] Here one might also think about how Thomas Laqueur argues in *Making Sex* that a shift occurred around the time of Enlightenment from a societal understanding of a one-sex to a two-sex model. He also argues: "[A]lmost everything one wants to *say* about sex–however sex is understood–already has in it a claim about gender. Sex, in both the one-sex and the two-sex worlds, is situational, it is explicable only within the context of battles over gender and power" (11).

[26] Castle continues her argument: "As soon as the lesbian in lumped in–for better or for worse–with her male homosexual counterpart, the singularity of her experience (sexual and otherwise) tends to become obscured" ("Lesbian" 12).

[27] See also Castle: "It is true, of course, that matters have changed dramatically over the past thirty years of so–thanks in large part to the extraordinarily influential books of the French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault. However belatedly, the work of acknowledgment and description has begun. *The History of Sexuality* […translated into English in 1978] was not only the first major work of European intellectual history to explore questions of sexual knowledge in relation to culture at large, it also helped to license a host of ground-breaking studies, in particular, of male homosexuality" ("Lesbianism" 10). "In the past five centuries, female same-sex love has become more and more visible as a Western cultural preoccupation, even as lesbian-themed writing–celebratory and scurrilous, polite and prurient–has proliferated in both public and private spheres" (Castle, "Lesbianism" 11).

periphery, a pervasive threat to the male patriarchal establishment that tries to control and censor women authors around 1800. Whether these women's relationships are always overtly sexual, or whether they are empowering in fostering communication between women, relationships between women push men and male-authored works out of the center, which is precisely one aim of this study.

More than identifying women's relationships, this study tries to *locate* these relationships between women, as well as between women and men, in narrated spaces. By directing a reader's gaze toward various spaces and noting points of intersection, overlap, or ambiguity, one can link space with constructions of gender and sexuality. Reconsidering the gendered division that supposedly existed between public and private spheres in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries challenges modes of thinking that consider women authors as belonging to another space, separate from canonical and giant male literary figures like Goethe and Schiller.[28]

"Space," like "woman," is a complicated category that resists an easy definition and one that calls forth a wide variety of pre-existing theories on space (as well as place).[29] My concept of space more closely aligns with the German word "Räumlichkeit," where the stem "Raum" evokes the "Zimmer" of *Frauenzimmer*. Instead of arguing for a stable definition of "Räumlichkeit," this study looks three elements that connect a woman author's relationship to space: her socio-political position, her access to the public sphere, and her representation of "Räumlichkeit" as depicted in literary texts. Women authors

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[28] Germany around 1800 was a "society highly structured by gender," which means that "every significant aspect of itself–daily activities, the personalities of its people, the spaces in its farms and towns, its cultural processes and products" relates to concepts of masculinity and femininity (Dawson 13).

[29] Edward Soja, for example, argues for a "triple dialectic of space, time, and social being" in *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) (12).

around 1800 have historically been neglected and marginalized. For this reason, the space they are writing *from* allows for more awareness of how they construct the literary space they imagine.[30] In conjunction with how each space is narrated, the form of the literary text and how the genre the author chooses to write in informs a reading of the particular space described.

Space is not an easily distinguishable realm, even though one might be able to trace the demarcations of a room, which could include physical walls, doors, or windows. In the bedroom, for example, there are potentially various nested layers that separate outer areas from inner ones: there can exist the bed as well as the space around the bed (which might include a curtain that separates the bed from the rest of the bedroom). Sheets, covers, and rugs can provide other types of physical separation. In the metaphysical or figurative realms, there are also spaces within spaces, or what could be understood as "overlapping universes" (Ardener 13). Thresholds, windows, and doors can be permeable boundaries between spaces that provide interaction between public and private domains. Different spaces in German literature around 1800 change communication between men and women, as well as between women. Spaces can be sites of danger, safety, privacy, and freedom. Through writing spaces, women narrate their own experiences and identities, which they mediate in their literature. A reading of each space through a variety of genres teases out differences among narrative techniques and understands how spaces are narratively constructed; for example, the epistolary novel allows a special way of reading the space of the bedroom, or the short story allows for a new reading of theatricality and narrative performance.

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[30] Thus, I ask: what kind of education did the author have? What motivated her to write? How did her socio-political position in German-speaking areas prepare her to write?

The Discourse Around 1800

Women exist in a precarious position in German literature and theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historically, women did not have the same freedoms are men did, even though the Enlightenment changed the how authors and critics viewed education. While (white, upper-class, heterosexual) men were encouraged to internalize values of morality, taste, and judgment, women were repeatedly encouraged to remain at home, and their main responsibility became the education of their children. However, as is often the case, the vilifying and (from a modern perspective) misogynistic condemnation by men was offset by a burgeoning population of women writers and female figures in literature. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and Theodor Gottlieb Hippel's *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* (published that same year) defend women and champion their rights to education. Their works stand in contrast to texts like Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile oder über die Erziehung* (1762, originally published in French as *Émile, ou De l'éducation*) and Joachim Heinrich Campe's *Väterlicher Rath für meine Tochter* (1789), both of which place women squarely within the confines of the home and emphasize women's roles as mothers.

The topic of education was popular during the eighteenth century, and opinions on how to raise young men/boys differed from how to educate young women/girls, which was discussed in various texts written throughout the century, reaching its pinnacle in the late 1780s and the 1790s. *Hausväterliteratur*, popular in the first half of the eighteenth century, gave way to new suggestions of educational reform from the 1760s to the early

1780s.[31] Two contrasting texts, *Väterlicher Rath* and *Emile*, show contrasting views on women's education around 1800. On the one hand, Campe outlines his ideas concerning girls' education in *Väterlicher Rath für meine Tochter*, and he relegates girls' education to a domestic affair. Although he addresses all the contents of this work to women, his philosophy, at its core, is not so different from Rousseau's, as articulated in *Èmile, oder über die Erziehung*, which devotes four of its five chapters to a discussion on how to raise Èmile, an imaginary son of the author, to be a productive and properly socialized member of society. Even just the proportions of *Èmile* show that less value was ascribed to women's education by authors and thinkers such as Rousseau. The fifth chapter, devoted to a hypothetical girl's upbringing, is titled "Sophie or the Woman." Sophie, who is written as Èmile's complement, is also his intended betrothed. Sophie is not supposed to be educated for her own sake; rather, her education is there for Èmile; her future is tied to his, and all her education is meant to support Èmile's life trajectory.

Rousseau's *Èmile* and Campe's *Väterlicher Rath* demonstrate an "Enlightened" male's perspective on women and their role in society. Rousseau insists on women's inferiority and makes it clear that "[w]oman and man are made for one another, but their mutual dependence is not equal" (364). Campe ensures that women are positioned in relation to men: "Du bist ein *Frauenzimmer* – also bestimmt und berufen zu allem, was das Weib dem Manne, der menschlichen und der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft seyn soll" (369). Women's responsibility is not directed at the self, according to Campe, but instead to the outer realms of humanity and society. At the time during which these theoretical treatises were published, women were increasingly bound to the home (and their duty as

[31] See Petschauer 265.

mothers), discouraged from pursuing individual aspirations (that did not entail being wife and mother, like authorship). Campe sees women as weaker than men, bound to the house and domestic affairs, for he argues that women are *made for* the domestic realm.[32] Campe cuts women off from accessing the public realm by placing them in the inner realm of the household and argues that the most important role for women is that of wives, of mothers in charge of their children's *Bildung*, and the inside of the house. Campe also elaborates on the physical differences between men and women, and writes that women are intrinsically weaker than men, and thus they must live aware of their weakened bodies and minds.[33] In addressing his female readership,[34] Campe writes, "Du hast also eine zweifache Bestimmung, eine allgemeine und eine besondere, eine als Mensch und eine als Weib" (5-6). Although Campe includes women in the category "Mensch," he also subordinates them. The "Weib," according to Campe, should complement her male counterpart. Campe acknowledges that a woman's influence can extend beyond the walls of her home, but this should be done in an appropriate manner.[35] According to Campe, when women remain bound to their home and their family, they

[32] See also Campe, who continues, "[I]hr seid vielmehr geschaffen […] um beglückende Gattinnen, bildende Mütter und weise Vorsteherinnen des inner Hauswesens zu werden" (14-15).
[33] "Das Erste und Nöthigste, was ich dir, wofern du selbst es nicht schon längst bemerkt haben solltest, hier zu melden habe, ist: daß das Geschlecht, zu dem du gehörtst, nach unserer dermahligen Weltverfassung, in einem abhängigen und auf geistige sowohl als körperliche Schwächung abzielenden Zustande lebt" (19).
[34] His intended readership is "für junge Frauenzimmer des glücklichen Mittelstandes, nicht für junge Damen von Stande" (vii).
[35] "Denn nicht bloß das häusliche Familienglück, sondern auch – was dem ersten Gehör nach unglaublich klingt – das öffentliche Wohl des Staates, steht größtentheils in eurer Hand, hängt größtentheils, um nicht zu sagen ganz, von der Art und Weise ab, wie das weibliche Geschlecht seine natürliche und bürgerliche Bestimmung erfüllt" (15).

fulfill their role for the state. Thus, each author offers women some sort of role, but these roles merely bolster male figures.

Hippel recognizes women's subordinate position in society in *Über die Verbesserung der Weiber*, but he disagrees with the current situation. Hippel, like Rousseau and unlike Campe, directs his treatise to a male readership. His thoughts are meant to provoke established norms and to bring together ideas of "Weiblichkeit" with both past and present treatment of women. Hippel recognizes the natural difference between men and women residing in women's ability to bear children, but he believes that society extends women's "rest" time to prepare her for a "Sklavenschicksal" (87). He grounds his claims in history and traces the effects of current society with primitive ones. The domestication of animals, according to Hippel, likewise resulted in the domestication (and enslavement) of women:

> Irgend ein Zufall, und ohne Zweifel die Anhänglichkeit mancher Thiere an den Menschen, lehrte ihn (wahrscheinlich zuerst das Weib), einige Gattungen von Thieren zu seinem beständigen Brauch und Dienste zu zähmen […] Jetzt mussten die Geschäfte getheilt werden; und da wählte denn der Mann die Jagd, das Weib den Haushalt. So ward das Weib allmählich die Befehlshaberin der Hausthiere, und eh' es sich's versah, das erste Hausthier selbst. Das arme Weib! (90)

These rhetorical gestures (the correlation between animals and women, as well as the final exclamation) situate Hippel as an advocate for woman's rights. Although he does not go so far as to propose outright equality between genders, he does advocate for women to care for other women. Chapter Five, titled "Verbesserungs-Vorschläge," strives to create a change in women's status in establishing a women's community, of

sorts: “Weibliche Ärzte müssten sich weit eher das Zutrauen bei den Kranken ihres Geschlechtes erwerben. Diese würden ihre Gebrechen leichter und mit weniger Zwang entdecken, und jene, aus Erfahrung mit der Natur und Beschaffenheit des weiblichen Körpers […] Dann würden weibliche Krankheiten nicht mehr die Schande der Ärzte seyn” (337). Hippel is constrained to the prevailing discourse that women and men are separate; he repeatedly challenges this assertion minutely, and overall he attempts to raise the status of women. By referring to various philosophers, intellectuals, and ancient thinkers such as Hume, Locke, Aristophanes, and Socrates, Hippel participates in an enlightened conversation from which women were often excluded (since they were usually denied an education in the Classics). In this way, Hippel takes on a (masculine) voice for women in order to challenge beliefs such as those given forth by Rousseau and Campe.

Mary Wollstonecraft’s seminal *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) uses terminology of the Enlightenment and reason to establish the misogynistic viewpoints of her time. Her influential piece, contemporary with the scope of this study, made waves throughout Europe. In her introduction, she argues for a girl’s education: “Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue; for truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general practice” (vi-vii). Wollstonecraft, for example, directly addresses Rousseau’s problematic Sophie: “I now principally allude to Rousseau, for his character of Sophia is, undoubtedly, a captivating one, though it appears to me grossly unnatural; however it is not the superstructure, but the foundation of her character, the

principles on which her education was built, that I mean to attack" (45). The problem of who Sophie was and where she might have a place to speak and communicate with other Sophies is one of the concerns of this dissertation. Wollstonecraft's concern transcends her native country and expand to inform contemporary discourse in German-speaking areas.

French author and critic Madame Germaine de Staël (1766-1817) discusses how women authors try to enter the public realm in her piece *On Literature Considered in Its Relationship to Social Institutions* (1800). She argues that, "It would no doubt be generally preferable for women to devote themselves entirely to the domestic virtues, but the peculiar thing about men's judgment of women is that they are much likelier to forgive women for neglecting these duties than for attracting attention by unusual talent" (605). Here, de Staël articulates the double-bind that women faced; it was *not just* "neglecting" domestic duties that garnered criticism, but it was even more so "unusual talent." An unusual talent could contend with men's talents, and this was viewed as a particular threat. De Staël, however, encourages both men and women to be educated, "[f]or women to pay attention to the development of mind and reason would promote both enlightenment and the happiness of society in general" (608). Finally, de Staël suggests that women can write, but that their texts remain masked and disguised in the language of lies: "Women have no way to show the truth, no way to throw light on their lives. The public hears the lie; only their intimate friends can judge the truth" (609). "Remodeling the Frauenzimmer" picks up on this comment in order to explore how women could negotiate intimate relationships and how they employed various genres in order to speak to their female friends in coded and nuanced ways.

Although the split between public and private spheres in the eighteenth century as articulated in Habermas' *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) has been challenged by feminist scholars who do not see such a neat divide in women's literary activity,[36] there are still notable differences between how men and women had access to the public sphere in eighteenth-century Germany. According to Habermas, the idea of *Öffentlichkeit* was just being formed in the public consciousness in the eighteenth century. Men dominated the public sphere, and women were bound to the private sphere and told in publications of their time (specifically at in the 1780s and 1790s) to stay at home, away from the bourgeoning industry and cultural capital. Women were strongly encouraged to remain tied to the domestic realm, and they were discouraged from becoming public figures involved in larger debates, such as philosophy and politics. Access to the public sphere was limited, if not completely denied, to them.

Current Trends

In *A Room of One's Own* (1928), Virginia Woolf explores the precarious position of women authors in recent Western European history. She points out a woman author's need for financial stability and for a modicum of independence, and calls attention to the necessity for women to "have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (3). This financial status carries over to women writing around 1800, for women authors were primarily of the middle/upper classes (because they had to have been given enough of an education to be literate). Although many women also *had* to write to earn or supplement an income, most women authors still had to have privileges that went beyond what was

[36] See, for example, Dupree "Mask" 15-16 and Arons 1, 8.

normal at the time. The German women authors explored in this dissertation came from the middle and upper classes, had some sort of education while they were being raised, and a few already had some money (perhaps through inheritances) – but even these more well-off women faced numerous obstacles, primarily the gendered restrictions that tried to deny them greater access to the public sphere.

Laura Mulvey, in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), which discusses the scopophilic and voyeuristic male gaze in cinema, contributes to a discussion of how the male gaze desires and controls women. Mulvey points out, "Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions throughout linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning" (2182). Many of the women depicted in the works explored here are written as statues or frozen in stone and subject to men's gazes. Mulvey points out how seeing and being seen are historically gendered roles, with seeing being the active/male position, and being seen the passive/female position: "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact" (Mulvey 2186). Static or statuary forms begin to move, disrupting the constant gaze, which challenges the designation of the body to further disrupt how men view and control them. Related to Mulvey's theories on the male gaze is Michel Foucault's work on the Panopticon as an institution that controls and monitors other institutions is apt for this

study, especially with the theory that "power should be visible and verifiable" (201). By robbing women of power, or, at the very least, keeping them from accessing agency, male authors could ensure that their own voices remained in the dominant realm.[37]

Chapters

Chapter 1, "Letters from the Bedroom: Textual Assault in Sophie von La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) and Marianne Ehrmann's *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788)," analyzes these two women-authored epistolary novels to reframe a discussion of assault as portrayed in Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Die Marquise von O…* (1808). The bedroom is a space always being controlled and monitored by men, and it becomes a site of textual and physical assault. Two scenes of assault depicted in *Die Marquise von O…* deny any narrative about the Marquise's experience of the assault, and Kleist covers up an emerging voice on assault that existed in the novels explored in this chapter. In addition, *Sternheim* and *Amalie* are prefaced by male-authored voices who position the novels as didactic or moral in function, which allows them to be published. For example, Wieland, La Roche's editor, repeatedly inserts his voice throughout the narrative to assert his control and maintain the visibility of his voice.

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[37] See also Michel Foucault, who challenges the "repressive hypothesis" in *History of Sexuality* (Volume 1) and links the repression of sex to censorship: "If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression" (6). "All these negative elements–defenses, censorships, denials–which the repressive hypothesis groups together in one great central mechanism destined to say no, are doubtless only component part that have a local and tactical role to play in a transformation into discourse, a technology of power, and a will to knowledge that are far from being reducible to the former" (12).

The theater as explored in Chapter 2, "Danger at every Turn: Performing the Theater in Sophie Mereau's 'Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt' (1806) and Elise Bürger's *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* (1814)," looks at how women authors respond to G. E. Lessing's theatrical depictions of women and to cultural stereotypes that view actresses as deceptive or untrustworthy. To this end, representations of the theater in Mereau's short story "Die Flucht" and in Bürger's "Scherzspiel" *Die antike Statue* show how the female protagonists use performance and theatricality to gain control over their relationships, but, while both texts end with happy marriages or reunions, the texts reveal how vulnerable women are and how men continue to have power over them. The women protagonists can use theatricality to their advantage, but they are forced to remain within heteronormative boundaries The intense scrutiny of the male gaze shows how Bürger and Mereau use parody to distort the power of that gaze.

In Chapter 3, "Whisked Away: Danger and Sickness at the Masked Ball in Sophie von La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) and Elisa von der Recke's *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* (1794; 1826)," the issue of performance elaborates on the masked ball and the gendered understanding of dance at courtly events. In Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) and in Eichendorff's *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1818), the male protagonists idealize the women they dance with by controlling and monitoring them with their gazes. Werther narrates the tension between the "proper" minuet and the "scandalous" waltz, which is a tension likewise articulated in *Sternheim,* published three years earlier. This chapter returns to La Roche's *Sternheim* to see how Sophie von Sternheim negotiates conflicting male demands put on her when she dances with the prince, and her body collapses as a

result of her confrontation with Lord Seymour. In von der Recke's four-act play *Familien=Scenen*, the four couples in the text prepare for the upcoming masked ball by questioning their current relationships, and the presence of the masked ball causes two women to fall ill. The female body, when both ill and masked, complicates the embodiment of the strain put on her by society. Even when the women are masked and thus have more anonymity and freedom, their bodies can weaken, in particular as related to their nerves or pulses.

In Chapter 4, "Far from Home: Gender and Nationality at the Italian Carnival in Marianne Ehrmann's *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788) and Germaine de Staël's *Corinna, oder Italien* (1807)," the motif of masking reframes the issue of disguise and deception in terms of nationality as well as gender, by moving outside of Germany and analyzing literary representations of the carnival in Italy. Goethe tries to systematize the carnival in an ordered schema in "Das römische Carneval," which he fails to do. Madame de Staël's aesthetic novel *Corinna* and Ehrmann's *Amalie* expose how female protagonists use their trips to Italy to question their identities as German women. Because the German nation states were fragmented around 1800, questions of nationality and related gender roles run through German literature of this time. The Italian carnival allows for a new way of looking at gender and tries to offer a way to escape from the tightly monitored and controlled male gaze of German society, but, even in Italy, women remain monitored and controlled by the gaze and idealized perceptions placed upon them by men.

This dissertation tries to parallel women's continued effort to access the public sphere. To that end, the chapters begin in the center of the home – the bedroom – and

move *outwards*, to first the controlled and monitored theater, then to the more complicated intermingling of genders at the masked ball, before leaving Germany to enter Italy (or the German imagination of Italy). Like women writers around 1800, this study searches out a space that allows women to express themselves, to speak of their treatment in society, and to establish their desire to communicate with a wider world than what they have in their own homes. Other topics that thread throughout this dissertation include the power of the male gaze (and its limits), how women's writing negotiates semblances of order/disorder and chaos, various motifs of masking (both thematically as well as formally), women's expression of sexuality (heteronormative or otherwise), and the tension between the moving and the static female form. These ideas are part of the larger picture of what it meant for a woman to be writing around 1800, and how she narrates space in the texts she brings to the public sphere.

CHAPTER I:

LETTERS FROM THE BEDROOM: TEXTUAL ASSAULT IN SOPHIE VON LA ROCHE'S *GESCHICHTE DES FRÄULEINS VON STERNHEIM* (1771) AND MARIANNE EHRMANN'S *AMALIE. EINE WAHRE GESCHICHTE IN BRIEFEN* (1788)

"Die Todesangst trieb mich aus dem Bette, ich suchte ihn zu entwaffnen, stürzte zu seinen Füßen, aber seine Raserei wurde immer heftiger, er wand meine langen Haare um seine Hand und schleppte mich barbarisch im Zimmer herum" (1.173). Amalie, in Marianne Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* experiences the bedroom she shares with her husband as a place of assault. This scene of violent and graphic domestic abuse[38] depicts the bedroom in literature around 1800 as a crime scene. The bedroom of the eighteenth century, situated within the home and the domestic realm, was often considered a feminine space – it was associated with intimacy, privacy, and domesticity, and it was kept under the wife's eye and command. Yet, this designation quickly becomes problematic in literature of the eighteenth century, which makes it clear that the bedroom is also an ambivalent space, for it can also be a space used *against* women. It is in Kleist's novella *Die Marquise von O…* (1808) that the aftermath of this invasion reaches its climax; it can be the site of assault or forced penetration (as an actual description of rape or a figurative description). In *Die Marquise von O…* the Marquise is assaulted twice, first by a nameless stranger in the castle's wings during a siege, and second in the bedroom by her father. In both of these scenes, the Marquise does not narrate her memories or thoughts about being assaulted; Kleist has removed the Marquise's point of view concerning these moments of assault. Two

[38] Dupree describes this scene as "one of the most graphic depictions of domestic violence in eighteenth-century German literature" ("Mask" 107).

women-authored epistolary novels, Sophie von La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) and Ehrmann's *Amalie* verbalize an emerging discourse about women's traumatic experiences in the bedroom that Kleist in effect silences. The narrators of these novels describe scenes of assault, and it is the epistolary format, I argue, that allows for a woman's point of view (to begin to) to emerge.

Traumatic silence in Kleist's *Die Marquise von O…*

Two scenes of assault in Kleist's novella *Die Marquise von O…,* written in 1807 and published in *Phöbus* in 1808 (Birkhold 1), portray a woman's powerlessness and voicelessness in the face of male power. In the novella's most famous scene, the man who first saves the Marquise from being assaulted by a band of men moves her to the wings of the castle and assaults her there. At the moment of assault, the Marquise falls into unconsciousness: she is "völlig bewußtlos" (114). The rape remains unnarrated, implied simply by the phrase: "Hier – traf er" (114). This dash, which has long been the source of scholarly discussion, has also drawn the attention of feminist criticism, which pays careful consideration to what the presence of the dash implies; Dorrit Cohn, for example, calls the dash "the most pregnant graphic sign in German literature" (129).[39] After the assault, the widowed Marquise returns to her life with her parents when an unrecognized stranger comes to stay with the Marquise and her family. Although the stranger tries to convince the Marquise to return his affections, she refuses to marry him, so he leaves. When the Marquise discovers that she is pregnant but does not know how

[39] She goes on to argue that "the scenic punctuality of the narrative context" in this paragraph "deliberately misleads the reader into ignoring the discrete dash," but "the blank point […] is nothing less than the generating matric of the entire plot, the pivotal *unerhörte Begebenheit* around which the novella revolves" (129).

(she cannot remember the rape) or who the father is, her own father becomes upset and expels her from their house. He soon relents after the Marquise tries to discover the identity of her unborn child's father by publishing a search in the newspaper, which convinces the Marquise's father, the Count, of her innocence, and she is allowed to return home. Alone in the bedroom with his daughter, the Count embraces in his daughter in what appears to be an incestuous act of forgiveness that reestablishes the balance of the nuclear family. The novella ends with the stranger revealing his identity to the Marquise as the father of her child. The two marry, and the Marquise's father makes her his sole heir. The happy ending of the novella mitigates the awful fact that the Marquise has to marry the man who raped her, and she remains trapped in a patriarchal order and heteronormative constructs.[40]

The absence of a description of the rape (signified by the placeholder of the dash) should be read alongside the scene of embrace between the Marquise and her father. Read together, these two scenes show a doubling of the loss of agency. The Marquise is thus twice assaulted in *Die Marquise*, and both scenes portray her helplessness in the presence of male power, whether juridical or familial.[41] Both times that the Marquise is assaulted, her point of view is not related to the viewer. The first assault is completely removed from the textual page and covered up with a dash, and the second scene is kept

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[40] Although the Marquise does have limited independence, in that she spends the first years of her marriage away from her husband, she still ends up married to the man who assaulted her.

[41] See Birkhold "The Trial of the Marquise of O…: A Case for Enlightened Jurisprudence?" for a discussion of a reading of *Die Marquise von O…* in light of recent legal developments and the *ALR*. In this article, Birkhold, for example, discusses how the "medicological discourse at the turn of the nineteenth century was engrossed with the problem of whether women could be impregnated against their wills, covering raped, sleeping, and unconscious women" (6).

private by the locked door of the bedroom, through which the Marquise's mother peers to bear witness to this scene. The mother's perspective, mediated and distanced, is the only one that describes the scene between father and daughter. It is not clear during the second assault whether or not the Marquise is even conscious. The closed bedroom doors are intended to conceal this incestuous moment, but the keyhole allows for visual access that shows the mother the physical gestures that make up this scene. The mother watches the silent Marquise "still, mit zurückgebeugtem Nacken, die Augen fest geschlossen" (150)[42] and the variety of movements the Count makes toward his daughter, which include pressing "lange, heiße und lechzende Küsse" on her mouth while he sits over her like over "seiner ersten Lieben" (150).[43] In a gesture that emphasizes the importance of seeing, the scene that is laid out before the mother alludes to the theatrical genres of the panorama and *tableaux vivants*.[44] Witnessing the embrace alleviates the mother, who responds by gleefully setting the dinner table and reveling in her knowledge that balance has been restored in the family. It is unclear how conscious the Marquise is, for, as with the first assault, the reader is denied access to the Marquise's mind. The reader witnesses the scene through the mother's eyes, which melds both gazes into one, and the reader must partake in the mother's voyeuristic delight.[45] Unlike the first scene of assault

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[42] Weinecke also argues that the Marquise is unconscious (77).
[43] Weinecke comments, "This passage remains, to my taste, one of the most disturbing scenes in German literature" (77).
[44] *Tableaux vivants*, most popular in the 1790s, were performed by women, often in silence, and they were usually re-created scenes from famous Greek paintings. As Krüger-Fürhoff describes, the *tableau vivant*, such living pictures "duplicate the moral poses that complete contemporary novels and plays" (79). Krüger-Fürhoff reads this scene as being revealing as well as concealing: "the use of aesthetic topoi also paves the way for uttering the unspeakable; in the guise of theatrical and pictorial conventions, the scandal of father-daughter desire can be veiled and displayed at the same time" (82).
[45] See Krüger-Fürhoff 81.

covered up by a dash, the reader here can watch vis-à-vis the mother what happens to the Marquise. The scene hinges on the mother seeing the husband embrace their daughter, and thus this scene of reconciliation depends on her overcoming the physical barrier that separates them. Although the mother's gaze is female, since it originates from a woman's eyes, it concerns the establishment of patriarchal norms, and thus her relief at this scene's erotically-charged conclusion is indicative of society's male-coded gaze. The keyhole, by privileging only the male perspective, preserves behind lock and key the secret that underwrites male authority. Even though the Count's direct power over his daughter is performed and brought to the reader's attention and not entirely covered up by a dash – unlike the Commandant's assault on Sophie in the opening scene of the novella – it is still mediated and depersonalized. In *Die Marquise,* rape is covered up and normalized, and the Marquise's family depends on the sacrifice of the daughter to the father and the mother's positive reaction to and gratitude for her daughter's powerlessness.[46]

That *Die Marquise von O…* twice conceals from the reader the Marquise's point of view during the times she is assaulted raises various questions about what it would mean for a woman to be able to narrate her own experience of being assaulted, or how the relationship and power (im)balance between men and women would be altered if women could narrate their own experiences. Two women's voices that threaten to speak out and reveal the moment of rape before Kleist silences it in his novella are Sophie von La Roche with *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) and Marianne Ehrmann with *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788). These two women-authored texts

[46] See Weinecke: "Weeping and ostensibly weak, the father asserts his right to his daughter in a way that brings to the foreground all the sexual tension that the well-known father-daughter scenes of *Empfindsamkeit* had only implied or concealed under that torrent of words that is here cut off" (77).

locate a more aggressive and explicit scene of assault in the bedroom, and the two novels, both written in epistolary form, narrate the assaults in more detail. This chapter shows how *Die Marquise* covers up an emerging female voice about representations of assault that take place in the bedroom, for the narrating persona removes the rape from the textual page and away from the readers' eyes.

Both *Sternheim* and *Amalie* are examples of the epistolary novel, a genre that was associated with women in the latter half of the eighteenth century and was considered a "suitable" genre for women authors to write and publish (Baldwin 24). Although men also write in epistolary forms (notably Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, 1774), the epistolary novel was coded as a "feminine" genre approaching 1800. Epistolary culture and the epistolary novel were primarily concerned with issues of domesticity, as well as the nuclear family – both important issues of the eighteenth century. The appropriateness of the epistolary form was no doubt influenced by the popularity of letter writing that was a crucial form of communication for women in the eighteenth century. Letters allowed women to communicate across distance and time, and they had the advantage of being both private and yet potentially public, which makes them conducive as the foundation of this genre (Dawson 83). Letters could exist both within the public and private realms, and letter writing became a way for women to reach an audience outside of the house. The epistolary novel was a genre that contained "an aura of privacy and naturalness" that was "considered the most legitimate vehicle for women's text" (Baldwin 34).[47] Epistolary novels also bolster women's relationships with one another. In

[47] See also Wurst: "As a communicative exchange between private citizens within the private sphere yet transcending the domestic realm of the family, it extended people's immediate social nexus" ("Fabricating Pleasure" 179). Also: "Almost from the moment

Amalie, for example, the two letter writers are women (Amalie and Fanny), whose letters support and strengthen their friendship throughout the novel. Even the *act* of letter writing is one that affirms the women's friendship. Fanny and Amalie can verbalize their thoughts and thus explore their intensity.[48] The two women are separated by space and time, but their letters offer them a way to communicate despite their distance. *Sternheim*, which is comprised of letters written by male and female characters, likewise depicts a female friendship within its form: Rosina, Sophie von Sternheim's friend's sister, compiles the various letters (and occasionally comments on them), in which she frames Sophie's experiences and establishes a textual relationship with Sophie. In both novels, women's voices are foregrounded (in *Amalie* more than in *Sternheim*, for male characters also have voices in La Roche's text).

In epistolary novels, the writer's voice is supposedly unmediated and is definitely foregrounded. Because the letter depicts at least part of a conversation – one whose parts include reading, writing, and responding – voices and thoughts remain textually visible, which expose tensions particular to women-authored literature of the time. Amalie, for example, avoids certain details of her assault that she fears might upset Fanny too much. Letters in *Sternheim* and *Amalie* reveal events that take place within the bedroom, but they also conceal certain details or perspectives. The letters in these two novels are always written after the assault, and they are thus also distanced by time and memory, so that, by time the assault is narrated, it has already occurred. In this way, the letters are

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women's own lives became the subject of literature, they become emboldened enough to write it--especially when the form is one that they have been encouraged to use: the epistolary form" (Goodman and Waldstein 8).

[48] Werther's passion, for example, is as enflamed by writing as it is by the actual sight of Lotte.

mediated not only by voice, but also by the passage of time, which repeats language's inability to represent immediacy.

Women authors could give their female characters voices in epistolary novels and thereby establish a more prominent portrayal of women's experience, but their texts remain censored and controlled. Not only did women authors of the eighteenth century have to publish their works with the approval of male editors, publishers, and collaborators, but they also risked "coming out" as writers and being vulnerable once they had a place in the public domain.[49] Women authors could not escape the male powers that kept watch over them, either in the domestic or public realms. However much freedom writing letters afforded women, they were still always mediated and controlled by men through the process publication, whose effects are anticipated and thus shape women's writing *avant la lettre*.

"Miltons Bild der Eva" – The Perception and Possession of Ideal Femininity in *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*

Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim (1771) was Sophie von La Roche's first published novel, and its appearance established her as "Germany's first female novelist" (Arons 49). As one of the first German-language epistolary novels that changed women-authored literature specifically and the German novel generally, its popularity and the gender of its author make it all the more groundbreaking. *Sternheim* appeared anonymously with a foreword by C. M. Wieland that commends the book and praises its

[49] See introduction for more explanation of the dangers of being a public woman author around 1800.

virtuous and didactic qualities.[50] The novel is made up of letters arranged chronologically, written primarily by Sophie, Lord Seymour, and Lord Derby.[51] Sophie's friend's sister Rosina has compiled the letters, and she occasionally interjects her own voice into the novel, which makes her both a visible narrator-editor as well as an observer of the letters she has compiled. The novel's plot follows young Sophie von Sternheim after her parents die to her aunt and uncle's house.[52] Throughout the novel, Sophie has to identify deceivers and those trying to take advantage of her in order to learn which man she should marry: Derby or Seymour. At the masked ball that occurs at the end of Book I, Sophie falls ill and marries Derby. In Book II, Derby, whom Sophie believes to be her legal husband, reveals that their marriage is actually a sham (for his friend disguises himself as a priest to perform a false ceremony) after he attacks her in her room. In Book II, Sophie assumes the pseudonym "Frau Leidens" and works as a governess for girls until she marries Seymour at the end of the novel, and, similar to *Die Marquise von O…*,

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[50] See Balmer for a history of the novel's publication (87).

[51] See Balmer (88) and Baldwin, who argues, "The epistolary structure of *Sternheim* foregrounds the processes of reading and writing and informs the novel's metafictional considerations. By juxtaposing the letters of different characters, La Roche experiments with various narrative paradigms for relating the heroine's history. The tensions arising from the desire to control Sophie Sternheim and *Sternheim* within established generic conventions reveal narrative cruxes of La Roche's work and reflect the literary and social pressures of the late eighteenth-century Germany that bear on female stories of identity" (113). "Previously, women's epistolary style had been proposed as a model of natural style. Now, the letter could integrate itself into romantic aesthetic theory as a whole. It was an ideal medium in which to synthesize the real and the ideal. It could fulfill the romantic criterion for fragmentary form, both internally (moving rapidly from topic to topic, with no formal requirements) and externally (a piece of reality lifted from its context)." (Goodman and Waldstein 21). "Therefore, while the letter is not a genre that has remained significant for the literary canon, its theoretical importance for the romantics clearly gave women the freedom to explore their expression with it" (Goodman and Waldstein 21).

[52] For the sake of this project, I am less interested in the frame story of Sophie von Sternheim's mother.

the plot concludes with heteronormativity reestablished through a conventional wedding and thus a celebration of what would come to be heteronormativity. With her novel, La Roche addresses important issues women authors of her time faced, which included the double-bind that women writers of the late eighteenth century faced: namely, how to have a voice in the public sphere that actively denied women a space for that voice. La Roche's novel, then, can be read as an attempt to satisfy conflicting aims: it reveals a young woman's struggle in a society that plots against her, but it does so in a way that reads as a didactic model that Wieland, in particular, and society, in general, will deem acceptable. Wieland's preface foregrounds his editorial voice, and it assumes superiority and authority over La Roche.

Much of the success of *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* can be attributed to its adherence to a form considered appropriate for women's writing: it adopts the guise of a didactic, epistolary novel. La Roche's method of didacticism here is to use letters written from the private realm and present them to a reader in order to offer the reader "instruction," and the publication of the "private documents of Sophie's life" as a "didactic moral example" justifies their appearance in the public realm (Baldwin 112). I argue, however, that the text's content and form reveal that the novel is, in fact, more subversive than it at first appears to be.[53] The didacticism of this novel masks the more unconventional modes of storytelling that are more threatening. Sternheim accommodates the conventions of a didactic novel in order for her text to be published, but its didactic

[53] See Meise (142) and Baldwin: "The public availability of the heroine's texts in Rosina's edition is rendered blameless by the epistolary form that vouches for the authenticity of the story and its original private intent, while the individual letters and journal entries written by the heroine attest to her modesty and her natural, virtuous femininity" (112).

purpose is second to its contents, which stray from a virtuous path and instead encompass a variety of experiences, some less virtuous than others.

The title page of the 1771 edition of *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* lists Wieland as the novel's editor, and the author remains anonymous, referred to only as a friend of the editor. Wieland's preface controls as well as frames the novel, and it is part praise and part apology for what he perceives to be the novel's shortcomings,[54] which he lists in the preface. With this list, Wieland undermines the text before it has even begun, with the claim that the novel contains "Mängel, welche den Auspfeifern nicht verbringen bleiben werden" (1.xi). A woman-authored text, Wieland's preface suggests, can serve a didactic purpose only when a male author calls attention to its shortcomings. He makes clear that a woman author remains bound to a man's authority (Meise 135). With his preface, Wieland introduces the text to a mostly female readership and declares it a gift to "allen tugendhaften Müttern, allen liebenswürdigen jungen Töchtern unsrer Nation" (1.vi). He emphasizes the novel's moral and didactic purpose that endeavors to "raise" young German women of the second half of the eighteenth century. He directs his comments toward young women in particular: "Möchten doch, so dacht' ich bey hundert Stellen, möchten meine Töchter so denken, so handeln lernen, wie Sophie Sternheim" (1.viii). Although Wieland's preface encourages a readership to enjoy and learn from the story of Sophie von Sternheim, it only does so by relegating the text to a "feminine" genre.[55] The apologetic tone of his preface mitigates the accomplishment of the novel and its portrayal of traumatic moments, for they are framed as "merely" didactic; they serve

[54] See Richter 137.
[55] See Richter, who believes that La Roche was complicit in Wieland's approach to market her novel (143).

the purpose of instruction rather than revelation. It is also important, of course, that they usurp the feminine voice.

Wieland's interjections as footnotes throughout the novel likewise serve to control the narrative, because they reassert his voice and power as the text's authority. He makes his position as the editor clear and frequently passes judgment on *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. When Sophie writes to Emilia toward the beginning of the novel, "Ich lachte mit, und sagte: Ich verlasse mich auf den rechtsschaffenen Gelehrten, der einmal sagte: Die Empfindungen der Frauenzimmer wären oft richtiger als die Gedanken der Männer" (1.91), Wieland interjects with the footnote, "Eine Bemerkung, welche der Herausgeber aus vieler Erfahrung an sich und andern von Herzen unterschreibt" (1.91). Wieland interrupts the text to support the educated view ("den rechtsschaffenden Gelehrten"), but he does not necessarily support Sophie's point of view. In a more overtly critical footnote, Wieland points out what he considers a weakness of the novel, when, at the end of Book I, Lord Seymour writes to Doctor T. and asks, "ist dieß nicht die Stärke des englischen Erbes von ihrer Großmutter?" (1.106). Wieland adds his comment in a footnote: "Ich habe der kleinen Partheylichkeit des Fräulein von Sternheim für die Englische Nation bereits in der Vorrede als eines Fleckens erwähnt, den ich von diesem vortreflichen Werke hätte wegwischen mögen, wenn es ohne zu grosse Veränderungen thunlich gewesen wäre" (1.105-06). Wieland suggests that he has ultimate control over the novel, because he almost erases what he sees as a "flaw" (which is Sophie's proclivity toward English culture). Although he ends up not making this change, he makes sure that the reader is aware of his power. Wieland's interjections

throughout the novel keep his authoritative position visible. Moreover, his willingness to allow Sophie to have her way lends his authority a benevolent character.

Wieland's voice is also not far from the scene that describes Derby's assault on Sophie. Derby narrates the assault that occurs toward the beginning of Book II by describing how he enters Sophie's *Nachttisch*, asks her to undress, which she refuses to do, and so he sends her chambermaid away and forces himself on her. Before the physical attack, Derby describes Sophie's appearance and likens her beauty to those of ancient Greek statues; when he first walks into the room, he sees Sophie "just wie ihre schonen Haare gekämmt wurden; ihre Kleidung war von weißen Musslin, mit roten Taft, nett an den Leib angepaßt, dessen ganze Bild das volkommenste Ebenmaß der grieschichen Schönheit ist; wie reizend sie aussah!" (2.33). Derby's reference to Sophie's perfect symmetry nods to the aesthetic appeal of ancient Greek beauty, which incorporates motifs later expanded upon in *tableaux* performances. The scopophilia of Derby's gaze is clear; his "cruise her body as if it were an artwork" (Richter, "Breast" 149). The importance of Sophie's physical appearance carries over to the moment when Derby first attacks her: as he grabs her, he is reminded of "Miltons Bild der Eva," which at once points to (his perception of) Sophie's purity and projects this image of a Miltonian Eve onto her. Coupled with the previous references to ancient Greek beauty, this projection of Eve also depersonalizes Sophie, which causes her to be merely representative of idealized images of women, and she loses her individuality, her personhood.

Not only is Sophie depersonalized in this scene, but she also lacks her own voice regarding the events of the assault. The only textual representation of her experience is

framed by and mediated through Derby's quotation of her resistance. Derby quotes Sophie: "Mylord, rief sie aus, Sie zerreißen mein Herz, und meine Liebe für Sie; niemals werd' ich Ihnen diesen Mangel seiner Empfindungen vergeben. Oh Gott, wie verblendet war ich!" (2.33). "Verblendet" not only signals Sophie's mental blindness to Derby's desires, but it also evokes images of statues with carved-out eyes. Along with the repetition of allusions to the statuary, Derby celebrates assaulting the ideal – and he triumphs in his assault, because Sophie becomes speechless and petrified, her silence visible in the statuesque.

Although Wieland mostly interjects Sophie's letters (and less frequently those of the novel's other letter-writers), he adds two footnotes in Derby's narration of the assault. First, Derby writes that he asks for the chambermaid to be sent away before he requests Sophie to undress and let him admire nature's first masterpiece. Here, Wieland uses his footnote to address Derby directly: "Welche Zumuthung, Milord Derby? Konnten Sie ihre Zeit nicht besser nehmen?" (2.33). Wieland's reprimand is directed toward an issue of timing, not one about the assault, in general, nor does he attribute any agency to Sophie or acknowledge her point of view. Wieland does not respect Sophie's space, privacy, or safety. His tone is almost playful, and, by engaging in Derby's letter directly, instead of commenting on its contents from a distance, Wieland inserts himself into the narrative in a fraternal gesture. Wieland's symbolic act of penetration here is not as obviously violent as Derby's attack on Sophie, but that these two acts of penetration – one physical, one textual – occur at the same time, ties them together and creates parallel movements of invasion, and, in essence, Wieland also textually assaults Sophie in this letter. The second time Wieland writes a footnote in this letter, he re-assumes the voice of

an editor (and less as Derby's comrade) and criticizes Sophie. When Derby writes that Sophie would rather forego pleasure than obtain it through her own efforts ("dennoch wolle sie lieber dieses Vergnügen entbehren, als es durch ihre eigene Bemühung erlangen" [2.34]), Wieland interjects:

> In der That löset diese Antwort das Räthsel gar nicht auf. Milord Derby ersparte ihr ja diese eigene Bemühung – Warum wurde sie dennoch so ungehalten? Warum sagte sie, er zerisse ihr Herz, da er doch nur ihr *Deshabille* zerriß – Vermuthlich, weil sie ihn nicht liebte, nicht zu einer solchen Scene durch die gehörige Gradation vorbereitet, und überhaupt in einer Gemüthsverfassung war, welche einen zu starken Absaz von der seinigen machte, um sich zur Gefälligkeit für einen Eingall, in welchem mehr Muthwillen als Zärtlichkeit zu seyn schien, herabzulassen. (2.34)

Wieland shows a clear lack of sympathy when he says that Derby *only* ("nur") rips Sophie's clothing. The presumable rape of this scene[56] actually suggests that Derby does indeed tear Sophie's body, not just her clothing. By ignoring this presumable rape, Wieland negates its occurrence. Although Wieland insists that Derby does not rip Sophie's heart, the long-term suffering and pain the assault causes her surely demonstrates that Derby has, indeed, affected her heart. Wieland, with this footnote, ignores the actual, physical danger and its brutal ramifications, and he mitigates the seriousness of the attack, thus making La Roche's inclusion of this scene less subversive, in that, if the attack is not as devastating as La Roche intends for it to be, the consequences of such an assault are less shocking to the reader, as well. Wieland's

[56] See Kontje "Domestic" 30 and Baldwin 123.

interjections serve to belittle and downplay Sophie's lived experience. In a way, Wieland prepares the father-daughter scene of assault in Kleist's *Die Marquise*, for Wieland, like the Marquise's mother, looks onto the scene of assault and approves what happens.

Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim oscillates between male and female voices, and a range of letter-writers explore the aftermath of Derby's attack on Sophie and offer contrasting views on Derby's responsibility for the assault. Although Derby is the only person who describes his assault on Sophie, and therefore has control over its narration, Rosina maintains editorial power, too, for she ultimately decides to include Derby's letter, as well as another one that describes how shaken Sophie is after the attack. So, although Sophie does not directly address the assault, Rosina surrounds Derby's voice with Sophie's and Sophie's friend's so that Sophie remains present in the narration. Because Rosina *chooses* to include his letter, she maintains some sort of power and control over his narration. Derby himself does not take responsibility for his attack, and Wieland only lightly chastises his behavior; together, these two male voices speak in unison. The women's voices, on the other hand, work to overcome this fraternal spirit that excuses Derby. Sophie writes to her friend Emilia after the attack, but she does not speak to what happens in the bedroom directly. Rosina fills in the gaps in narration with her explanation of the sequence of events when Sophie's health worsens to the point of being unable to write any letters at all. Rosina writes to her sister Emilia about how she and Sophie learn that Sophie's marriage to Derby was a sham ("war falsch," 2.37) and of the physical distress Sophie displays. Rosina emphasizes her blindness as well as Sophie's regarding the false marriage ("ach wir waren beyde verblendet," 2.37) and continues to write that she cannot look at Sophie ("ich darf unsere Dame nicht ansehen,"

2.37),[57] for the sight of Sternheim not eating and instead crouching the entire day in front of a chair breaks Rosina's heart (2.37). Although, according to Rosina, Sophie occasionally calls out to God, her reactions to Derby remain voiceless: she rips up Derby's letter without a word. Rosina writes, "Blaß und starr wurde sie; endlich, ohne ein Wort zu sagen, zerriß sie mit der größten Heftigkeit seinen Brief, und noch ein Papier, warf die Stücke zu Boden" (2.38). This action of ripping up Derby's letter demonstrates Sophie's refusal to accept Derby's written words. At this point in the novel, Rosina's written words become a placeholder for Sophie's, and, when Sophie can resume the pen, Rosina's voice again fades into the background. This moment of understated homosocial bonding allows a woman's experience still to be shared, for, when one woman's voice (Sophie's) is muted, another one (Rosina) speaks up to make sure a woman's experience is still being recounted. However, it does not, in essence, matter *which* woman speaks (or writes) of the assault, for the damage has already been done.

Sophie resumes her voice in the novel to write to Emilia about how, for "das erstemal in [ihrem] Leben" she allows herself "Gedanken von Rache, von heimlicher List" (2.40) (but she does not speak to any specifics concerning the assault). Now that Sophie has resumed her voice, what she says can be clearly juxtaposed against Derby's words. Derby's letter to his friend, which follows Sophie's repossession of her own voice, comments on his parting from Sophie. He writes that Sophie "muß doch immer [seine] Wahrheitsliebe verehren, und [seine] Kenntnisse der geheimsten Triebfedern wahrer Seele bewundern" (2.42). Derby is mistaken here, for Sophie at no point indicates that she appreciates his honesty, especially since he tricked her into a sham marriage.

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[57] This quotation, along with "wir waren beyde verblendet" calls back the image of the statuary.

Derby's letter serves to point out only how disconnected he is from Sophie's thoughts. Derby, who wallows in self-pity, returns to physical desires to assuage his pain, and he goes to B. to visit his "Tänzerin" who is "ein ohnefehlbares Mittel gegen alle Gattungen von unruhigen Gedanken" (2.44). These lingering letters that respond to the assault reveal that Sophie has no words, but that Derby has too many, and Derby's visit to the "Tänzerin" shows how he views women merely as placeholders, each exchangeable for another.

From Intimacy to Assault: The Bedroom in Marianne Ehrmann's *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen*

Seventeen years after the publication of *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, Marianne Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788) appeared in print. Not only does Ehrmann's novel respond to La Roche's by adopting a similar epistolary form, but the two authors are also historically linked: Ehrmann read and so greatly admired La Roche that she adopted the stage name "Sternheim" during her acting career.[58] Unlike its *Sternheim* predecessor, Ehrmann's novel contains letters written only by two women: Amalie and Fanny. No third-person narrator interrupts the compilation of letters, which begins with Amalie's mother's death and continues with conversations between the two women that show their mostly similar positions on issues such as philosophy, morality, and *Bildung*. Ehrmann's own name did not appear in public

[58] Madland's monograph on Marianne Ehrmann reads her texts against her own biography; that is to say, chronologically, with an eye toward Ehrmann's personal history. Dawson reads *Amalie* as a protofeminist text (221). Arons understands Ehrmann's texts as offering "a steady, if not always consistent, critique of women's social position and of patriarchal double standards" (116).

until 1790, even though she published her first work, the short novel *Müßige Stunden eines Frauenzimmers* (which is an earlier version of *Amalie*) in 1784 (Madland 2, 27). When Ehrmann's *Amalie* appeared in print, it was one of about thirty novels written by women at the time, nine of which were written by Sophie von La Roche and five by Christiane Benedikte Naubert (Madland 117). In this context, it is clear that Ehrmann's novel is one of the first women-authored novels that changed the landscape for German women authors as well as readers. Throughout the course of *Amalie*, Amalie's father and sister die; Amalie marries an abusive gambling addict who later also passes away; she spends time in a convent; she travels to Venice; she works for a while as an actress in a theatrical troupe; and, at the very end of the novel, she remarries. The bedroom appears as a motif throughout the novel, as a space for Amalie to embrace a female friend, as a place where she envisions her dying sister, and as a room where her first husband assaults her.

Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen presents itself as a true story and as an autobiographical retelling of Marianne Ehrmann's own life. Although the epistolary form in the eighteenth century is often framed as a "true" collection of letters, the overdetermination of how *Amalie* is depicted as truth by Ehrmann and her husband, who writes the novel's preface, comments on its own content beyond that of it being a common trope of its time. *Amalie* sets up an interesting tension between her "insistence on the veracity of her story," which "can be read as a common plot of eighteenth-century fiction," but that Ehrmann "deliberately linked the novel to her autobiography through the title (her own nickname was Amalie […]) begs for an acknowledgment that many of the events narrated in the novel did indeed happen (if not exactly in that form) to the

novel's author" (Arons 115-16). By insisting on performing truth, Ehrmann writes and simultaneously fictionalizes her own autobiography, giving it literary representation, and she is thus able to share it with a public readership. Alongside the novel's focus on its own truth and authenticity, the text becomes a performative text by re-affirming its veracity to the public. At the same time, the uncertain space separating fiction from autobiography seeks to carve out a space secure from male penetration if only because it is undecideable. The novel's truth, for example, is highlighted in two extant, contemporary reviews, one written in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* in 1788 (when the novel's author was still anonymous), and the other in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* in 1794 (when Ehrmann's identity was known). The first review compliments the novel, using terms such as "Feinheit der Gedanken" and "Leichtigkeit des Ausdrucks." In the short review (which is only eighty-six words long, and consists of three sentences), the adjective "wahr" appears three times: "ungezwungene Lebhaftigkeit in den scherzhaften, *wahrer* Affekt in den ernsthaften Briefen, zeichnen dieses Werk aus, das durch viele *wahre* Bemerkungen über das Menschenleben nützlich seyn kann" (Madland 277, emphases mine). The review's author uses truth as a category to describe the emotions that resonate throughout the text, and continues that the novel is "eine wahre Geschichte," which echoes the novel's subtitle.[59] In this review, praise and truth are combined. The second review, written six years later (and after Ehrmann's name was made public), is much more critical of *Amalie,* scorns the novel's claim to truth, and slights its contribution to literature of its time as an account of a woman's position in the

[59] "Der Verf. legte eine wahre Geschichte zum Grunde, und behielt den ganzen Gang derselben bey, weil sie keine Freundinn von künstlicher Verwicklung und gehäuften Episoden ist" (604).

public sphere and the challenges she might have to face in her life.[60] Two conclusions can be drawn from these reviews. First, the review before Ehrmann's name was made known to the public was more positive than the review written after her identity was revealed. Second, the category of "truth" is important not only within the novel, but also within the discourse surrounding the novel, which indicates that an understanding of the novel's truth was part of its appeal to a readership that continued even into the decade following publication.

T. F. Ehrmann, who writes the preface of the novel, more directly and overtly praises *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* than Wieland does for *Sternheim*. T. F. Ehrmann, for example, asks the reader: "Warum sollte es nicht Pflicht seyn, in Verborgenen schimmernde Talenten hervor ans Licht zu ziehen, damit auch Andre sich drob freuen, sich daran laben können: – damit sie blühen, diese verkannte Talenten und Früchten tragen mögen zum Vortheile der Gesellschaft?" (1.4). Although T. F. Ehrmann lauds the novel, he suggests that such admiration is superfluous; the novel "empfiehlt sich selbst" (1.8), and he hopes that the attention of the reader has not turned too much to him (1.8). Although T.F. Ehrmann's preface is full of praise, the novel still requires a preface authored by a man in order to project a sense of legitimacy and shows a metaphorical stamp of patriarchal approval. Although didacticism is not the primary object of T. F. Ehrmann's preface, the connection of truth, experience, and virtue harkens back to didactic qualities that bolster the book's importance.

[60] "Der Versicherung, daß die Geschichte wahr und kein idealischer Roman sey, hätte es übrigens am wenigsten bedurft, wohl aber eines Beweises, daß es sich der Mühe verlohne, solche alltägliche Dinge, die ohne alles Interesse sind, aufzuschreiben" (I, 12f).

Truth is likewise a category that the Ehrmanns emphasize in the novel's preface and afterword. In the preface, for example, T. F. Ehrmann writes of the novel's contents, "Es sind Briefe, die eine im Grunde wahre Geschichte enthalten" (1.5). Here, T. F. Ehrmann brings together the issue of truth with the epistolary genre and states that the type of truth that the letters reveal is one of unmasking ("dem verkappten Laster die Maske vom Gesichte reißt," 1.5), which serves to reveal what lies below the surface. Marianne Ehrmann, too, uses her *Nachschrift* to reiterate the authenticity of the letters by writing, "So viel, meine werthesten Freunde und Freundinnen, kann ich Sie versichern, daß dieses mein Werkchen eine wahre Geschichte und kein idealischer Roman ist" (2.246). The issue of how the novel's truth is connected to its form bookends its contents. The performance of truth turns into a performance of female identity, and as a depiction of women's relationships that can exist without being mediated and controlled by men – presumably.

The epistolary structure of *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* remains foregrounded throughout the novel, with the letters left undated, and the only indication of how much time passes between the exchange of letters found in each specific letter's content. Although the letters are numbered, their chronology is inconsistent and contains gaps. Sometimes, either Fanny or Amalie writes a second letter before the other receives a response. Fanny, for example, writes to Amalie: "Vermuthlich mußt Du, meine Liebe, deinen lezten Brief, den ich Dir heute auch beantworten werde, abgeschickt haben, ehe Du meine leztre Antwort erhieltest" (1.23). Amalie also signals that she at times writes numerous letters without receiving a written response from Fanny: "Vergieb mir, Freundin, daß ich schon wieder an Dich schreibe, eh ich Antwort von Dir erhielt" (1.53);

or Fanny writes to Amalie: "Zween Briefe auf einmal will ich Dir heute beantworten!" (1.96). At times, the temporal gaps between letters are large, whereas at other times, the epistolary responses seem to be almost immediate. By providing an inconsistent narrative, *Amalie* shows how its literary and historical existence somewhere in the gaps and inconsistencies of what women were able to publish. It also keeps the coordinates of the in-between space that marks the uncertain site between fiction and non-fiction never the same at any one moment. If women are destined to be absent, then their voices, at least in this case, resist appropriation by being both truthful and fictional at once. Although Amalie and Fanny reveal plenty about themselves – including specific circumstances surrounding the bedroom – they cannot share everything in their letters, and their epistolary inconsistencies suggest moments where information might be missing or avoided. Once Amalie narrates the bed and bedroom in her letters, these spaces are no longer private, contained spaces hidden away from the rest of the world. Although the space she narrates has begun as relatively private, the narration of its events transcends the walls of the bedroom because of its textual representation. These inconsistencies challenge a linear and total description of women's experiences by making moments that exist between fiction and truth unable to be narrated.

The letters between Fanny and Amalie offer an example of what we today might call "homosocial bonding,"[61] a "women-identified" relationship,[62] or a further example of

[61] See Smith-Rosenberg "The Female World," in which she writes that "an abundance of manuscript evidence suggests that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women routinely formed emotional ties with other women" (1).
[62] See Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality."

"feminocentric" literature.[63] The constellation of women characters and their close friendships in *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* evokes the idea of women identification from Adrienne Rich, who writes,

> Women identification is a source of energy, a potential springhead of female power, curtailed and contained under the institution of heterosexuality. The denial of reality and invisibility to women's passion for women, women's choice of women as allies, life companions, and community, the forcing of such relationships into dissimilation and their disintegration under intense pressure has meant an incalculable loss to the power of all women *to change the social relations of the sexes, to liberate ourselves and each other.* (34, original italics)

Although Fanny and Amalie do not have a physical relationship in the novel, their bond comes from the intimate letters they share with one another. When Amalie writes to Fanny about how she physically embraces her female friend in bed one night, she shares the physicality of a friendship to Fanny through epistolary transmission. Their letters exemplify a form of homosocial bonding in that their epistles create a shared space where they can verbalize their personal experiences and reflect back on them to communicate to one another. Usually, Fanny and Amalie begin their letters with terms of affection, for example: "Beßte theuerste Freundin!" (1.9), "Meine Beste, Liebste" (11), "Liebe unglückliche Freundin!" (12); "Traute, liebe Freundin!" (70); and "Liebes, gutes Malchen" (105).[64] Close friendships exist between Amalie and other women, such as the woman Amalie embraces in bed one night when the woman's husband is absent. By

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[63] Baldwin uses this term in conjunction with *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (106-07).

[64] For a more detailed discussion of the two women's voices see Balmer 91-92.

narrating the physical aspect of her relationship with another woman, Amalie moves outside an epistolary and textual female friendship to one that also concerns the female body. The epistolary addresses serve as placeholders for the women's inability to be physically affectionate with one another. Amalie explores various women's relationships and intertwines their levels of intensity in letters and physical embraces.

Amalie describes the night she spends with her married female friend in physical and emotional terms. She writes how, during the night, she pretends that her friend is the doctor she fancies, and she embraces her friend in the bed. She begins her narration with a focus on the friend's husband's absence in a sentence replete with dependent clauses and layered with adjectival phases: "Als ich letzhin, Schäkkerei halber, bei meiner Freundin im nemlichen Bette schlief, (ihr Mann war abwesend) begieng ich einen Streich, der mich des andern Morgens schamroth machte" (1.49). Amalie places herself next to her friend and removes the husband in a parenthetical aside: "(ihr Mann war abwesend)." The aside displaces the husband not only from the space of the bed, but also from the linguistic syntax of the sentence. Yet, his absence is not complete. Although Amalie replaces the absent husband and literally sleeps *in his place*, she gives him textual representation by writing his absence. In referring to the friend's husband, even just in an aside, Amalie simultaneously reinforces his usual presence and (im)position so that, even absent, the husband remains present, if only in the imagination. The potential scandal of the affair can hide behind the cloak of fiction, appealing, paradoxically, to the voyeuristic imagination of its male readers. In this way, the voyeuristic male reader can both watch this womanly embrace without being excluded from the erotically charged moment.

Amalie uses the absent husband's place to enact a fantasy. She writes to Fanny, "Denk dir einmal: Im Schlaf umfaßte ich meine Freundin, küßte, herzte sie und seufzte laut den Namen des Doktors dazu" (1.49). With the phrase "Denk dir einmal," Amalie again invokes the epistolary form and signals to her reader her awareness that her words are written for someone else to read. The first physical actions that Amalie describes ("umfassen," "küssen," "seufzen") exist not only between the two women in the bed, but, when Amalie sighs the doctor's name, his masculine presence enters the scene. With her sigh, Amalie gives the doctor an existence in the room, even if he is not physically there. Like the phantom husband who is away for the night, the doctor simultaneously both is and is not in the room with Amalie and her friend. Amalie's invocation of the doctor mitigates the physical exchange between the women, for the moment is framed in heterosexual terms: Amalie embraces her friend, but she only does so while pretending the friend is the doctor. This way, the doctor becomes a mask that allows Amalie to embrace her friend. The friend, then, takes on dual roles: she remains herself, but she also becomes a placeholder for the absent doctor.

This letter presents a tension between Amalie's feeling that night and how she represents this specific night to Fanny. With the repetition of words related to shame ("scham"), Amalie mediates and controls her experience by framing it in language that comments on the appropriateness of her actions. Although the experience during the night first seems to be a positive and intimate one, when Amalie recounts it in the letter, she describes the shame and embarrassment she feels the next morning: "Läugnen half jezt nichts und der unschikliche Ort, wo ich meine Gefühle ausdrükte, war für mich eine ärgerliche Erinnerung" (1.49). Embarrassed by her own actions, Amalie is even more

upset when her friend tells the admired doctor about her scandalous behavior. The emotion of shame reappears then in the letter: Amalie writes that she is "schamroth" and that she is ashamed ("schämte ich mich") in connection to her feelings the next morning. In this letter, Amalie makes it clear that she writes about the embrace *after* the fact, and, in this way, she mediates her experience and also frames it in her current perspective. Amalie's invocation of shame tempers the rebellious action of embracing her friend as well as the subversive recounting of this moment in a letter to Fanny. Because the novel's events occur on the precipice of fiction and truth ("Wahrheit"), shame allows the act to be expressed in either realm. Amalie has to feel ashamed for her embrace with another woman, but Wieland and the Marquise's mother can find satisfaction in the moment of assault.

Amalie's narration of the night remains mired in heteronormative language, because she (writes that she) only embraces her friend because she imagines or pretends that the friend is the doctor. Amalie reveals the existence of a woman-woman physical relationship, but she is constrained to discuss this women's relationship within a heterosexual framework. In writing to Fanny about this embrace, Amalie offers an example of the space of the bedroom that can be conducive to forming and reinforcing women's relationships with one another. That she describes the night spent with one female friend in a letter to another female friend demonstrates the overlap between a physical relationship and one bolstered by the written word. Thus, Amalie reinforces her form of homosocial bonding with Fanny as well as with her married friend in this letter. Her resistance to conforming to patriarchy exists, but it can only exist by remaining within carefully circumscribed limits. Her insistence on the shame she feels works as

another performance of her conforming to patriarchal demands and constructs; she can only discuss her intimate experience when she frames it as an experience of shame.

The bedroom in *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* transforms from an intimate space between two women to a site of domestic violence and assault. After Amalie eagerly marries her first husband, she discovers that he is addicted to gambling and that he stays out late at night, losing money. In a series of letters, Amalie describes her fear to Fanny while she awaits his return in the bedroom: "Schlaflos, voller Furcht, unter banger Erwartung schleichen meine Stunden des Nachts dahin, bis ich die Thüre öffnen höre. Mein ganzer Körper fängt an zu zittern, noch eh er sich mir naht" (1.170). The sound of the door becomes the auditory indication that her husband is near, and just the noise alone is enough to cause her to tremble. The physical response to an approaching sound repeats in Amalie's next letters, when she writes that she hears a "Lärm und Gepolter," which causes her to feel a "kalter Schauer" that shatters ("durchzittert") her nerves. The bedroom is not a safe place for Amalie, but she is able to share her fear with Fanny through her letters.

When Amalie begins to write about the events of this night, she couches the narration again in terms of its veracity – "Es ist freilich wahr" (1.173) – which is another nod to the novel's subtitle *Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen*. The sequence of events of this attack is jumbled, which complicates the letter's claim as a truthful retelling of what happened. Amalie writes that she rises out of bed ("Die Todesangst trieb mich aus dem Bette"), and then her husband drags her through the room by her hair ("[er] schleppte mich barbarisch im Zimmer herum!"). As Amalie describe to Fanny, "Keine Seele von unsern Bedienten durfte ins Zimmer, worinn ich mit ihm war" (1.174). The closed

bedroom door conceals the moment between Amalie and her husband from others in the house. Amalie loses her unborn child as a result of the physical abuse when her husband leaves her unattended and on the verge of death: "Während dieser Zeit verließen mich meine Kräften, ich verlor mein Kind, und niemand zweifelte an meinem nahen Tode" (1.175). Amalie begins her description of the physical abuse she suffers by framing the attack in terms of her husband's "murdering hand" ("mit mörderischer Hand," 1.173) that ends the potential life of her unborn child and the possibility for her to be a mother, and this metonymic hand at once depersonalizes her husband while also anticipating the physical brutality of his beating. In contrast to referring to her husband's hand only, she gives her child-in-utero an identity: "Mein Kind ist durch Grausamkeit vertilgt worden aus dem Schoos ihrer Mutter!" (1.173). In this sentence, Amalie ascribes the child a gender as well as gives it (her/*ihrer* Mutter) a space: the womb of *her* mother. When Amalie's husband beats her, he also invades this child's space in the womb, which should be a site of safety and nurture. The invasion of the child's space parallels the husband's invasion of the bedroom – both are meant to be safe places for female figures, and, in one swift action, the husband destroys the illusion of safety of both. Although Amalie survives the attack, her hopes to be a biological mother die. At no other point in the novel does Amalie mention being pregnant again or even the possibility of bearing children,[65] and the miscarriage haunts the rest of the novel and scars Amalie's body as well as the text. Within the walls of the closed bedroom, Amalie is trapped and removed from potential help.

[65] Amalie does act motherly toward younger women later in the novel when she stays at a convent, but even when she marries her second husband at the very end of the novel, she does not mention a potential pregnancy.

Through her epistolary narration, Amalie is able to give her experience a voice and communicate it. Amalie survives the attack and narrates it to Fanny, thereby bringing the attack outside of the walls of the bedroom and sharing her experience with another woman. What Amalie writes is mediated, though, for it is written after the attack, and the confusion of the sequence of events in this letter indicates that Amalie's memory has also suffered from this attack. Although Amalie acknowledges and respects the limitations to her memory of this event, her repetition of the event's *reality* ("es ist freilich wahr") indicates a need for Fanny to take her narration seriously and believe her account. Ehrmann, writing in Amalie's voice, repeats the novel's insistence on its own truth and performs it again in Amalie's narration: there is truth to Amalie's account of her assault and the suffering she experiences afterwards. This tension between concealing and revealing can be expanded as a motif to the level of narration and the epistolary form, where words reveal while concealing; they transmit information and ideas, but they are only symbolic representations of the actual event. *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen*, as a novel, likewise reveals and conceals, for, although the novel gives the reader a view into a semi-historical account of a woman's life at the end of the eighteenth century, it does so with embellishments and changes to the progression of events. But, it is not the details that matter here as much as the act of revealing, of making visible to Fanny and the reader the horror and consequences of domestic assault and violence. Given the impossibility of securing the bedroom and one's womb from her husband's assaults, the text circulates in an non-specific or even undisclosed space that resists total appropriation and can even be said to haut the margins of male or patriarchal "truth."

Amalie's slip into unconsciousness at the moment she loses her child likewise cannot be narrated, which is not unlike the Marquise's famous faint in Kleist's novella. Although Amalie's letter reveals to Fanny the incident of this particular evening in startlingly graphic detail, her account, she writes, does not – cannot – replicate the experience completely, for she wishes to shield Fanny from this night's anguish: "Ich will Dir diesen Auftritt seiner abscheulischen Leidenschaften schildern, um Dir, wenn es möglich ist, nur einen Schatten meines Elendes zu zeigen!" (1.173). Whereas Amalie previously couches her letter with the phrase "es ist freilich wahr," she now constructs her narration in terms of representation and shadows, not of authenticity. Her return to the place of assault, to the enclosed bedroom, is a negotiation between discussing it in terms of shadows and of truth, for she shares her experience with Fanny, but the expression of her experience remains bounded by the limits of her consciousness as well as a decision not to tell Fanny all the details in order to shield her from them.

Conclusion

In order to convince Germany's growing readership that *Sternheim* and *Amalie* are both moral and appropriate texts for a *Frauenzimmer* to read, male authors (Wieland in La Roche's novel, and T. F. Ehrmann in Marianne Ehrmann's) preface the novels and promote the ensuing content. Men's voices control La Roche's and Ehrmann's novels, and the male-authored prefaces claim control and authority over the women-authored content of the novels.

Ehrmann and La Roche begin a new representation of women's friendships, a type of friendship that stands in contrast to both men's friendships and as well as

relationships between men and women of eighteenth-century literature. Although the letters in each text serve as a type of "Frauen-Zimmer" in that they offer a space (*Raum/Zimmer*) to reveal a woman's experience in the bedroom, the letters themselves are always mediated and written after-the-fact. Amalie's letters, for example, reveal the chasm that exists between the night of the assault and the time it takes her to narrate this experience to Fanny. Lord Derby likewise writes about the scene with Sophie days after he attacks her, and his perspective is undeniably unreliable. Thus, although *Amalie* and *Sternheim* try to forge a space to share a woman's space, their letters reveal not only that men can invade this space, but also that the voices they use to narrate these moments are mediated by their very own acts of narration. The letters at first seem to serve as testimony, but, instead of giving the women characters in the novel voices, they depict a woman's lack of control, both over her immediate surroundings as well as her ability to communicate traumatic moments to other women. At the same time, these voices resist the standard logic of male-drive narratives to the extent that their persistence can still be read, if only by a dash, in Kleist's text some thirty-seven years later.

Although neither attack in *Amalie* or *Sternheim* is necessarily an explicit depiction of a sexual assault, connotations of sexual aggression run through both scenes. In these novels, the trope of penetration precedes the attack. Both Lord Derby and Amalie's husband enter the rooms where a vulnerable Sophie and Amalie already are, having retired for the night. Whereas Amalie's husband's attack does not seem to be as sexually coded as Lord Derby's, his beating causes Amalie to miscarry, which is an attack on her both as a wife and as the future mother of his child. In *Sternheim*, Derby's attack is almost certainly sexually motivated; he wants Sophie to undress and reveal her body to

him.[66] Likewise, his description of his attack alludes to its sexual aggressiveness: "ich drang in sie, und sie sträubte sich so lange, bis Ungeduld und Begierde mir eingaben ihre Kleidung vom Hals an durchzureißen" (2.33). The phrase "drang in sie" implies sexual assault, but Derby does not expand on the details of this moment. Instead, he relates only his emotions and perceptions, and not the physical actuality of what occurs. According to Rosina, it is after this attack that Sophie becomes ill again with a nervous condition, and it becomes clear that, even if the attack is not narrated in detail, whatever occurred within the bedroom causes Sophie continued pain and fear. In contrast, the possibility (as well any refusal) to offer up graphic details of the rape frustrates or refuses to satisfy a scopophilic or voyeuristic male desire to visualize the assault.

The bedroom as narrated in these women-authored epistolary novels serves two main purposes: one, it shows the intimacy between women that could exist through writing letters, even concerning traumatic events such as rape and assault; and, two, it shows how women's relationships could be physical and sexual, as Amalie demonstrates when she sleeps next to her married female friend and embraces her. A reading of the bedroom scenes shows that physical and sexual relationships between women did exist, even if they had to be narrated in heteronormative terms,[67] but the circuitry of such negotiations produces a textual voice whose continued mediation refuses total appropriation.

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[66] See Richter for a discussion of how, for Wieland, "the women are more likely to be the seducers" (151).

[67] Although scholars have pointed out the "almost total obliteration of the lesbian in history" and that this statement "doubly appertains to German scholarship" (Kord, "Eternal" 228), this moment in *Amalie* shows an exception.

Here, the epistolary novel, generally, and *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen*, specifically, offer a glance into the intensity of women's relationships in the eighteenth century. Although the public realm was traditionally a domain that allowed access primarily to men, by using the epistolary form, La Roche and Ehrmann could explore the gender dissonance caused by being women who enter the public realm. Furthermore, they could use their admission into the public realm under the guise of "didactic" epistolary novels to reveal how unsafe the domestic realm could be for women and communicate the dangers a woman faced both within and outside the home.

In addition to being domestically coded, *Sternheim* and *Amalie* likewise emphasize the truth of their own contents: with the word "Geschichte" in the title *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, La Roche plays with the double meaning of "Geschichte" as both history and story; the separation between truth and imagination is blurred. Sophie von Sternheim's (hi)story is made more authentic through its performance of a compilation of letters that Rosina collects and edits. *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen*, on the other hand, is more explicit about the novel's veracity; the repetition of "wahr" in the novel's title, preface, and afterword, emphasize how the novel's contents hold a connection to Ehrmann's reality and autobiography. Kleist's *Die Marquise von O…* is an example of how literature further silenced women's voices regarding assault in the domestic realm around 1800. Instead of beginning to have a voice and struggling against the strict structure of patriarchy, the Marquise is assaulted not only once by a stranger (an assault that is textually absent), but she is also at the mercy of her father who embraces her in an incestuous and semi-pornographic scene that the

Marquise's mother witnesses through a keyhole and delights in. The Marquise remains trapped, caught in a family structure that victimizes her both as a daughter and as a wife.

In all three texts, the narration underscores the importance of the gaze. Both *Sternheim* and *Die Marquise* complicate the reliability of the gaze by dis-locating the point of reference. Whereas, in the *Die Marquise von O…*, the first assault is completely obfuscated by the dash, the second assault is seen through the Marquise's mother's eyes. Men direct the gaze in *Amalie* and *Sternheim*, but in *Die Marquise von O…*, the mother's gaze blends together with the patriarchal one, and so it is also coded as male. In *Sternheim*, Derby's assault is narrated in terms of how he sees Sophie and perceives her blindness toward him and his desires. In Ehrmann's novel, Amalie is the only one who bears witness to her husband attacking her, but she narrates the events in a letter to Fanny in a way that is, she claims, both truthful and yet shadowy, so that Fanny – and the reader – can gaze upon this scene. *Amalie* is the only text in which the assaulted woman speaks for herself regarding her trauma. The bedroom is a woman's space only under conditions that are controlled by patriarchy, and writing about the domestic space and thus trying to expose it to a reading public is also carefully monitored and censored. As odd and distanced as this voice may become, its literary trace would continue to haunt German letters for the next few decades, at least. Women's voices may be muted, but their unevenly spaced or timed appearances, much like the confused chronology of Ehrmann's text, reverberates with enough intensity to speak against Kleist's dash.

CHAPTER II:

DANGER AT EVERY TURN: PERFORMING THE THEATER IN SOPHIE MEREAU'S "DIE FLUCHT NACH DER HAUPTSTADT" (1806) AND ELISE BÜRGER'S *DIE ANTIKE STATUE AUS FLORENZ* (1814)

"Die Bühne ist der letzte Zufluchtsort aller Gattung verlaßner Menschen" (1:38) writes Fanny in Marianne Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788). Her observation poses conflicting questions: is the stage a refuge for women who need freedom from the demands of a rigid system, or does the stage pose yet another danger by embracing "verlaßne Menschen"? Fanny's claim refers to the situation women faced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when they turned to the theater.[68] In the theater, women could have the opportunity to earn an income (or supplement one) through their roles as actresses or playwrights. Women in theatrical circles could travel more by going from stage to stage, city to city, and could thereby experience more of the cultural milieu that surrounded them. Theater gave them the opportunity to redefine and recreate themselves by embodying multiple identities onstage (as well as offstage). The eighteenth-century theater may seem an ideal space for women to dissociate from the bourgeois home and to construct identities separate from those of the relatively new paradigm of domestically bound women and mothers, but, as a site of refuge, the theater remains problematic. Cultural associations tainted actresses' social

[68] Caroline Neuber worked as an actress before working as a theater director; L. A. V. Gottsched translated seven plays from French to German for her husband; Katharina die Große wrote plays after she began her reign in Russia; Sophie Albrecht and Elise Bürger were paid authors as well as actresses; Charlotte von Stein was a lady-in-waiting (*Hofdame*) to Herzogin Anna Amalie, and her "Schlüsselstücke" *Rino* (1776) and *Dido* (1794) comment on Goethe and the Weimar Court (although she masks her content and characters); Marianne Ehrmann was a journalist as well as an actress and author, and actress Karoline Jagemann left behind extensive memoirs.

standing by linking them to prostitutes or associations of "deceptive" women,[69] and so society often viewed them suspiciously.[70] Male directors mediated women's onstage performances and editors censored women-authored dramatic works. Actresses performed for an audience whose idealized conception of theater was masculine.[71] How women narrated theatrical space offers a lens to examine gender in the long eighteenth century, since theater opens up a discussion of the problems of binaries such as concealing/revealing, public/private, and onstage/offstage. For example, when Wilhelm in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795)[72] tells Mariane, the woman he loves, about his childhood fascination with puppets, she only feigns an interest, which is at first fairly benign,[73] but her larger secret (that she has another suitor) is not. As a performer, Mariane embodies the fear society had of an actress's deceitful potential. However, the issue of deceit can only be discussed with an awareness of the dangers implicit or explicit in a theatrical realm. This chapter analyzes the double-bind of women and theater in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in texts that incorporate female theatrical identities, performances of (un)masking, and perilous moments.

In discussions of theatricality, women could expose the underbelly of their existence in the theatrical domain by textually staging themes of rape, brutality, pregnancy fears, and domestic abuse. Although contemporary scholars interested in the

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[69] Actresses of the eighteenth century bore social stigmatization. Connotations of actress as prostitute were common. Pre-1775, women lacked a stable theatrical space, although they were part of the theater for almost a century earlier. See Kord's "The Curtain Never Rises" (360) and Arons, *Performance and Femininity* (200).

[70] Arons claims, "Both life in the theater and the theatrical spectacle itself were suspected of having deleterious effects on young women's morality" (200).

[71] See Kord's "The Curtain Never Rises" (360) and Wurst "Fabricating Pleasure" 114.

[72] This text is based off of Goethe's 1775-1785 *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung*, which demonstrates the centrality of theater for this text.

[73] See I:iv; I:vi; I:viii.

intersections between theatrical space, femininity, and gender studies/feminism have made advances in textual analysis, their focus is not overtly on the dangerous aspects of the theatrical realms.[74] The threat of assault (sexual or otherwise) runs through several women-authored texts at this time. Although women are by no means the only authors who look at the dangers women face and pose, their narrations thereof foreground their perspectives. Authors like Marianne Ehrmann re-situate aggressive attacks and perform them on the written page, so that they do not continue a line of victimization; rather, they challenge ideas of power struggles by showing that which is not supposed to be revealed to society. This action gives voice to the perception of the victim or the person against whom violence is being done. In *Amalie,* Amalie's husband beats her to the point of miscarriage. In La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771), Sophie is sexually assaulted in her bedroom, and the male attacker (and narrator of this event) tries to downplay the obviously traumatic experience, and Rosina, who compiles the letters, addresses Sophie's terror. Charlotte Ackermann (1757-1775) exemplified the reality of death and the ways in which women could succumb to tragedies that could be re-appropriated and idolized, although she did not contribute directly to the literary realm. Her contribution to the intersection of gender and theater became most apparent after her mysterious death at age seventeen, because her death and virtuous reputation meant that

[74] Kord, Wurst, Arons, Dupree, and Dawson all tease out various strains that are important to recognize when discussing the situation of female playwrights at this time. However, none of them explicitly explores the extreme amount of violence and assault that occurs within these texts, whether these texts, like Ehrmann's, explicitly narrate it, or whether they more indirectly saturate their texts with fear and danger like in Mereau and Bürger's texts. Wendy Arons does not closely examine the first attack the narrator of "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" suffers offstage by Vinzens. My aim is to participate in this dialogue by shifting attention to the ways in which women narrate moments and spaces of danger and negotiate its presence with motifs of concealing and revealing.

society co-opted her as a literary figure and as a "heroine of sentimental fiction" (Dupree, "Mask" 62-63).[75] In Sophie Mereau's short story "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" (1796; 1806), the narrator's suitor Vinzens accosts her backstage and she is saved only by her screams for help. The queen in Charlotte von Stein's dramatic piece *Dido* (1794) reveals (in the play's final scene) her reason for suicide: she would rather die than marry the barbarian Jarbas who states, "Zu meinen Füßen will ich die stolze Frau noch liegen sehen" (IV:iii). According to Jarbas, Dido's fault is twofold: she is proud and reigns a kingdom, and so she stands above him, instead of lying below him. Theresgen also chooses suicide by drowning at the end of Sophie Albrecht's *Theresgen* (1781) because she cannot marry the Count with whom she is in love. These texts demonstrate that sometimes the only power at a woman's disposal is suicide; other times, it is a retreat into the patriarchal system with a renewed perspective. After the protagonist in Elise Bürger's one-act play *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* (1814) reacts to her husband's avoidance of her, she uses her physical body to terrify him. These authors demonstrate types of agency, but all are kept tightly framed or limited.

Lessing's theatrical space haunts drama of the late eighteenth century, features strong women, and stages gendered forms of danger and adversity in the dramas *Miß Sara Sampson* (1755), *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767) and *Emilia Galotti* (1772) – but these women are still caught within a system of patriarchy. In his essay on Cleopatra in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767-69),[76] Lessing's narrating persona[77] suggests that a

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[75] The Ackermann family performed onstage (Charlotte was trained for the stage since birth [Dupree 22]), and society held an idealized image of them (Dupree 27).

[76] Lessing, who calls the dramatic form a "sauere Arbeit" in the eightieth essay of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, claims it is "die einzige [Form], in welcher sich Mitleid und Furcht erregen läßt" (80. Stück).

woman's pride is more unnatural than a man's (30. Stück).[78] Women authors' narration of theatrical space reworks Lessing's notion of classical and emerging national theater by re-constructing aspects of his plot devices like confusion and coincidence and re-situating them in a new, feminine space. Lessing has created female characters that pose questions about the relationships between image, body, performance, and lies that suggest a person's theatricality is connected to deceit or manipulation. Deceit might end with a marriage (*Minna von Barnhelm*), be manifest as revenge between two women (*Miß Sara Sampson*), or even be a cause for suicide (*Emilia Galotti*). Emilia first arrives onto the stage of *Emilia Galotti* as an image – a two-dimensional painting, in which the prince is enamored.[79] In this play, Lessing keeps terror at a distance and romanticizes the titular figure's death: she becomes a virtuous martyr, and her body is sacrificed for her enlightened and spiritual comments. Even though Emilia is right to be terrified for her life (since she dies at the end of the drama), she tells her mother Claudia: "O meine Mutter! – so müßte ich mir mit meiner Furcht vollends lächerlich vorkommen" (II: vi). Claudia commands her daughter to "Sag ihm [the count] nichts. Laß ihn nichts merken" (II: vi) and encourages Emilia to employ secrecy and deception in her relationship. Emilia does not end her life for herself, which strengthens (instead of subverting) the system that has betrayed her. Stabbing one's self is, in her case, not a prideful, violent

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[77] In this work, Lessing does not necessarily take on his own voice (i.e. he speaks about the director of *Miß Sara Sampson* in the third person), and the piece should be read with an awareness of the rupture between author and persona.

[78] Interestingly, the most famous depiction of Elise Bürger is in her role as Cleopatra in an 1805 performance of August Kotzebue's *Octavia*.

[79] When Emilia Galotti finally does appear in the flesh, the role of hostage is foisted on her, so that she, too, becomes a player in the prince's theater of lies. Her initial presence, as well as Orsina's, are merely as shadows, paintings, or words – they both lack substance and body.

act, but one that is ultimately concerned with morality and virtue. In the final scenes of *Minna von Barnhelm*, Tellheim tells his eponymous fiancée and her maidservant, "O Komödiantinnen, ich hätte euch doch kennen sollen!" (V: xii) and comments not only on their particular situation, but also on the greater problem that was of concern for late eighteenth-century Germany: theatricality and its connection to deceit. Minna, who has tricked Tellheim in order to teach him a lesson (a didactic move that her uncle ends by making her reveal the truth), responds to Tellheim's argument that she is a "Komödiantin." She claims, "Leicht ist mir meine Rolle auch nicht geworden" (V: xii), and her recognition of her theatricality, of her ability to act in different roles, is reminiscent of Marwood in Lessing's *Miß Sara Sampson* and her extended lie to Sara. But, Marwood's decision to act like Mellefont's cousin, instead of being a scorned wife and mother, ends with Sara's death by poison, and not with the happy marriage that closes *Minna von Barnhelm*. These three dramas by Lessing do not offer an alternative to a world in which virtuous and independent women must die (i.e. Emilia and Sara). Only in *Minna von Barnhelm* does Lessing show how women can survive in such a world; according to *Minna von Barnhelm*, for women to endure, they must engage in role-playing and deceit, but they also need to know when to stop acting.

Drama differs from other forms of literature because it prefigures an acting body, and theatricality offers a specific way of reading a text that brings the body in conversation with shifting identities. A performance of a dramatic text (including its repetitions and reenactments) is bound to space and relived only through mediated sources such as reviews, journals, and letters.[80] A play's words are meant to be

[80] See Dupree's *The Mask and the Quill* for an examination of paratheatrical literature.

represented and spoken in front of others; in this way they gain a type of tangibility. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century actress could embody textual representation of written characters, and, like her male counterpart, an actress could be famous for her ability to perform a variety of roles. A famous actress often performs more than just one role: an offstage identity (the private individual) and the onstage performer (often a transitory role) combine onstage, which encouraged society to view her as duplicitous and thus destabilize her performing identity.[81] The relationship between women and theater had the potential to be quite volatile. Acting is part of a multifaceted cooperation; the audience's reception of a piece also factors in to the construction and fame of dramatic identities. Fame increases publicity and pushes women even more into the public sphere. The external body, that which is being presented to the public, is malleable and masked. Male and female authors often allude to the trope of the mask, and its literal or figurative incarnations suggest a preoccupation with how power is concealed and revealed onstage.[82] In the eighteenth century, most women authors published either anonymously or under pseudonyms, but censorship regulations insisted that frontispieces published the author's real name (which further disadvantaged women).[83] The proliferation of rules and censorship regulations made against women reveal the cultural anxieties that arose out of the relationship between women and the theater and addressed with the threat of

[81] The same holds true for male actors, but their situation is different in that they were more commonly a part of the public sphere.
[82] See Arons 8.
[83] Kord suggests that there is a "recurring obsession with femininity and female behavior on stage" (359), and censorship laws aimed to protect those deemed especially vulnerable, namely the young "hypothetical daughters in the audience" ("Curtain" 362), which might explain why censorship laws target women more than their male counterparts.

femininity.[84] Women were allowed to attend performances and thus participate in the cultural repertoire of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, but conscious attempts to educate the audience and offer a view into a culture of aesthetics kept theatrical performances under tight control. The threat that women created, both as producers and receivers of culture, demonstrates that although the theater was a place of potentiality, women in various facets of the dramatic realm were carefully controlled.

Issues of morality and status are bound to cultural anxieties about the shifting ideologies within German societies.[85] As the title of Schiller's essay "Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet" (1784) suggests, the connection between morality and the theater was a central concern in the 1780s and 1790s. Morality was closely intertwined with concepts of nationhood, a German theatrical tradition, religion, secular law, and virtue.[86] Although theater was then intended to educate its audience about morality, certain stigmas (or shadows thereof) remained. Perhaps the greatest danger of women and theater was that female actresses, who were more prevalent in the second half of the eighteenth century, still did not adhere to the cultural paradigm that mandated identities secured through motherhood and marriage.[87]

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[84] "No kind of literary censorship in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany has been as extensive and long-lived as that of the theater" (Kord, "Curtain" 359).
[85] See Dupree: "Recalling Wittenberg's anxieties about pleasure and distraction, Schiller makes it clear that actresses *as women* represent a special obstacle to the moral reform of theater. Female sexuality is associated with a destructive need to show oneself and to attract men's gazes at all costs" ("Mask" 46).
[86] "Given the division of Germany into numerous states and their relative independence, it goes without saying that there was no single law regulating theater censorship for all of Germany" (Kord, "Curtain" 359).
[87] "Women's role in the theater, on stage as well as off, is the single most frequently cited factor on which contemporaries and later scholars have blamed the dubious reputation of the German stage throughout much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Kord, "Curtain" 359).

Two of the early eighteenth century's most notable women who helped transform the theater were Luise A. V. Gottsched (1713-62) and Caroline Neuber (1697-1760). They informed later generations of women interested in theatrical space (playwrights, actresses, directors, or translators) by challenging the stigmas actresses and women working with the theater faced. Both women were connected to Johann Gottsched, and they adhered – to an extent – to the cultural paradigms that controlled women. Neuber was a monumental figure in theater's historical progression because she joined the theater and, by joining the theater as a respectable woman of the middle class, she reshaped society's thoughts about a woman's place in the theatrical realm. Her fluctuation or liminality on the precipices of the middle and upper classes changed society's perception of theater because her life and texts challenged society's perspective of women and theater. Neuber contributed to changing the overall image of German theater, and challenged gender roles as a female director and reformer. L. Gottsched, on the other hand, represents the contradictions female playwrights of the eighteenth century had to face. Although L. Gottsched served her husband's interests in translating French dramas, her small moments of subversion expanded the limits her education and gender enforced.[88] Her first original comedy *Die Pietisterey im Fischbein-Rocke* (1736) satirizes hypocrisy with certain Pietist cults.[89] She gives her characters names that indicate they represent archetypes, not individuals (i.e. "Glaubeleicht"; "Scheinfromm"). The first full sentence of the play is a question and introduces a theme of purposeful concealing: "Was ist das wieder vor [*sic*] ein Pack Bücher, was du da versteckst?" (I:i). By emphasizing the

[88] Luise Gottsched also participated in the theatrical realm by translating eleven dramas for her husband and authoring five dramas (Kord, "Detours" 5).
[89] This is her first "original work," which is partly her own, and partly a translation of Bougeant's play, *The Female Scholar*.

word "wieder," Gottsched implies that hiding books is one of the protagonist's habits and not a one-time event, and she thereby introduces the dilemma faced by women who wanted to read. Gottsched's comedy *Die unglückliche Heirat* (1743), true to its name, explores the unhappy consequences of an unmatched couple (upper and middle class). Gottsched, like Neuber, received an education as a child, which she later supplemented by listening to her husband's university lectures "hidden behind the door to his lecture hall" (Kord, "Detours" 5). These biographical details stand out because it represents the threshold L. Gottsched stood on when negotiating between her own artistic creations and her husband's commands. Upon the shifting backdrops of German theater, Neuber and Gottsched were pivotal in creating a respectable space for women in the theatrical realm and mitigating anxiety about women in the theater business.

Later in the century, Marianne Ehrmann exposes issues of safety and danger alongside a preoccupation of theater and theatricality. Her personal history included acting, and her texts are aware of the body's role and its connection to societal constructions. She uses language to prove that her body does not deserve to be abused,[90] since she knew tragedies and traumas first-hand: she married a gambling addict in 1777, and the two divorced in 1779, after which time Ehrmann turned to a career as a traveling actress.[91] In 1780 she joined a theater troupe and performed in Germany, Austria, and Hungary under the stage name "von Sternheim."[92] During her life, Ehrmann was stigmatized as promiscuous due to her career as an actress, and she tried to "distance

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[90] "Ich liebe meinen Körper zu sehr, um ihn so geradezu zum Mißbrauch so vieler Undankbaren zu bestimmet, und nur eine Dumme, Verdorbene kann niedrig genug seyn, bey jedem Angriff das Werkzeug der Bedürfniß der Männer zu werden" (9).
[91] See Dupree ("Mask" 101-07).
[92] This is an obvious reference to Sophie von La Roche.

herself from the image of the actress as whore" (Dupree, "Mask" 131).[93] She left the group in 1784, met struggling author and historian Theophil Friedrich Ehrmann, and married him a year later, left the theater, and began writing novels, essays, and moral-didactic journals intended for young women (Dupree, "Mask" 101).

Two of Ehrmann's texts, *Philosophie eines Weibs* (1784) and *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788) depict the conflicting power struggles that arose between issues of domesticity and a theatrical career. To read *Amalie* and *Philosophie eines Weibs* with an awareness of the author's personal circumstances enriches an understanding of how Ehrmann uses literary space to comment on the dangers within physical spaces. *Philosophie eines Weibs* was first published anonymously and "ohne Ort und Verlag," which disconnects it from the greater literary sphere and any specific (gendered) author. Ehrmann's tone is nonapologetic in this essay; she is concerned with issues of morality, of female conduct both on- and offstage, and of the dangers women faced in their lives. She outlines the power hierarchy that controls women's situations[94] and uses the stereotype of the "weak woman" against its perpetrators to reveal her power through charged rhetoric.[95] Although *Amalie* is an epistolary novel, its extensive discussion of theater's role in both its main characters' lives make it a text especially pertinent to questions of gender, theater, and the danger of the eighteenth century. *Amalie* is a non-dramatic text preoccupied with theater that deals with issues of danger and power by

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[93] Dupree argues that "her harsh criticisms of her fellow actresses must be understood in this context" ("Mask" 131).
[94] "Ein elendes Ding ist daher ein Frauenzimmer ohne System gegen die Liebe – gegen die Männer" (8).
[95] "Bedenkt ihr dann nicht, daß, wenn wir Frauenzimmer wirklich so schwach sind, als ihr behauptet, euch eben darum unsre Eroberung wenig Mühe koste, und euer Triumph von keinem Werth seye?" (10).

depicting abusive, manipulative, and deceitful male characters,[96] and its prose form offers an alternative way to locate how women narrated theatrical spaces.[97] Although the topic of discussion explicitly turns to theater only in the novel's later chapters,[98] allusions to the theatricality of domestic life abound in the first thirty chapters,[99] such as when Fanny alludes to life as a world theater ("auf dieser Weltbühne") and a "Zufluchtsort." Amalie's first experience at the theater is overwhelming, so she writes to Fanny: "Wie stark aber dieses erste [Schauspiel] auf meine Nerven wirkte, kann ich Dir nicht sagen. – – Ich weinte…staunte…fühlte…und das Bild der Liebe, das darinn erschien, riß mich bis zum Entzükken hin!" (1.70). Amalie's use of the ellipsis between her emotional responses emphasizes the power of the theater lifestyle to disrupt her daily routines.[100] However, Fanny warns Amalie of what she perceives has more serious implications that come from being in proximity to the theater. Fanny writes to Amalie that "das Schauspiel" is "der Weg zur Bildung für junge Leute," but warns that it is only so "wenn es nicht von einer falschen Seite genommen wird" (1.75). Fanny's warning plays out, because Amalie uses the theater as a way to be independent, but she meets her fair share of deceptive people in

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[96] The same should be said about Goethe's *Bildungsroman Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.
[97] Although the episode of Amalie's domestic abuse is not explicitly brought up in the context of the theater, her description of what occurs when she suffers in her room alone works similar to showing that which happens offstage. She writes to Fanny: "Es ist freilich wahr, ich wurde mit mörderischer Hand mishandelt! – Mein Kind ist durch Grausamkeit vertilgt! […] Keine Seele von unsern Bedienten durfte ins Zimmer, worinn ich mit ihm war" (1.175).
[98] Amalie's role consists of an audience member as well as an actress, a director, and a "theater pedagogue" (Dupree, "Mask" 102).
[99] Dupree reads *Amalie* as "a manifesto for theater women that cleverly embeds its arguments amid the sentimental tropes of eighteenth-century fiction" ("Mask" 102).
[100]The theater's influence continues after the performance: "Als wir beiden Mädchen wieder zu Hause waren, sprach ich den ganzen Abend durch kein Wort, aß nichts, und träumte unaufhörlich von dem, was ich gesehen hatte. Die Vorstellung war ein Trauerspiel, Romeo und Julie genannt" (1.75).

that arena.[101] As a "Zufluchtsort," the theater offers not only a physical space of refuge, but also an emotional one that arouses one's senses.

Fleeing from danger in Mereau's "Die Flucht nach der Haupstadt"

In her short story "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" (1796; 1806),[102] Sophie Mereau (1770-1806) challenges stable meanings of both "Flucht" and "Hauptstadt" and uses parody to address the issue of danger and theatricality. In "Die Flucht," a young woman leaves her small hometown with her lover Albino and becomes a successful actress after Felix, a friendly third-party, reports that Albino has been captured. At the short story's end, the narrator and Albino are reunited and married in their hometown and discover that Felix lied to both of them about the other having been confined. Recent scholarly attention has been directed at "Die Flucht," much of it centered on the controversy about the message and tone of the text's conclusion that seemingly ends with the protagonist's acceptance of the joys of a bourgeois marriage upon the couple's return to their hometown.[103] Although readers have been frustrated at this seemingly anti-feminist conclusion of "Die Flucht," such readings ignore the parodic elements of the

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[101] In a letter to Fanny, Amalie suggests that one way to prevent young girls from danger is to expose them to novels and the darker sides of life, which enables them to recognize deceptive people: "Wäre es denn nicht besser, die jungen Mädchen durch eine wahre Schilderung der Welt von Irrwegen abzuhalten, als durch eine erdichtete Romanenmoral ihre Einbildung bis zur Engelssphäre zu spannen, damit sie noch tiefer fallen, wenn ein empfindsamer Schurke an ihrer Seite seine Rolle gut zu spielen weis?" (1:19). See also Dupree ("Mask" 111).

[102] "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" was probably written in the middle of July, 1796 (Hammerstein, "Ein Glück" 292).

[103] Scholars focus on the narrator's return to her *Heimat* and read it as a retreat into heteronormativity and cultural expectations. Those who discredit this text for its ending dismiss it as being "too eclectic" and "dilettantish" (in Arons 190, c.f C. Bürger, *LebenSchreiben* 171; Schmidt 25, 29-30). See also Arons ("Performance" 200-01).

final scene. By engaging with genre play, Mereau reveals the dangers a young female actress faced, and her parody is more subversive than it at first appears. On the one hand, Mereau uses prose to unmask drama and explore power dynamics offstage; on the other hand, she misdirects the reader's attention from the narrative's moments of danger to the absurdity created by parody. Mereau removes the body from her text, which complicates the tension between drama and prose. Even though the narrator never directly *performs* in the text (the formal structure of drama is absent), and her description of the roles she plays are narrated in the past tense, her impressions of performing are retold through prose. The various moments of masking and unmasking, of secrets told and revealed, and the absence of reflections of the body and self all point toward a reading of the final scene as not only a comment on the state of women in society, but also of the false allures of both women's theatrical careers and more "traditional" roles of being wives and mothers.[104]

Written a year after *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" incorporates elements from Goethe's text. A variety of intertextual allusions to Goethe's *Lehrjahre* situate "Die Flucht" within contemporary German literature[105] and bridges concerns with theatricality. In her a fragment of a letter about the *Lehrjahre* written in 1799, Mereau writes that Goethe's novel is "eines der größten und schönsten

[104] Due to Mereau's controversial public image, scholars use biographical information to inform their readings of her works. Mereau's divorce from her first husband was considered a scandal, and her subsequent marriage to Romantic writer Clemens Brentano was tumultuous.

[105] Two references to "Thalia" situate the text in conversation with the mythological figure Thalia, who was the muse who presided over comedy and idyllic poetry. She is usually portrayed as a young woman who holds a comic mask in her hand. "Thalia" may also be a nod to a journal in which Mereau published poems in 1791. The resonances that occur throughout this text play double roles, both "onstage" in terms of literal presence in the short story, as well as "offstage" in relation to cultural allusions.

Erzeugnisse des menschlichen Geistes" and that German literature has "nichts ähnliches aufzuzeigen" (Hammerstein, "Sehn'"181). She commends the novel for its "Kette der Begebenheiten" and that "das Gewühl der Umstände spielt frei um sie herum" (Hammerstein, "Sehn'"181). What Mereau takes away from the *Lehrjahre* is that "Jeder Mensch soll sich selbst verstehn lernen, und darnach handeln. Er soll seiner Natur folgen, und seine Neigungen und Ansprüche an das Leben mit Vernunft und Zusammenhang zu befriedigen suchen" (Hammerstein, "Sehn'" 185). What also interests Mereau is the idea of the path of "Irrtum" that leads to an enlightened end. She writes, "Erziehung heißt folglich nichts anders, als den Menschen über seine Irrtümer auf dem Wege der Bildung früh genug belehren, weil das Schicksal, dieser vornehme und teure Hofmeister, eben diesen Weg mit uns geht, nur daß uns meist zu spät die Augen aufgehen" (Hammerstein, "Sehn'" 186). Obviously influenced by Goethe's novel, Mereau does not go about rewriting it, but she does pick up on the interest in theater and re-works the *Lehrjahre* by writing a journey of a young woman through a theatrical career that may or may not end with her own *Bildung*. Her re-writing of the *Wilhelm Meister* narrative re-contextualizes aspects of gender in relation to narrating theatrical space.

Plot and topography in "Die Flucht von der Hauptstadt" often work in tandem, where the move from one location to another signals an advance in the narrative as well indicates spaces of safety/danger and revealing/concealing. The narrative's movements are: 1. *Heimat*; 2. Berlin; 3. Dresden; 4. an unnamed rural town; 5. Berlin; 6. Hamburg; 7. *Heimat*. The location in the middle of the list is the unnamed small town, which serves as an apex that brings acting back to a small and rural stage. The short story's title "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" can provide another reading of this list of locations. The

common interpretation of this title is that the narrator flees her hometown for Berlin (the *Hauptstadt* of the story's title), but "nach" can also be read as "after," so her flight can also be what occurs *after* her two trips to Berlin. The motif of fleeing then accompanies every station, for they are all, in one sense or another, a flight to or from Berlin. When the narrator and Albino arrive in Berlin, they meet and befriend Felix, a man they immediately trust, but when Felix tells the narrator that Albino has been brought to jail, the narrator faces a precarious existence: unmarried and alone, Berlin becomes a dangerous city, instead of one of opportunity. Berlin becomes a place for the narrator both to hide from her family and where masked actors are revealed to be intimate friends.

The unnamed *Ich-Erzählerin* of Mereau's "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt" begins her narrative with a description of her small family home, and she situates herself genealogically, physically, and socially. Her first sentence locates her within Germany: "Ich bin in einer Mittelstadt Teutschlands geboren" (203), so that her first identity originates from her place of birth. She notes that she is a daughter of a long family line that goes back to "Noahs Zeiten." This ironically coded comment offers a preliminary glimpse into the text's parodistic qualities. The narrator defines herself in relation to the lineage of her father's family line: "er *allein* vertauschte seine lebendige Rebenpflanzungen gegen das tote Pergament eines Adelbriefs" (203, emphasis mine). She notes that her father is an exception to familial tradition. With these introductory sentences, the narrator has established her place in both an extensive genealogy but points out the exceptionality of her nuclear family. Her father, attached to his quest for nobility, wants the narrator to marry a "Landedelmann" (204), and presumably carry on a lineage that advances the family's class status. Genealogy is coded as masculine not only by the

father's extensive familial history but also by the complete absence of any information pertaining to the mother's genealogy. Although she contextualizes herself among external forces, her physical and personal descriptions remain flat, with little explicit psychology and back-story, such as leaving the first fifteen years of her life absent from her narration.[106] Her appearance onto the stage of "Die Flucht" is as superficial as a role she might play onstage in front of an audience unaware of her personal history.

Inside their house, the narrator's mother plays the dilettante; she uses books to give off an air of aesthetic taste, culture, and education. The narrator explicitly contrasts her mother and father; the first sentence in which she introduces her mother juxtaposes the description of her father: "*Doch*, wenn mein Vater durch diese Handlung mehr für den Nachruhm leben wollte, *so* trachtete meine Mutter vielmehr nur nach dem Beifall ihrer Zeitgenossen, und sie gab sich so viel Mühe, den Ruf einer Gelehrten zu erweben, daß sie gern alles andre darüber zu Grunde gehen ließ" (203, emphasis mine). Their house is for show, has little depth, and is a carefully constructed mask intended to deceive or misdirect visitors. The mother is a dilettante who wants her room to portray her as a thoughtful and educated woman to the detriment of other tasks. The room's appearance is also performed; it is merely a mask over her superficiality, which the narrator removes: "Ihr Zimmer war mit lauter Folianten angefüllt, denn sie schämte sich bei dem Lesen eines leichten, gefälligen Buchs angetroffen zu werden" (203). For the narrator's mother, reading is not a private activity, but is done with an eye toward the outside. She uses her surroundings to keep up appearances. Although genealogy is associated with the father and domestic rooms with the mother, both are revealed to be

[106] In the short story's denouement, the narrator reveals she has a brother who was close friends with Albino and who loved her greatly (225).

performances, in that they desire affirmation from an audience (society). There may not be any explicit danger in the familial home, but there is also a lack of stability due to its superficiality.

The familial garden-theater, located partway between a domestic space and a public one, puts her in Vinzens' (and harm's) way and threatens her wish to marry Albino. Since the theater belongs to the narrator's father, it should be a safe location where her father could protect her from the advances of unwanted men. But, when the narrator acts in her father's performances, she has to interact with Vinzens, the man she has to marry, who "trat sehr oft in Tyrannn- und Heldenrollen auf" (204). His onstage roles parallel his offstage identity as an antagonistic force in the narrator's young life that conflict with the idea of marriage as a way of protecting a young woman at this time:

> [Er suchte] mich hinter den Kulissen auf, um ebenfalls mir seinen Beifall zu bezeigen. Er glaubte mir davon keinen schmeichelhafteren Beweis geben zu können, als die Versicherung, daß er nur den Heiratsvorschlägen [...] nicht länger wiederstehen könne [...] Hier drang er mir [...] einige so plumpe Liebkosungen auf, daß ich mich nachdrücklich gegen ihn wehren mußte und durch mein Geräusch bald einige andere herbeizog. (205)

Couched in a parodic short story, this scene at first seems less than menacing; Vinzens ends up not being a direct threat to the narrator and this scene marks the only time when the two are alone together. However, the narrator tries to combine physical force ("gegen ihn wehren") and screams for help before others can save her. Even in this short scene, Mereau demonstrates the narrator's powerlessness in the face of any attack. The simultaneous safety and danger present at this familial locale parallel the possibilities and

constraints of women in German theater at the time, because it marks woman's negotiation between having a public career and a private one as mother and wife.

The ambiguity of the garden-theater is due to it being both a location for concealing and (involuntarily) revealing. The narrator's first experience in a semi-formal theatrical setting takes place in her father's barn. He has, according to her, a "Sinn für Kunst" (203), and "[v]or allen ehrte und übte er die dramatische Kunst, und hatte sich deshalb in einem seiner Weinberge ein artiges Theater errichten lassen" (203). The simultaneous safety and danger present at this familial locale parallel the possibilities and constraints of women in German theater at the time, because it marks woman's negotiation between having a public career and a private one as mother and wife. The narrator and Albino use the stage at night to plan their running away, but their plan is thwarted by the father's unexpected presence. The narrator and Albino hatch a plan to run away together in order to escape the intended marriage with Vinzens. They abscond to the garden-theater at night and enact their plan onstage. Their giddiness is interrupted when Albino feels a body that turns out to be the narrator's father, whose presence threatens their plans. The lovers go to the unattended theater at night, which, according to the narrator, "war der Ort unsrer geheimen Zusammenkünfte; hier, wo die Wiege unsrer Liebe gewesen war, hofften wir auch für ihr Fortkommen sorgen zu können" (205). They begin to enact their escape on the garden-theater's stage and, in their hilarity, they forget "die nötige Vorsicht für die Bewahrung unsers Geheimnisses" (205). Albino, excited by the plan ("im Feuer seiner Schilderung") starts to enact the flight "auf dem Theater," but when he trips over something living (206), he discovers that the narrator's father is in the garden-theater. Their use of the stage for the traditional purpose of acting scenes has

revealed their secret plans. The garden-theater is again marked as a place of opportunity (a future with Albino) as well as one of interference caused by the family's insistence that the narrator marry Vinzens to advances her class and became a wife (and presumably a mother). The simultaneous safety and danger of the garden-theater are emphasized, for what wants to be concealed is revealed onstage.

The couple's move from the *Heimat* to Berlin occurs at night, concealed in both silence and darkness made possible when the narrator is able to elude her sleeping father who rests below and run away with Albino. Their silent journey by carriage is uneventful, and when the two arrive in Berlin, they meet and befriend Felix, a man they immediately trust, but their joy is short-lived. Felix tells the narrator that Albino has been brought to jail. The narrator, now alone in Berlin, stays in a room at Felix's female friend's (known in the text as the *Wirtin* and the *Gerfährtin*) home and mourns her fate there. After learning from Felix that she is safe, the narrator accompanies her *Wirtin* and Felix to a theater, in which the figure of the buffoon enchants the narrator. Upon returning to her room, the narrator finds that a theatrical element has anticipated her arrival: the masked buffoon is already in her private chambers and invites her to an improvised skit, where the two act like lovers. The plot arch comes full circle here, for when the buffoon removes his mask, he reveals himself to be Felix. Theatrical guises have been unmasked in the narrator's private room, and Berlin becomes a place for the narrator both to hide from her family and where masked actors are revealed to be intimate friends. This explicit rupture of Felix's onstage/offstage identities becomes a catalyst for the narrator to become an actress, and, to pursue this goal, the narrator and Felix take a carriage to Dresden. In contrast to her carriage ride with Albino, this one is filled with pranks and

laughter. In Dresden, the narrator's first role as the *Mädchen von Marienburg* is successful, but she discovers that Felix has only pretended to be friendly and is in actuality cruel and manipulative, so she leaves him and meets an unnamed artist, who dies soon thereafter.

The narrator's experience as a spectator at a large theater in Berlin further complicates the relationships between onstage/offstage and concealing/revealing. The narrator first ventures into a professional theater at Felix's behest: "Einst führte er [Felix] mich in ein Theater, in welchem ich noch nicht gewesen war" (213). Spectatorship here is associated with a lack of agency ("Felix führte mich"). The narrator is neither the subject of the theater nor of the sentence. The narrator watches the performance alone with her female companion because Felix has left. As the theater fills, so does the narrator's anxiety. The narrator's internal unrest comes from Felix's absence, and she becomes increasingly nervous: "Das Schauspiel begann, doch es zerstreute mich nicht, die Schauspieler kamen mir alle langweilig und abgeschmackt vor, bis auf den Augenblick, da der Bouffon erschien" (214). The narrator's opinion of the piece reveals her ability to judge a performance through the lens of aesthetic values.[107] The narrator is so entranced by the buffoon that "ich vergaß mich selbst und alles andere über ihn, und sah nun mit Entzücken den übrigen Teil des Schauspiels an" (214). The narrator's forgetting of her self removes her awareness of her physical location from her body. She is no longer conscious of the space she physically occupies, because she is temporarily removed from sensations of temporality and spatiality. The division between spectator and performer

[107] "Abgeschmackt" carries the connotation of "Geschmack," an important term of the Enlightenment associated with art criticism.

changes when the narrator returns home, to her private chamber. The narrator describes the comedic scene when she enters her room:

> Als ich in mein Zimmer trat, sprang zu meinem Erstaunen eben der Mann, der mich auf der Bühne so sehr bezaubert hatte, mit einer Maske vor dem Gesichte und mutwilligen Gebärden auf mich zu…*Unwillkürlich* trat ich in die Rolle seiner Geliebten, wir gaben uns ganz der Laune des Augenblicks hin, und erschufen aus dem Stegreif eine Menge der lustigsten Szenen, die vielleicht nie so lebendig auf den Brettern gesehen worden sind. (214, emphasis mine)

The transfer of the very public location of the theater to the very private one of the narrator's home challenges the designations of each space. Her role as spectator turns to one of a participant in an impromptu skit. Felix is the one who literally conceals (the buffoon) and reveals himself (as Felix). The narrator reveals her "internal" qualities as an actress with the word "unwillkürlich," an idea Felix buttresses when he shouts, "Wahrhaftig, meine Liebe, die Natur hat dich zur Schauspielerin geschaffen!" (213).

The text's explicit references to the narrator's *Flucht* position her transitory moments on her journey. The word *Flucht* (or a form thereof) appears three times in the short story. The first occurs when the narrator and Albino meet in the garden-theater before planning to run away: "ehe noch eine Seele unsere Flucht ahnete, würden wir schon weit entfernt sein" (206). The next instance is when the narrator sees Vinzens acting onstage in Berlin: "Er war einige Zeit nach meiner Flucht aus dem väterlichen Hause gleichfalls nach B– gereist" (222). The third occurs with the infinitive form "flüchten," in a direct citation of when Albino reveals Felix's lies to the narrator: "Felix gab mir darauf mit verstelltem Schmerz den Rat, mich ins Ausland zu flüchten, und die

Hoffnung, die vielleicht in besseren Tagen wiedersehen zu können" (225). The varied meanings inherent in "Flucht" bind it to both a psychological state of fleeing from a place or mindset as well as a connection between rooms or animals.[108] The narrator connects the numerous cities and towns she visits. These three specific references to "Die Flucht," along with the short story's greater theme of fleeing emphasize the importance of theater's spatiality and its potentiality for German women of the eighteenth century. For Mereau, the flight may be one to a narrated space where her narrator can perform and travel with a type of ease unusual for German women of this time. The text's explicit references to the narrator's travels positions her transitory moments on her journey and comments on her relationship with her male companions.[109]

The narrator's performances onstage reflect those of her own familial life. She romanticizes her performed first role, played on her father's stage: "Auch ich war kaum fünfzehn Jahre alt, als ich in diesem, der Kunst geweihten Tempel in allen ersten Rollen

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[108] The etymology of "Flucht" also carries an interesting connection to spatiality, because "Flucht" is related to "Zimmerflucht" (Duden 7, 228). The image of a suite of rooms, or rooms connected by a corridor, can be transposed on Mereau's text, so that each town the narrator visits is also a room, or a space.

[109] Lessing's tropes – a woman fleeing her father's disapproval with her beloved, an artist's depiction of a woman commanding a man's attention – reemerge in texts by Mereau and Bürger, as well as does his treatment of spaces. Inns are places of refuge, of safety, and of secrets concealed and revealed in *Minna*, *Emilia*, and *Sara*. *Sara*, which begins *in media res*, her father searching for her at a wretched provincial inn [*elenden Wirthaus*], contains multiple rooms that house Sara, her father, Mellefonte, and Marwood. The landlord assures Sara's father, "Nur eine Wand wird Sie von dem Frauenzimmer trennen" (I: ii). The inn offers the characters proximity, but the walls offer spaces of secrecy and intimacy. Alone in her room, Marwood removes her symbolic mask(s): "Bin ich allein? Kann ich unbemerkt einmal Atem schöpfen, und die Muskeln des Gesichts in ehre natürliche Lage fahren lassen?" (IV: v). Allowing movement to change a deliberately forced mien, Marwood uses her privacy to reveal to the audience another face – that of a woman left alone with a child. Sara's room proves to be dangerous when Marwood follows her [*gefolgt*] into her room and discloses her identity as Marwood's previous lover.

mit großem Beifall auftrat" (204). The mention of her just-barely fifteen years highlights her youth and vulnerability. At this tender age, the narrator experiences her first onstage (and offstage) love, Albino, who "spielte den ersten Liebhaber, und er sagte mir als solcher so oft, daß er mich liebe, bis er es endlich selbst empfand und ich es glaubte" (204).[110] Interestingly, the narrator does not claim to love Albino; she merely believes that he loves her. Not only is their love first a performance, but the narrator uses the rare present tense to suggest Albino may not be his real name: "Ein junger Mann aus der Nachbarschaft, den ich Albino nennen will" (204). "Albino" is a blank sheet of paper, upon which the narrator can inscribe an identity. This placeholder causes the narrator to *believe* in a mutual love: "Unsere Einbildung entbrannte immer mehr und mehr, und bald spielten wir in den zärtlichsten Rollen nur uns selbst. Mit welchem Feuer stellten wir nun die schwersten Szenen dar!" (204). Albino is coded as an actor both onstage as well as offstage; he could well be a character name or a performance. "Albino," which has its roots in "alb," or white, is a name that itself carries no meaning, and "Albino," then, is a placeholder for a specific, named identity. Mereau repeatedly undermines both theatricality and authenticity so that neither is a stable category, not even for the narrator's personal emotions or her staged performances.

The narrative, written in the first person, changes in the text's final two paragraphs to the third-person plural. The narrator describes the preparations for the marriage and all previous threats seem to have disappeared. On the surface, the shift from "ich" (the narrator) to "wir" (the narrator and Albino) shows the harmony between the reunited couple. The narrator and Albino share one mind, which parallels their depiction

[110] Arons argues that the "casual crossover of performance into real life (and vice-versa) is a recurrent trope in the narrative" (199).

of a perfect marriage: "Nichts schien *uns* lustiger, als wenn *wir uns* erinnerten…" (227). However, this move does more than perform a happy couple. Any mention of an "ich" in the final paragraphs has completely disappeared. Mereau has shifted the "ich" offstage away from the text. Therefore, the incorporation of the "ich" to the "wir" therefore performs not only the marriage as a union, but also removes the seemingly stable subject that has been narrating the story up to the final paragraphs. The short story's final performance is made visible by the performative choice of shifting the narrative voice away from the narrating subject, which obfuscates her completely. By conflating a happy (albeit parodic) ending with an eradication of any sort of female self, Mereau writes a final scene that produces a type of violence, that, while subtler than Emilia's and Sara's deaths that close Lessing's dramas, also removes the female protagonist (as an individual) from the narrative. Her final performance is a type of erasure of individuality; her final existence can only be alongside her husband.

The feminine ideal and real in Elise Bürger's *Die antike Statue aus Florenz*

Elise Bürger's short "Scherzspiel" *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* (1814) satirizes the popular performance genres of the *tableaux vivants* and *Attitüden*[111] by relocating theatricality away from the stage and onto the female body. In the play, the protagonist Laura pretends to be a classical statue in order to receive her husband's lost adulation, and she pretends to come to life before his eyes to reveal her identity and remind him that he loves her. She performs a variation of *tableaux vivants* and *Attitüden*, new genres of

[111] See Wurst "Spurensicherung" 220.

the last decade of the eighteenth century that were performed solely by women,[112] which privileged the body over the voice – due in no small part to the fact that they were performed in silence.[113] As a performative space, the *tableau* comments on issues of aesthetics (as a result of its allusions to ancient Greece and classical statues), the pleasure of experiencing the uncanny,[114] and the performance of gender (because women usually performed these pieces alone). The *tableaux* worked with challenging the audience by giving them access to an almost magical transformation onstage. In the play's premiere, Elise Bürger played the role of Laura,[115] and Laura's great concerns – her husband abandoning her and facing the scandal of divorce – are realities that Elise Bürger herself faced. However, Laura uses creativity and deceit to make her relationship return to its initial state; Elise Bürger did not have this possibility. In writing *Die antike Statue*, Bürger imagines – satirically – how a married woman could use aspects of theatricality to

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[112] Important *tableaux* performers of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries included Sophie Albrecht, Friederike Brun, Ida Brun, Elise Bürger, Lady Hamilton, Henriette Hendel-Schütz, Madame de Staël, and Madame de Genlis. For a discussion on Goethe's incorporation of themes of monodrama and attitudes, see Holmström 140; 145; 215-16; 231.

[113] Around the turn of the century, women who performed popular genres of *Attitüden* and *tableaux vivants* experimented with transforming the female body. Sophie Albrecht (1757-1840) performed *Attitüden* and *tableaux* that focused the audience's attention on women's body and the ability to transform a woman's shape with just a veil or scarf. Albrecht performed in many of her close acquaintance Friedrich Schiller's plays. *Tableaux* were performed in semiprivate spaces "such as salons, spas, ballrooms, and dinner parties" (Dupree, "Mask" 141) of the "middle-class and aristocratic sociability" (Dupree, "Mask" 135, 141).

[114] "By contrast, later works of the Romantic period sometimes foreground the erotic, irrational, and uncanny dimension of such transformations" (Dupree, "Mask" 144).

[115] "*Die antike Statue aus Florenz* was written in 1814 in Stuttgart and performed for the first time in January 1815 as part of a program of Bürger's attitude performances in Nuremberg, with Bürger herself playing the female lead role of Laura" (Dupree, "Mask" 152).[115]

regain agency in her relationship.[116] Laura's fears anticipate Elise Bürger's own fate: she suffered a particularly public and scandalous divorce from *Sturm und Drang* author Gottfried August Bürger that left her poor and vulnerable. For Laura, the *tableau* is no mere parlor game – it is a method to save herself from a fate similar to Elise Bürger's. When Bürger questions and complicates the genres of *Attitüden* and *tableaux* by locating them in the domestic realm and using them to parody and critique the male gaze, she destabilizes the perception that the women's bodies were sites of male adoration. She also removes theatricality from the (semi)public domain of the stage and places it in the private realm of the nuclear family's home.[117]

Die antike Statue aus Florenz is, in part, Bürger's satirical response to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (1762), which also features a man who adores a female form in the private realm of his studio. Rousseau's theater piece and *Die antike Statue* are both one-act plays with a comparable plot. In *Pygmalion*, the sculptor falls in love with Galatea, the statue he has created to perfection. In a long monologue, he implores Galatea to come to life and his passionate pleas transform the statue into a beautiful and loving woman. Bürger restages the Pygmalion story and adjusts the plot to feature a female voice and give her agency, which repairs an unhappy marriage. Whereas Galatea is able to speak only at the very end of *Pygmalion*, Laura and her sister Rosaura speak at both the beginning and the end of *Die antike Statue*, and thus Bürger's play is bookended by the female voice. Bürger's addition of the second woman (Laura and Rosaura) splits the original single female identity into two and thus frames her play with the two women. In

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[116] According to Wurst and Dupree, *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* satirizes the male gaze (Dupree 151) and foregrounds "the ways in which women use theatricality in order to navigate the domestic sphere" (Dupree, "Mask" 156).
[117] See Dupree "Mask" 145.

the end, Ludwig and Laura reestablish their marriage, but Rosaura, standing on a pedestal as if watching over them, disrupts the binary between man and woman that dominates *Pygmalion*. On a greater realm, Bürger also breaks down a clear split that society has constructed between male and female identities and includes a woman-woman relationship that is supportive and helps Laura to overcome her precarious position as a forgotten wife.[118]

Die antike Statue aus Florenz begins with sisters Laura and Rosaura who try to learn why Ludwig, Laura's husband, no longer pays attention to his wife and why he spends all his time locked away in an attic room. Rosaura peers through the keyhole and reveals to Laura that the room contains plaster statues. The room's contents may seem innocuous, but Ludwig's fascination with them frightens Laura, who laments to Rosaura, "Er brav, er bieder? Und vergißt sein leidend Weib / Um einen, Gott erbarme, nur gipsnen Zeitvertreib? / Kann er hingeben warme Lieb an kalte Puppen, / So zieh zum Onkel ich, er bleibe bei den Gruppen" (11). Laura realizes that she has been traded out for lifeless forms. Rosaura comforts Laura by saying, "Auch sehe ich zur Scheidung weder Schuld noch Klage, / Man lachte Dich nur aus, sprächst Du von Deiner Plage" (12).[119] With divorce not being a realistic option, Laura decides to regain agency and to trick Ludwig into falling in love with her again by pretending to be the statue that he ordered. Like a *tableau* performer, Laura drapes herself in white fabric, so that her entire

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[118] See Heilmann, "Fear, Performance and the Female Body" for an expansion of this argument.

[119] Laura's fears do not seem so misplaced when one considers that Elise Bürger suffered a particularly public and scandalous divorce from Storm and Stress author Gottfried August Bürger that left her poor and vulnerable. "*Die antike Statue aus Florenz* was written in 1814 in Stuttgart and performed for the first time in January 1815 as part of a program of Bürger's attitude performances in Nuremberg, with Bürger herself playing the female lead role of Laura" (Dupree "Mask" 152).

physical body, *except* her mouth is veiled. Ludwig believes her to be the statue and praises her form: "Welche reines Ebenmaas, der Arm, die weiten Falten, / Der kleine Fuß, so weich, so zart gehalten! Die Fingerspitzen rund und fein und durchzusehen" (22). He implores the statue to approach him: "Du über alles Reine, / O steig herab vom Thron und sey die Meine!" (22). Laura responds by lifting her right hand, which causes Ludwig to react by asking questions aloud: "Wie? Was? Erhebt sie nicht die Hand? / Ha, könnte sie erwarmen? Bin ich nicht ein Thor –" (23). Ludwig's questions disrupt the Alexandrines of the play – an indication that the fear he feels affects even the established rhythm constructed within the domestic realm. Laura's body has influenced not only Ludwig's body, but has also (momentarily) ruptured the form of their communication.

Whereas before Laura felt fear at Ludwig leaving her, he now feels afraid that the statue is coming to life before his very eyes. When she begins to move, Ludwig is as horrified as if he were in a *Schauerroman*. He exclaims, "Hu, hu! Ein Fieberfrost durchschauert mir die Glieder" and "Nein, Nein! Ich traume wohl, bin krank, nur Fieberwahn / Ist es, der wachend sich so etwas träumen kann" (24).[120] The juxtaposition of heat (*Fieberwahn*) with cold (*Fieberfrost*) posits the contradiction of bodily senses in the presence of fear. Fear has moved from Laura's situation to Ludwig's body, and she has gained agency by performing a *tableau* within her home, which upsets her husband's expectations. To assert her control, Laura gestures to her feet (25), and Ludwig sinks to his knees and exalts her: "Hier lieg ich, zeige Dich mir, göttliche Vestale!" (25). Ludwig's position *below* Laura parallels her new control over Ludwig, who now praises

[120] "The *tableau* thus evoked a variety of emotional and intellectual responses, ranging from disinterested pleasure to abject terror intermingled with desire" (Dupree, "Mask" 144).

the very same body that he previously criticized. By adopting an identity that foregrounds the body and incorporates the supernatural (with a moving statue), Bürger gives Laura the agency to create fear in her husband.

Now that Laura is positioned above Ludwig, she can remove her veil and reveal her identity to him. While she lifts her veil, she tells him, "So sieh, was längst Dir schon Freund Amor zugesandt, / Dein liebend Weib!" (25). When Laura originally discovered Ludwig's fascination with the plaster figures, she referred to herself as a "leidend Weib." Her new self-created label as a "liebend Weib" reveals a reversal not only of her agency, but also on the linguistic level, where the "ei" of "leidend" is transformed into the "ie" of "liebend," and the direction of the "d" flips to become a "b," so that "leidend" visually transforms into "liebend." She reveals herself vocally as well as visually and brings the language of revelation together with the presentation of identity. Laura goes on to tell Ludwig that he should be looking within his home for his happiness, not for female forms that are elsewhere: "Nicht aus fernem Land / Kömmt Dir Dein wahres Glück, es war schon längst Dir nah / Nur daß es nicht Dein fernhin schwärmend Augend sah" (26). Laura's comments resonate beyond the parameters of a text; she simultaneously assures female viewers that they are worthy of their husband's admiration, as well as instructs male viewers that they may already have what they seek. Although Bürger's play is, indeed *play*ful, it also adopts a light didactic tone that send a message to male and female viewers alike.

Laura's performance restores her marriage with Ludwig, but her *tableau* performance also critiques Ludwig's gaze. Because Ludwig so easily mistakes Laura for the statue he ordered, the reliability of his gaze is questioned and critiqued in *Die antike*

Statue. The play makes fun of Ludwig, because he easily mistakes Laura for the statue he ordered, and *Die antike Statue* thereby criticizes the male gaze by showing how subjective it is and confused it can be. Ultimately, Laura has control, but the control that she has is limited and must remain within the realm of performance. Like in *Pygmalion*, Ludwig both desires the stone but also desires the stone to move – under his command. He wants to control the stone's movement, and, in Ludwig's case, when he gets what he wants, he is afraid; for what he really wants is ultimate control, a moving statue that behaves more like a marionette (he is the master of the strings) than someone independent of him. He wants to maintain control over the stone, whether it moves or stays still, so that it remains subject to his gaze.

In the play's final scene, the pedestal becomes again a stage-within-a-stage. Rosaura, Laura's sister (the rhyming of the names bolsters a reading of these two women as being iterations of one another) stands on the pedestal and holds a wreath over the embracing couple. She speaks the play's final words: "Bravo, Herr Schwager! Hier ist die beste Gruppe anzusehn. / Ich kränze sie, die ist antik, modern und ewig schön" (28). This final moment, in which Rosaura stands over Laura and Ludwig, speaks to the audience of their union. Rosaura's words end the play, and she ends with a sentence that nods towards Goethe's *ewig weibliche* from his *Faust II*, but adds the new adjective "modern" to make room for an updated understanding of the German woman around 1800. The theatricality of this scene, the overly happy ending, harkens back to the blissful narrated happiness that closes "Die Flucht." By adopting a light tone, *Die antike Statue* can tease Ludwig's perceptions and then, on a larger scale, critique a male-centered system that longs for an idealized female that behaves like a statue – unmoving and silent, there only

to be gazed at by men. Bürger's play breaks this vision and re-writes the active woman's voice into the marriage. The re-union is performed on the diegetic level, which highlights all the various levels of performance within this piece. In both texts, the authors depict the superficiality of a marriage and reveal that a union is performed and constructed.

Conclusion

By invoking the theater and actresses, Mereau and Bürger address a women's career that still carried connotations of scandal, and they use the theme of theatricality to add another dimension to the control men had over women who dared enter the public realm. In "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt," the plot ends with the marriage ceremony, performed in front of the couple's town and family, whereas in *Die antike Statue*, the estrangement of a married couple ends with Ludwig's reawakened love. In both texts, the blissful conclusion can only exist after the extent of its theatricality is revealed, for theatricality and performance exist not only on a physical stage, but also within the home and within relationships. Whereas Ehrmann and La Roche reveal in *Amalie* and *Sternheim* that performance is linked to writing letters about experiences of the bedroom, Mereau and Bürger essentially flip these considerations: performance is not bound to the stage and the theater; rather, women are forced to perform their roles as wives in the domestic realm, as well.

These two texts set up a tension between the moving, "flighty" female body and the idealized stony, statuary female form. *Die antike Statue* focuses on the male desire for female body that represents both ancient and eternal beauty, but Laura challenges the reliability of sight and thus mitigates the power of the male gaze. When Laura, disguised

as the statue, begins to move and thus interrupts the static female form she imitates, she causes Ludwig such fear that even the formal structure of his spoken language is affected. Although Ludwig has requested that she step off the pedestal to be his, his reaction shows that, while he gets what he desires, he is also fearful of it, and it is in this moment of fear that Laura can regain power. Laura refuses to allow her husband, who desires plaster statues, the frozen form of his desires. Whereas Laura puts her body on display to juxtapose the frozen female form with the moving one, the narrator of "Die Flucht" moves from town to town and stage to stage, always evading a singular, stable gaze. She has various male suitors throughout the short story, and no one experiences the totality of her experience; not even the reader has access to the sight of her, for she hides her body from the narrative; there is no physical description of her appearance. Whenever the male gaze (from her father, Felix, or her unnamed lover, for example) tries to hold and control the static female form, she moves and disrupts what he sees. Although the narrator is "flighty" throughout the narrative, she too closes her piece with a static scene of being surrounded by her town at her wedding ceremony, also a sort of *tableau* that anticipates the *tableau* motif of *Die antike Statue*.

The endings to both pieces are parodic, and both incorporate a tableau that portrays a union; in *Die antike Statue*, Laura and Ludwig stand below Rosaura on the pedestal, who crowns their love. Mereau and Bürger employ parody to unmask established hierarchies and to give their female protagonists (limited) agency, for parody allows the authors to play with genre conventions and write female characters that can consciously perform an image of domestic bliss. Parody functions to distract the male gaze, which Bürger and Mereau critique by dismantling the stability of the female body.

The theatrical female body as narrated by Bürger and Mereau resists the male imagination and its idealization of the female form. Although both texts end with a frozen image, these images now incorporate the male figure and freeze the idealized marriage, not the individual female form, and the final scene frames both the male and female figure, as well as those who diegetically witness the scene (Rosaura in *Die antike Statue* and the townspeople in "Die Flucht"). The parody thus addresses not only the male gaze, but also society's gaze on the idealization of unions between men and women.

In Rousseau's *Pygmalion* the persona describes how Pygmalion gazes at Galatea in terms of its intensity and utter fixation to the point of distraction from all else:

> His Galatea, now, absorb'd his Care:
> (For so the Nymph he nam'd) his weary Toil
> Still gazing there, Pygmalion would beguile:
> And while his Galatea blest his Sight,
> All other Studies were neglected quite. (5)

On the one hand, Pygmalion's fixation monitors Galatea and frames her in his studio. Like Ludwig, her image entrances him and he obsesses over her physical form. Pygmalion also *names* Galatea, which reiterates the extent of his power of her, which harkens back to Adam's role in the Genesis. This final line in this passage is perhaps the most important – because when Pygmalion observes and gazes at Galatea, he neglects his studies, the pursuit of knowledge. Pygmalion cannot see everything when he is obsessed with one form. *Pygmalion* sets up the possibility that a man's fixation on the female form might distract him from a more comprehensive picture, one that allows for a woman's interiority, for a narrating female "I," and for the subversive implications of parody. The

woman no one sees is speaking, writing, dissembling; she sending men off on the wrong path while he gazes at the female statue. While the men are staring at Galatea, at the *Vestale*, and idealized representations of women on stage, the writing author has a space to emerge and share her voice.

CHAPTER III:

WHISKED AWAY: SICKNESS AND DANCE AT THE MASKED BALL IN SOPHIE VON LA ROCHE'S *GESCHICHTE DES FRÄULEINS VON STERNHEIM* (1771) AND ELISA VON DER RECKE'S *FAMILIEN=SCENEN ODER ENTWICKELUNGEN AUF DEM MASQUENBALLE* (1794)

"Aber als er sie um den Leib faßte, an seine Brust drückte, und den sittenlosen, frechen Wirbeltanz der Deutschen, mit einer, alle Wohlstandsbande zerreissenden Vertraulichkeit an ihrer Seite daherhüpfte – da wurde meine stille Betrübniß in brennenden Zorn verwandelt" (2.7). With this quotation, Lord Seymour observes Sophie von Sternheim dance the fast-paced waltz with the prince in Sophie von La Roche's epistolary novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771), and his enraged reaction captures how women authors of the eighteenth century were carefully monitored and controlled by male authors, editors, and publishers. Although Sophie is reluctant to dance the waltz with the prince and tries to free herself from him, Seymour still chastises her for what he perceives to be her immoral behavior. Caught between two male powers (the prince and Seymour), and, with Lord Derby also angrily observing the scene, Sophie is trapped by both the male gaze and male strength. She tries to break free of these powers by fleeing from the ballroom to the side wings of the castle, where she tears apart her costume before succumbing to an increased pulse and weakened nerves. In *Sternheim*, La Roche addresses the tensions that arose when women became visible in the public realm, which she links to the sick female body. Elisa von der Recke reframes this scene in *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* (1794). Both authors expand on tropes of the masked face and the dancing body and link them to the sickly female body. Their representations of masked balls complicate male-authored texts that

likewise trace a tension in the relationship between genders in relation to dancing. Goethe's novella *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) offers a male-authored perspective on the dance and the masked ball that ignore the female voice. In this chapter I read the literary representation of women dancing (in general), and dancing the waltz (in particular) as veiled warnings for women authors that parallel the potential dangers of writing in the public sphere, where their texts are placed alongside those written by men, and, in effect, "dance" with them.

Women-authored texts could function as textual masks that gave women authors access to the public realm, but women authors also faced the danger of being unmasked and having their identity exposed if they published anonymously or under a pseudonym, which they often had to, since publishing as a woman was filled with obstacles (because having a female identity revealed to the public could nullify an author's works).[121] Even masked, by writing anonymously, pseudo-anonymously, or under a male "mentor's" name, women were still controlled and censored, for their works had to go through male editors and publishers before they could access a public readership. Women authors were a particular threat to men, for they upset a system that tried to silence them.[122] Publishing placed women-authored texts alongside those written by men, which caused an anxiety about the limits of control that men could maintain over women's writing. Women

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[121] When Benedikte Naubert's identity (and gender) was revealed in 1814, her previously famous and admired fairy tales lost credibility and were nearly forgotten and overshadowed by the Grimms' fairy tales, some of which were appropriated from her *Volkmährchen der Deutschen.*

[122] See Arons, who finds "the concept of masquerade" useful for her analysis "in two important ways. First, women writers of the eighteenth century had to grapple with the pressures of maintaining their own status as 'proper women' while engaging in an activity (writing) that represented an assumptions and normative prescriptions of 'ideal womanhood,' and, as a result, masquerade an idealized femininity that, at time, was at odds with their own lives, behaviors, and attitudes" (6).

authors, who could use the literary realm to circumvent limitations placed upon their gender around 1800, threatened a patriarchal society that deemed it unfit for women to publish outside of genres and venues proscripted for them. Women authors were allowed to publish in a carefully circumscribed discourse, and when they stepped out of their position, they were viewed suspiciously.[123] The masked ball scene in *Sternheim*, narrated first by Derby and then by Seymour, is indicative of how women authors writing around 1800 had to negotiate their place in the literary sphere. Sternheim's collapse in a side room at the masked ball exposes the strains strict cultural norms inflicted upon women, and Seymour's reaction in *Sternheim* is representative of a male-dominated society's anger at women authors writing their gendered experiences for all to read.

In women-authored literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, narrations of the masked ball serve as literary tropes that perform cases of mistaken identity as well as open a space for women to examine their own gender(ed) subjectivities. The masked ball often appears at the textual climax to reveal previously hidden secrets, and these revelations challenge or upset the established, patriarchal order. At the masked ball, all participants are simultaneously performers and viewers, and these performing elements, which involve seeing, listening, and touching, link the body to the voice. Similar to *tableaux vivants* and the theater, masked balls emphasize visual pleasure. At a masked ball, appearances are purposely false, misleading, or incongruous, which can lead to an exotic, estranging, and spectacular experience, and various women

[123] "For lurking behind the eighteenth-century insistence that woman does not belong in the public sphere is a suspicion of woman's propensity toward a theatrical display of herself that must be forestalled" (Arons 25).

authors reframed the representation of the masked ball to play with concepts of fluctuating identities that disrupt normal societal patterns.

Masking, veiling, concealing, and masquerading are all terms that were negatively associated with women and femininity around 1800, with undesirable "feminine" traits including being deceptive or being in disguise.[124] Masking signaled a general discomfort and unease regarding women and their role in society. The tension that Joan Riviere explores in her landmark essay, "Womanliness as Masquerade" (1929), in which she argues that women use their femininity to masquerade, relates the "conception of womanliness" to the motif of the mask, "behind which man suspects some hidden danger" (101). The danger that Riviere articulates here can be expanded to include German Romantic depictions of the masked ball and women authors, for the male gaze's desire to see everything perceives the female masked face as a threat, which destabilizes the illusion of control. In this chapter, I consider the trope of the mask as a public expression of an identity that negotiates a woman's body with the world around her. Women authors who address the motif of the masked ball in literature around 1800 include Amalie von Imhoff, who performed her poem "Die Schatten auf einem Maskenball" (1797) with her mother, both dressed as shadows, at a masked ball with the Herzogin Anna Amalia and Friedrich Schiller in attendance;[125] Sophie Mereau, who writes about an intimate conversation between her protagonist Marie and her future suitor that takes place in a corner at the masked ball in her short story "Marie" (1798);[126] and Karoline Jagemann, who mentions attending a masked ball as a child in her memoirs

[124] See Arons' introduction.
[125] See Schulz, *Schillers Horen* 176.
[126] See Arons 187.

(1771-92).[127] In these texts, the representation of the masked ball offers a way to trace issues of displacement and shifting identities.

In Eichendorff's texts, the masked balls are affected by moonlight, and this Romantic, refracted light portrays fantastical sights of ethereal female figures. In his prose works *Ahnung und Gegenwart* (1815), "Das Marmorbild" (1818; 1819), and *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826), Eichendorff narrates masked balls in which a male figure idealizes and objectifies the woman he admires, either by likening her positively to a Greek statue or an animal.[128] In each of these three texts, the masked women are elusive and their identities are unstable, for one cannot be sure that the narrator knows whom he sees. The moonlight and the masked ball heighten the beauty of the female figures, who lose their individuality behind their masks and instead become generic objects of male desire. In *Taugenichts*, for example the dangers posed to women by dancing the waltz are mitigated and only mentioned here. In the novella, the Good-for-Nothing watches the masked ball from a perched position in a tree outside of the castle where the masked ball and dancing are being held. The Taugenichts hears music from a distance ("Da droben schallte mir die Tanzmusik erst recht über die Wipfel entgegen," 27) and looks over the garden into the "hellerleuchteten Fenster des Schlosses" (27). Distance mediates what he

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[127] See Emde 94.

[128] In *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, for example, the protagonist Friedrich compares the woman to admires to a "flüchtige[s] Reh" and a "kleine, junge Zigeunerin, sehr nachlässig verhüllt, das schwarz Haar mit bunten Bändern in lange Zöpfe geflochten" (176), and he picks up again on this motif in his short story "Das Marmorbild," in which Florio sees a "zierliches Mädchen" in "griechischem Gewande leicht geschürzt, die schönen Haare in künstliche Kränze geflochten" (169). The third incarnation of this disguised woman appears in Eichendorff's novella *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*, in which the Good-for-Nothing watches the masked ball from his position outside of and separated from the castle. From his position perched in a tree, the Taugenichts sees "die schöne junge gnädige Frau," who is dressed "in ganz weißem Kleide, wie eine Lilie in der Nacht" (30).

can discern of the dancing. He observes the scene and the general impressions he has: "Dort drehten sich die Kronleuchter langsam wie Kränze von Sternen, unzählige geputzte Herren und Damen, wie in einem Schattenspiele, wogten und walzten und wirrten da bunt und unkenntlich durcheinander" (27). The people remain visible only as silhouettes; they are merely shadowy, two-dimensional figures. The Taugenicht's description emphasizes movement; the polysyndeton of "und" that connects the verbs "wogten," walzten," and "wirrten" mimics the three-count step of waltz: as a dance in ¾ time, the three verbs connected by alliteration parallel the steps of the waltz. The Taugenichts, from his hidden, perched position in the tree, has the ultimate male gaze: he can see everything without being seen.

The juxtaposition of the minuet and the waltz, as dances indicative of greater tensions that existed in the eighteenth century, also comments on how women authors had to negotiate the public domain. In this chapter, I read dancing in general, and the waltz in particular, as veiled warnings for women authors that parallel the potential dangers of writing and publishing in the public sphere.[129] The eighteenth century witnessed a transition in popularity from the minuet to the waltz, a transition that some viewed with skepticism. This change represents shifting attitudes about political discourse, cultural constructs, and gendered identities, that were occurring in this turbulent century. The minuet was an intricate dance that required intense training available to the aristocracy, whereas the waltz, whose roots came from peasant culture,[130] was easier to learn and placed men and women in closer proximity with one another,

[129] See also Ruprecht 45-47.
[130] McKee points out that the waltz's origins come from Austrian, German, and Bavarian lower-class peasant cultures (11-12).

even embracing "tightly, torso to torso, for the duration of the dance" (McKee 12). Although both men and women danced the minuet, they did not make the same close, physical contact as couples did with the waltz. The shift from the minuet to the waltz symbolizes a move to an increased privatization of familial structures, and addressing the tension between private and public spheres shows that this tension is inherently a gendered one. The subversive implications of the waltz open a space for women's publication when one considers that both break down gendered institutions and give women more freedom of movement and more intimate interactions with men. Although most scholars read the transition between these two dances as one about shifting class systems, an increasingly democratic society, or paradigmatic shifts about what was deemed "appropriate" at this time, I read the tension between the waltz and the minuet as one that can likewise be applied to how women authors had to negotiate their twofold identities – they were culturally mandated to be part of the domestic sphere, but their writing placed them in the public, literary domain.

The rise of the waltz's popularity paralleled other cultural shifts occurring in the second half of the eighteenth century, whereby "the bourgeois values of individual autonomy and expressivity and of the familial privatization of the new couple […] found an appropriate corporeal expression" (Wellbery 183).[131] Whereas the eighteenth century,

[131] "[T]he transition involved in the passage from minuet to waltz is to be interpreted in terms of abstract values inhering in large-scale social structure; hierarchical stratification and its attendant forms of ritualized greeting and exchange are replaced by individual autonomy; public and ostensive definition of identity passes over into a privatized, familial definition. Thus, both dances are viewed as *ways of representing* categories that ultimately derive from a theoretical discourse of macro-structural sociological description" (Wellbery 184). Also, McKee: "The waltz celebrated individuality, physical pleasure, and freedom from aristocratic convention and was considered by many to be an immoral dance. Its ascendancy at the end of the eighteenth century as the most popular

specifically its beginning, is often viewed as "the century of the minuet," the nineteenth century is seen as "the century of the waltz" (Murray 256). Also referred to as "deutsch tanzen," or as the "Wirbeltanz," the waltz involved whirling motions, improvised movement,[132] and "highlighted the self-enclosure of the couple's intimacy" (Wellbery 183). The minuet, "born of the court of Louis XIV," was a "celebration in movement of all the accouterments and bodily gestures of noble society" (McKee 11). It was a technically difficult dance that required "years of instruction to master" (McKee 11) and foregrounded "pose, constellation, rank ordering, prescribed movements, and theatrical display" (Wellbery 183).[133] It was an "egalitarian dance" that many considered to be immoral (McKee 11-12),[134] and the sexual connotations of the waltz "elicited moral censorship" (Wellbery 184). The literary juxtaposition of the minuet and the waltz in German literature of the eighteenth century depicts shifting political and cultural tensions of the century. Literary examples that explore this tension between the two dances include La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) and Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774), which are often read as texts in conversation with one another.[135] I add to the discussions about these scenes that already exist in

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ballroom dance in Europe mirrored the social and political revolution of the time: the fall of the ancien régime and the rise of a politically powerful middle class" (McKee 12).

[132] See Kord, "Curtain" who discusses how improvisation was not allowed on the stage at certain points in the eighteenth century.

[133] "Die Ballordnung bewegt sich also vom auf eine öffentliche Bühne angewiesenen galanten Versteck- und Zeigespiel des Partnerwechsels zur Häuslichkeit individuelleren und exklusiveren Umgangs; von Körpertechniken, die offenen Auges ausgeführt werden, zu solchen, in denen sich das Sichtfeld im Schwindel verwischt" (Ruprecht 46).

[134] "As late at 1771, the intimacy and turbulence of the dance could still be perceived as scandalous" (Welberry 183).

[135] See Arons for a discussion of how *Werther* has been interpreted as a response to *Sternheim* (52). See also Goodman and Waldstein (8).

scholarship a reading that sees these dances as emblematic as shifts occurring with female authors and the anxieties that it caused.

Minuet, waltz, and a third in Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*

In his epistolary novella *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774),[136] Goethe explores Werther's fixation on Lotte, a woman already engaged to Albert, whom she marries before Werther commits suicide. Most of the reader's knowledge of Lotte hinges on Werther's description of her, and so she is basically a masked figure, behind which the reader can know only very little. Either Werther relates his thoughts of her to his epistolary friend Wilhelm, or the editor discusses Lotte's thoughts and actions in the novella's final section. Lotte does not speak for herself. Lotte is always mediated by a male figure, and, as such, her relationship with Werther is always in the presence of a male third, which creates a triangle constellation in the novella. The two main triangle-formations are Werther-Wilhelm-Lotte and Werther-Albert-Lotte. The tension of these triangles is explored during the ballroom scene, in which Lotte and Werther first dance a minuet with each other before dancing the waltz. The minuet, as a dance that includes other dancers, is a mediated group dance, but the waltz threatens this multiplicity, for it is a dance only between two people. Thus, the waltz eliminates any third, mediating figure.

[136] Like *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, Goethe's novella is written as a compilation of letters, arranged by an editor. Goethe's *Werther*, unlike *Sternheim*, changes to prose in the novella's final section, where the narrator takes over and chronicles Werther's last days with snippets of his letters and editorial observations on both Werther's thoughts as well as Lotte's. Whereas multiple male and female voices make up *Sternheim*, only Werther writes the series of letters (occasionally interrupted by an editor) to his friend Wilhelm (whose responses, if they do, in fact, exist, are not included in the novella).

Werther recreates the dance in his letter to Wilhelm and foregrounds how carefully he monitors Lotte's every move, from her dance with another man, to her dance with him, to the interruption of the dance by calamitous weather. Werther begins dancing the minuet (36), and he "fordete ein Frauenzimmer nach dem andern auf" (36). When Lotte and "ihr Tänzer" begin to dance "einen englischen" (the minuet) (37), they appear in Werther's row ("in der Reihe," 37). He is pleased at the sight of her, which he reiterates in his letter: "Tanzen muß man sie sehen! Siehst du, sie ist so mit ganzem Herzen und mit ganzer Seele dabey, ihr ganzer Körper, eine Harmonie, so sorglos, so unbefangen, als wenn das eigentlich alles wäre, als wenn sie sonst nichts dächte, nicht empfände, und in dem Augenblikke gewiß schwindet alles andere vor ihr" (37). Werther repeats words relating to sight ("sehen"; "siehst du"; "Augenblikke"), indicating how intensely he scrutinizes Lotte. Seeing becomes something shared with Wilhelm, who, through Werther's letter, can also envision Lotte dancing. Werther's gaze on Lotte is thus shared with a third, male figure.

In a conversation that serves as its own verbal dance *in nuce*, Lotte and Werther discuss how they will dance with one another; Lotte says: "ich habe im Englischen gesehn, daß Sie gut walzen, wenn Sie nun mein seyn wollen fürs Deutsche, so gehn Sie und bitten sich's aus von meinem Herrn, ich zu ihrer Dame gehn" (37). Werther describes heightened emotions when he dances the waltz with Lotte: "Nun giengs, und wir ergötzten uns eine Weile an mannchfaltigen Schlingungen der Arme. Mit welchem Reize, mit welcher Flüchtigkeit bewegte sie sich! Und da wir nun gar an's Walzen kamen, und wie die Sphären um einander herumrollten, giengs freylich anfangs, weil's die wenigsten können, ein bisgen bunt durch einander" (38). The waltz gives the two an opportunity to

dance closely with one another, but Wilhelm can see Lotte vis-à-vis Werther's description of her. The dance is halted by the incoming thunder and lightning, and Lotte and Werther escape to an open window, momentarily alone ("Wir traten an's Fenster, es donnerte abseitwärts und der herrliche Regen säuselte auf das Land, und der erquikkendste Wohlgeruch stieg in alle Fülle einer warmen Luft zu uns auf," 43). They begin to discuss their intense emotions: "Sie stand auf ihrem Ellenbogen gestüzt und ihr Blik durchdrang die Gegend, sie sah gen Himmel und auf mich, ich sah ihr Auge thränenvoll, sie legte ihre Hand auf die meinige und sagte – Klopstock! Ich versank in dem Strome von Empfindungen, den sie in diese Loosung über mich ausgoß" (43). This moment threatens to break the triangular constellation created throughout the novella, for it begins as a moment that falls outside of language (in a way that dancing is also a word-less expression of human interaction), but when Lotte says "Klopstock," she calls forth another male figure, one that she and Werther only know through Klopstock's texts and thus through written language. This invocation interrupts the potential moment of immediacy between Werther and Lotte. Klopstock ensures that Lotte's position is in between two men.

The issue of immediacy also relates to Werther's suicide and the presence of the pistol throughout the novella. When Werther receives the pistols her requests from Albert, he learns vis-à-vis his servant, that Lotte has touched the pistols and wiped the dust off of them; Werther writes to Lotte: "Sie sind durch deine Hände gegangen, du hast den Staub davon gepuzt, ich küsse sie tausendmal, due hast sie berührt" (216). Waltz, as a dance that only focuses on two people, challenges the mediation that occurs throughout the novella, for it looks to exclude the third male, but this dance cannot be fully realized.

Depictions of the masked ball in La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*

The masked ball scene in La Roche's epistolary novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771) appears at a climactic moment that bridges Books I and II and reveals the court's secret plotting against Sophie von Sternheim. Derby (who narrates the masked ball scene at the end of Book I) and Seymour (who narrates the same scene at the beginning of Book II) both watch her at the masked ball, and they focus on her dancing the waltz with the prince. At this point in the novel, Sophie does not know yet that her aunt and uncle have planned for her to become the prince's mistress, but Seymour and Derby both see that she wears complementary clothes to those of the prince (which he planned secretly with Sophie's aunt and uncle) and witness her dance with him, which causes them to believe that Sophie is already the prince's mistress. When Sophie learns of her aunt and uncle's plans, she rips off her mask and outfit, begins to shake and tremble, and requires medical attention. This moment of physical suffering is indicative of a greater problem women authors around 1800 faced. As one of the first German women to enter the public domain as an author to become a household name, and as one of the first major women authors who had to negotiate between having a public voice and maintaining a good reputation (and thus adhering to ideas about women's virtue and remaining in the domestic realm), La Roche had to balance how close she could be to her male counterparts in order to access the public domain. The juxtaposition of the waltz with the minuet in the climactic scene of the masked ball not only represents shifting tensions of the eighteenth century pertaining to class and changes in the aristocracy, but to gender, as well.

The role of voice and the act of narration show how men control and maintain power in *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. The masked ball in the novel is narrated twice by men, and Derby and Seymour offer different narratives of the masked ball, with Seymour's narrative serving to reveal information that was not accessible to Derby. Sophie von Sternheim does not describe the masked ball in her letters, which means that her own thoughts about the masked ball remain concealed from the reader. Without Sophie's voice adding her own perspective to the masked ball, whatever she thinks, feels, or imagines remains inaccessible and un-narrated. Her presence and behavior are mediated through the two men's descriptions, so that all the reader can access is the men's perspective of her body language, her appearance, and descriptions of her voice, directly or indirectly quoted. The constellation of voices that describe the masked ball is therefore unbalanced; because only Derby and Seymour have narrative power, Sophie remains a masked figure, her thoughts mostly impenetrable to those who scrutinize her every movement.

Lord Derby's description is filtered though his desire for Sophie. He introduces the masked ball at the end of Book I and explains why the masked ball is being held: "Man hat, weil das Fräulein gerne tanzt, die Hoffnung gefaßt, sie durch Ballustbarkeiten eher biegsam und nachgehend zu machen; und da sie noch niemals einen Masquenball gesehen, so wurden auf den Geburtstag des Fürsten, die Anstalten dazu gemacht" (1.239). The masked ball is intended to manipulate her to be the prince's mistress; its purpose is masked and disguised from Sophie. When Derby sees Seymour enter the masked ball wearing clothes that match the prince's, he is determined to observe her more closely than ever before ("schärfer als jemals"). From his position as an observer, Derby sees

Sophie perform an aria dressed as a Spanish musician, wearing a mask that covers half her face; he watches her dance the waltz with the prince; he sees a man in a white mask (who later turns out to be Seymour) approach her, which causes her to leave the ballroom in distress and rush to the hallways and enter a sideroom. His servant then hides behind curtains in the sideroom and observes her physical collapse. Throughout this letter, Derby focuses on Sophie's movements, behaviors, and appearance; he does not speak to her or interact with her at the masked ball. Seymour's description of the masked ball, which he writes in a letter to Doktor T. at the beginning of Book II, serves to fill in the gaps left open by Lord Derby's account (such as how Seymour chastised her lack of propriety by dancing with the prince and appearing to be his mistress), as well as to re-frame the events as shown through a different perspective. Like Derby, Seymour also views Sophie at the masked ball with hostility, jealousy, and lust. Together, the men's voices do not allow room for Sophie to write about the masked ball; as an event that highlight visual pleasure, Sophie becomes a figure to be looked at by men only and not a person who can speak for herself.

Sophie's dancing enrages Lords Derby and Seymour, and both men emphasize that the source of their anger stems from when Sophie dances the waltz with the prince. Her initial dance, the minuet, upsets them slightly, but her waltz with the prince is the focus of their anger. Derby describes the dances first and his is a description based merely on observation, not on interaction with anyone at the masked ball:

> Der Gedanke, daß sie ihren ganzen Anzug vom Fürsten erhalten, ihm zu Ehren gesungen hatte und schon lange von ihm geliebt wurde, stellte sie uns allen als würkliche Mätresse vor; besonders da eine Viertelstunde darauf der Fürst in einer

> Masque von nämlichen Farben als die ihrige kam und sie, da eben Deutsch getanzt wurde, an der Seite ihrer Tante, mit der sie stehend redte, wegnahm und, einen Arm um ihrem Leib geschlungen, die Länge des Saals mit ihr durchtanzte. (1.241-42)

Derby assumes that, because Sophie and the prince wear matching colors, she is already his mistress. The rest of the court in attendance shares this misguided assumption, for they too are unaware that the matching colors are a proposition agreed to by Sophie's aunt and uncle. Sophie's transition from dancing the minuet to the waltz ("da eben Deutsch getanzt wurde") carries with it, in Derby's mind, the implication that she is not as virtuous as Derby believed her to be. He prioritizes his own emotion about what he sees, and he links his feelings to Sophie's movements. There is a shift that occurs between Derby's emotions about the minuet and those of the waltz. Derby barely mentions the minuet, but when Sophie begins to dance the waltz, his observation is that much keener. Although Derby sees Sophie try to escape from the prince's clutches, this does not seem to mitigate his anger. He writes, "Dieser Anblick ärgerte mich zum Rasendwerden, doch bemerkte ich, daß sie sich vielfältig sträubte, und loswinden wollte; aber bey jeder Bemühung drückte er sie fester an seine Brust und führte sie endlich zurück" (1.242). Derby again references sight as his primary sense in this scene, and, although he sees that Sophie is physically trapped in the prince's arms, he is still enraged that she dances the waltz with the prince.

Seymour's anger also increases when the dance changes from the minuet to the waltz, and he critiques the waltz more sharply than Derby does. Derby and Seymour's contrasting views mark this as an unstable moment, for both men are unreliable narrators,

and Seymour describes his impression in a way that makes Sophie seem like a more willing dance partner, complicit in the illicit waltz with the prince:

> Der tiefste Schmerz war in meiner Seele, als ich sie singen hörte, und mit dem Fürsten und mit andern Menuette tanzen sah. Aber als er sie um den Leib faßte, an seine Brust drückte und den sittenlosen, frechen Wirbeltanz der Deutschen, mit einer, aller Wohlstandsbande zerreißenden Vertraulichkeit an ihrer Seite daher hüpfte – da wurde meine stille Betrübnis in brennenden Zorn verwandelt. (2.7)

Seymour explicitly refers to the minuet ("mit andern Minuetten tanzen sah"), which Derby does not do. Seymour's first emotion is that of pain, not anger, but that changes with the shift of dance. Seymour perceives Sophie as skipping alongside the prince, and he does not seem to observe her struggle to free herself. Seymour juxtaposes the two types of dance here: the minuet and the shameless and indecent waltz ("sittenlosen, frechen Wirbeltanz"), as well as her physical connection to the prince, which amplifies his emotions. The dancing and the waltz codify this tension that Sophie faces when trying to negotiate the plans that threaten her. Although Derby previously writes that Sophie tries to get away from the prince, Seymour writes that she shows the prince great trust when skipping by his side. Instead of just observing like Derby does, Seymour interrupts the dance and confronts Sophie about her seeming lack of virtue, to which Sophie responds by stammering ("stotterte sie") "ich – ich –" (2.7) before reaching out to Seymour, who then slips away from her. In response to Seymour's accusation, she flees to the hallways, finds a side room where she tears of her mask and outfit, and she falls into a feverish state that requires medical attention. Sophie is unable to formulate a complete sentence, and the repetition of the "ich" parallels the various dichotomies in

tension at the masked ball: between the mask and the face, between morality and sensuality, between secrets and revealed knowledge. This moment of stuttering marks the moment where Sophie loses control not only of her dance, but also of her voice and very likely her selfhood.

Derby and Seymour both use a form of the adjective "reizend" to describe Sophie.[137] When Sophie first enters the ballroom, Derby writes, "Nichts kann reizender sein, als ihr Eintritt in den Saal gewesen ist" (1.240), and he links his own desire for Sophie with her entrance. Seymour writes that he too must resist her "Reiz," and he emphasizes her "reizende" qualities while watching her perform: "Hätte ich Kraft gehabt, sie ihrer reizenden Gestalt und aller ihrer Talenten zu berauben, ich würd' es in diesem Augenblick getan haben" (202). Seymour desires to make Sophie a more demure figure, and thus change her to fit his vision. The men's descriptions of Sophie are not identical, but they use similar words to describe this scene. Both refer to Sophie's "Leib" and her position against the prince's "Brust." Their emotions at seeing Sophie dance the "Wirbeltanz" with the prince are also similar: Derby is bothered to a state of "Rasendwerden" (1.242) and Seymour is filled with a "brennender Zorn" (2.7). Although Seymour and Derby both sexualize Sophie, they bristle at her "reizende" performances at the ball in their descriptions. They desire to see her in a sexual manner, but they do not want her to project her sexuality; it is something the men want to be able to control.

The gazes of three men – Derby, Seymour, and the prince – control Sophie's dance in the ballroom, for they all desire her and observe her every move. Derby watches not only Sophie, but he also watches Seymour watch Sophie. By narrating not only what

[137] "Reiz" is also an emotion that Werther describes when he dances with Lotte, but he projects it onto her, not onto himself.

he sees, but also the presence of two other male figures who likewise watch Sophie, Derby emphasizes that the male gaze monitors Sophie's performance. He describes Seymour "in einem schwarzen Domino an ein Fenster gelehnt" who watches her "mit convulsivischen Bewegungen" (1.241). He describes the Fürst "in einem venezianischen Mantel in seiner Loge, Begierde und Hoffnung in seinen Augen gezeichnet" (1.241). Derby's vision of Sophie is momentarily refracted through the Fürst, and his gaze on Sophie is temporarily displaced. He interprets Seymour's gaze and attributes his gaze to one of desire. And, more than just these three men, the entire court in attendance also watches Sophie's every move.

Sophie's morality, according to Derby, is linked to her mask as well as to her dancing. According to Derby, Sophie's morality shines through when she is unmasked but is obfuscated when she wears a mask: "Denn ohne Masque war meine Sternheim allezeit das Bild der sittlichen Schönheit, indem ihre Miene und der Blick ihrer Augen, eine Hoheit und Reinigkeit der Seele über ihre ganze Person auszugiessen schien, wodurch alle Begierden, die sie einflößte, in den Schranken der Ehrerbietung gehalten wurden" (1.241). Sophie does not don a complete mask; Derby emphasizes that it is only a half mask, so that her identity is never completely concealed to the point of being mistaken for someone else; rather, her appearance and mien are only distorted. Much of Lord Derby's narration of Sophie's appearance and behavior at the masked ball is couched in terms of morality, and, in his perspective, Sophie's costume is a display of her immorality, because it links her to the prince's sexual pleasure. Not only does the mask obfuscate Sophie's pure soul, but it – and her performance – also associates her with the prince, as his mistress. The comparison between Sophie's masked face and her unmasked

one continues when he further discusses her masked face, which, he states "verlor dadurch die sittliche charakteristische Züge ihrer Annehmlichkeiten, und sank zu der allgemeinen Idee eines Mädchens herab" (1.241). With emphases on words like "sittlich" and "Seele," Derby heightens his concern with morality, and the mask (partially) covers the purity of Sophie von Sternheim's appearance, according to Derby.

Sophie's confrontation and ensuing behavior in front of her aunt, uncle, and the prince is representative of fluctuating power dynamics that control her. She enters the sideroom by destroying her costume, which is a symbolic act of her refusal to be the prince's mistress and thus she rebels against her intended position to be the prince's mistress, and, in this destruction, she regains power over her appearance. Sophie speaks with her body as well as her voice when she refuses to comply with her family's desires for her. At this moment, she acts of her own accord and physically confronts the injustices that have been carried out against her. This moment is one of her first time she in control at the masked ball, and she uses her new position of authority to ask to be taken home. However, her physical ailments impede her independence, for her fingers tremble when she tears apart her costume, and she requires medical attention. The doctor's assistance, arriving at her most confrontational moment, demonstrates the difficulty Sophie faces in asserting her own power and refusal to have her virtue ruined.

Sophie's sickness first manifests itself as a shaking of her voice (when she stutters in response to Seymour's confrontation on the dance floor) and body (her trembling fingers). Away from the ballroom, her body weakens considerably. Sophie confronts her family and the prince about their deception in the wings of the castle, and it is here that she is struck down by her nerves. As she enters the sideroom, she rips all the jewelry off

her body and throws them to the ground with "verachtungs= und schmerzensvollen Ausdrücken" (1.243). Her shaking and stuttering ("zittern" and "stottern") circle back onto her own body when she rips her costume off and apart, which is one of the first signs of her impending physical collapse. She likewise tears apart her collar and cuffs and strews them about: "Mit zitternden Händen band sie ihre Masque loß, riß die Spitzen ihres Halskragens, und ihre Manschetten in Stücken, und streute sie vor sich her" (1.243). When the prince falls to her feet and begs her in the softest phrases ("zärtlichsten Ausdrücken") to tell her the original source of her suffering ("die Ursache ihres Kummers"), her response is a "Strömen von Tränen" (1.243). Sophie asks to return home with a "stotternden Stimme" (1.244), and she falls into a physical collapse. The alliteration of the words "Sternheim," "stotternden," and "Stimme," as well as the repetition of the "t" sounds mimic the stumbling of Sophie's speech. The phrase "außerordentlich" indicates the severity of her trembling; she is no longer able to stand on her own. Sophie manages to tell the prince (before the doctor comes): "Erweisen Sie mir die letzte Güte und führen Sie mich nach Hause. Sie sollen nicht lange mehr mit mir geplagt sein" (1.244). She is able to express what she needs, but her weakened voice mediates how she speaks. Derby describes an "außerordentliches Zittern" that has befallen her, and that she has to make an effort ("mit Mühe," 1.244) to hold herself upright by balancing on a chair, a domestic part of the nuclear home. Soon thereafter, "[i]hr Zittern nahm zu," and the prince calls for a doctor (1.244). When the doctor arrives, he looks at Sophie with surprise ("mit Staunen," 1.244), takes her pulse, and concludes "daß das heftigste Fieber mit starken Zückungen vorhanden wäre" (1.244). The doctor's diagnosis relates Sophie's body temperature with her nervous system, which

he shares with the others in the room. Even when Sophie is strong enough to leave the castle, she walks with "wankenden Füssen aus dem Zimmer" (1.245). Her gait parallels her speech; she is able to have some agency in how she moves about, but it is limited physically, and her mobility and agency are hindered by male powers.

Displacement is another motif that connects masking with dancing the waltz in *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. Lord Derby becomes increasingly agitated while he observes Seymour (disguised in a white mask) confront Sophie, and, when Seymour moves away, Derby is left "in der größten Verlegenheit," a phrase that not only emphasizes Derby's emotional distress, but also carries connotations of physical displacement (*Ver-legen*heit) from his position as an observer of Sophie and distance from the masked ball. At the dance, Derby asks his friend John to double his attention on Sophie, because his "aufkochendes Blut nicht mehr Ruhe genug dazu hatte" (1.241), and John is the one who manages to sneak into and hide in the room when Sophie tears apart her costume. After Derby watches Sophie flee the ballroom, he becomes separated from her, and he must construct his narrative based on what John tells him. Derby returns to the dance floor, where Sophie's earlier behavior and performance remain the center of attention, even though Sophie is no longer physically present, and her altercation and dancing with the prince continues to reverberate in the margins of the room: "Im Saal hatte man fortgetanzt, aber daneben viel von der Begebenheit gezischelt" (1.245). Sophie's confrontation with the prince has ramifications, according to Derby's perspective, that cause a stir. The main event – dancing – continues, but the rumors continue to exist on the periphery. Women authors also caused sensations that prompted discussions of how a woman should behave in front of an audience, and Sophie,

according to the court, has challenged her boundaries, which is not unlike the problems that women authors faced when publishing their texts.

Sophie's shaking and trembling voice is indicative of the greater problematic of how women authors tried to have a voice in the late eighteenth century. A woman author could attempt to speak out against the injustices she faced, but she had to do so against powers that opposed her. Sophie's voice alone does not narrate *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*; in the structure of the epistolary novel, male and female voices constantly switch back and forth, which creates the amalgamation of voices that resonate throughout the text. In *Sternheim*, the various letters, written by people of different genders, move back and forth, not unlike the rapid movement of a waltz.[138] In this way, the epistolary form of the novel also performs a trembling and dancing in the way that it oscillates between male and female voices and reveals an uneasy intimacy between the proximity of these gendered voices.[139]

The Masked Ball in *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe*

The plot of Elisa von der Recke's play *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe: Schauspiel in vier Aufzügen* (written around 1794, published in

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[138] To expand this metaphor, the books covers hold the contents, similar to the waltz's tight embrace.

[139] See *Adelung*, Bd. 4, Sp. 1728: "Zittern: mit dem Hülfsworte haben, *sich schnell und heftig hin und her bewegen*" (emphasis mine). Also: "Zittern, ist durch eine doppelte Ableitung von einem veralteten Verbo ziten, oder siten gebildet, welches etwa bewegen bedeutet haben mag; sowohl durch die Verdoppelung des t, die Heftigkeit oder Intension der Bewegung zu beeichnen, als auch durch das er oder r, ihre Geschwindigkeit und kurzen Absätze zu bezeichnen. Und darauf ist auch der Unterschied dieses Wortes von beben gegründet." The dance ends up being as much of a performance as the performed aria.

1826)[140] builds up to the masked ball during the first three acts and depicts the areas surrounding the masked ball in the fourth act. Like with *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, von der Recke's play invokes a connection between dancing, masking, and the ill female body. There is no question that von der Recke was familiar with *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*,[141] and her text, written twenty years after La Roche's, reframes similar concerns, but it also adjusts them to fit von der Recke's own cultural milieu. The term "Familien=Scenen" in the title evokes the domestic realm and frames the content in the private sphere. In the first three acts, the characters of the play, all arranged in couples, plan and enact festivities for Sophie von Wellenthal's birthday. The female characters (Julie, Laura, Sophie, and Antonie) engage in lengthy conversations about problems within their relationships, the role of motherhood, and their physical health. In the fourth act, when the masked ball occurs, the play only represents the area outside of the castle: the garden and the *Laube*. It is there that characters mask and unmask, removed from the frenzy of the dancing, where the actual ballroom, the center of the masked ball, is not represented textually. The characters go to the garden outside of the castle to play with their masks, to obscure their identities, and to profess their love for one another. The original couples split apart, flirt with new arrangements, and finally return back to their original relationships. All these interactions occur removed from the hectic and frenzied pace of the dance floor, and the masked ball is less important than the areas that surround it.

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[140] See Wurst "Hazards" 326.

[141] Dawson writes on this point that when von der Recke met with the King of Prussia "at a reception, they discussed the writings of Sophie von La Roche" (132).

Elisa von der Recke (1754-1833), in contrast to La Roche, remains relatively unknown in German literary history.[142] Von der Recke is mostly known for her travelogues, diaries, and epistolary exchanges, also wrote fiction, which remains under-researched, and scarcely any scholarship exists on her *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe*. Although the history of the play is also relatively unknown,[143] it is likely that Schiller read – and rejected – the piece for his *Horen* journal. He writes about an unnamed von der Recke play in a letter to Goethe in December of 1797:[144]

> Die Elisa von der Recke hat mir ein voluminoses Schauspiel von ihrer Erfindung und Ausführung zugeschickt mit der Plenipotenz, zu streichen und zu zerstören. Ich werde sehen, ob ich es für die Horen brauchen kann, der Inhalt ist, wie Sie leicht denken können, sehr moralisch, und so hoffe ich, solle es auch durchschlüpfen. Ich muß auf jede Art für die Horen sorgen. ("Briefwechsel" 514-15)

Schiller's initial judgment of the play as moral makes it a contender for publication in his journal. The moral qualities Schiller identifies may well be how the plot of *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* follows a well-established pattern of mistaken identity in which couples break up before returning to their original

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[142] She came from a noble family, married at sixteen, divorced five years later in 1776 (Becker-Cantarino, "Mündigkeit" 181), and, after her divorce, "extended her vast correspondence with famous contemporaries, and vigorously continued her literary pursuits" (Wurst, "Hazards" 326). The "reception and production of literature" played an important role in her life, as can be seen in her autobiographical writings (Wurst, "Hazards" 326). Von der Recke "saw herself as a mediator between the ideologies of the court and those of the bourgeoisie" (Wurst, "Hazards" 326).

[143] See Wurst "Hazards" 326.

[144] See Fleig for another discussion of Schiller's letter ("Elisa von der Recke" 1-2).

pairing (like in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*), or how, in the play, motherhood is heralded as *the* virtuous role for women. Von der Recke's play addresses "prevailing patterns of socialization, which culminated in the construct of *Geschlechtscharakter*, the concept that the sexes are different by nature and thus naturally responsible for different social tasks, which underscored the compartmentalization of modern life" (Wurst, "Hazards" 328), which, again, would line up with Schiller's judgment of the play. Even the dancing at the masked ball in Act IV – or any textual representation of the physical contact between men and women on the dance floor – is not performed in the play and is instead only alluded to. However, even though he deems *Familien=Scenen* moral, Schiller does not make space for von der Recke to publish her fiction; rather, he emphasizes that he must care for his journal ("Ich muß auf jede Art für die Horen sorgen"). Schiller does not write why he does not include the piece, but future issues of the *Horen* indicate that he did not choose this play (or any other play by von der Recke, for that matter) for publication. He writes that he has "Plenipotenz"[145] which emphasizes the totality of his power to make whatever changes he wants, and he uses this power to deny the play publication in the *Horen*. Schiller's letter is a prime example of how the male voice controls and censors the female voice to the extent that it is not published and made available to a readership.

The motif of ill female body in connection to dancing arises twice in *Familien=Scenen* – first Julie becomes ill in Act III and then Laura becomes ill in Act IV. At the beginning of Act III, Antonie and Sophie sit in a room with a sleeping Julie, and Sophie remarks on Julie's illness: "Dieser sanfte Schlaf wird unserer Leidenden wohl

[145] Here one might wonder: did von der Recke write this exact phrase in her correspondence with Schiller, or is he using this word for himself?

thun. Vielleicht sammelt sich noch Kräfte genug, um der Masquerade beizuwohnen" (74). The masked ball poses a challenge to Julie's physical body, and when Julie awakens, the three women discuss Julie's illness and her need to improve her health. The doctor arrives, and his first action is to feel for Julie's pulse (the stage directions read: "Julien an den Puls fassend"), and thus he controls her body with his and monitors her physical symptoms. The doctor comforts Julie and tells her, "Der Puls geht ruhig" (84) and that she can go "mit der Gräfin aufs Land hinaus" (84). Julie remains focused on the masked ball and asks for clarification: "Und wohl gar diesen Abend der Masquerade beiwohnen?" (84). The doctor becomes playful with Julie and responds: "Warum nicht? – ich werde auch da seyn; – nur keinen Tanz dürfen Sie wagen" (84). Julie laughs, and the doctor continues: "So recht, ein fröhliches Gesicht," and asks her how she slept. Julie contrasts her sleep ("sanft und gut") with her moment of waking – she says she awoke with "ängstlichen Herzpressen" (84), but her anxiety seems to be mitigated by bantering with the doctor. Julie's illness poses the possibility that she cannot attend the masked ball, but the doctor's presence there works to reassure her, for he can keep an eye on her and help her if she again succumbs to weakened nerves. Von der Recke make no overt criticism here about the doctor's role as a care-taker, but this scene serves as a reminder that men had a position of authority not just in terms of morality, but also in terms of women's bodies.

The doctor, as a figure of authority in the play, becomes a mouthpiece for a male-dominated point of view. Sophie responds to the doctor's question as to whether Julie has taken a "Krampfpulver" by suggesting that she and Antonie diagnosed Julie as suffering more "durch innern Kummer als durch Krämpfe," and they try to ease her suffering by

cheering her up ("so suchten wir sie zu erheitern"). The doctor dismisses Sophie's comment and continues: "Diese nervenstärkenden Tropfen müssen Sie noch aller drei Stunden einnehmen. – Ja, ja – Ihr guten Weiber!" (84). The doctor scorns Sophie's "diagnosis" of Julie's nerves as something that he attributes to women ("Ihr guten Weiber!") in a way that undermines their knowledge and friendship. Seemingly provoked by Sophie's comment, the doctor comments on the relationship between women and the private sphere, and the dangers that a woman faces if she does not do what is expected of her:

> Die Krämpfe wären in der Welt weit weniger, wenn Eure zarten Nerven nicht durch überspannte Empfindsamkeit so geheizt würden. Man sollte Euch genau mit den Lasten, Lastern und Thorheiten der Welt bekannt machen, Euch diese meiden, -- und die Fehler und Schwächen Anderer ertragen lehren, Euch aber den Gedanken tief einprägen, -- daß nur edle Thätigkeit Gesundheit der Seele und dem Körper giebt, und daß wie unser wahres Glück nur von und selbst, nie von Andern erwarten müssen. Bei dieser Philosophie des Lebens und guter Diät würden die Aerzte und Apotheker wenig zu verdienen bekommen. (85)

Here, the doctor addresses not only the sick Julie, but also Antonie and Sophie, and women, in general. The doctor takes an individual sickness – Julie's weakened state – and applies it to the world ("in der Welt"). His universalization of a woman's sensibility suggests that women internalize their surroundings too much. Along this vein, the conclusion the doctor suggests is that societal issues compound Julie's nerve sickness. The doctor bolsters his male authority by assuming in advance that the "fairer sex" is too tender not be the charge of men knowledgeable about the world. The doctor seems to

want to heal Julie (and the other women) not only with his medicinal nerve drops, but also with advice on how to handle the greater world. Julie's initial sickness speaks both to the body and to the mind and establishes different points of view concerning gender. This scene sets forth a tension that is expanded and multiplied in the events unfolding at the masked ball. The doctor is also a pedagogue who shows that only male instruction can save Sophie.

Whereas Julie's nerves improve in time for the masked ball, Laura's nerves worsen as a result of dancing. She collapses inside of the ballroom at the masked ball (a scene not performed in the play) and Feldheim and Sophie carry her outside, with Julie and the doctor following. The doctor's role is, again, there to reassure the afflicted patient, which he does by saying, "Seyn Sie unbesorgt. Die Luft ist sanfte, der aromatische Blüthenduft wirkt wohlthätig auf die Nerven" (143). A grateful Laura replies, "Haben Sie Danke, lieber Doctor, daß Sie mir diesen Wunsch erlauben. – Hier atme ich freier! – alles ängstigte mich dort oben!" (143). The outdoors offers her respite from the emotional-laden movements of the masked ball, similar to the woman that the Good-for-Nothing observes in *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*. When Laura faints for a second time, the doctor feels for her pulse and tells Julie, "Tröpfeln Sie dreißig von den Tropfen, die ich Ihnen gab, auf Zucker, und geben Sie diese der Kranken" (144). Although two different women get sick, the medicine the doctor prescribes for Julie in Act III is used for Laura in Act IV. The doctor again feels for the pulse of the ill woman and says, "Das ist nur ein leichter Übergang, – sie kömmt bald wieder zu sich, der ruhiger Puls verspricht mir dies" (144). The doctor again uses the pulse to access knowledge of the women's bodies, which evokes the doctor who cares for Sophie von Sternheim.

Julie's and Laura's roles have been switched, but the illness – a weakened pulse and nerves – has remained the same. In this way, illness transcends the individual and instead affects the female body, in general.[146] The doctor has a much more explicit role in *Familien=Scenen* than in *Sternheim*, for he not only helps the women with their weakened bodies, but he also verbalizes a culturally specific view on women and the cultural demands that are placed on them.

Von der Recke's *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* does not depict the dancing of the masked ball, and, in this way, the masked ball, the center of attention (as well as the title of the play), becomes de-centered, placed in the margins, where it cannot be seen. Von der Recke also avoids speaking about specific dances; the tension she elucidates throughout her play is one of relationships between couples, and how women suffer physically under all the pressure placed on them. By 1794, the year that von der Recke presumably wrote her play, the waltz was no longer seen with the same suspicion it attracted twenty years earlier, but von der Recke suggests that dancing could still threaten a woman's health. By choosing the genre of the play, von der Recke focuses on the dialogue of her characters, not on their inner emotions. The reader only has access to characters' thoughts as they are expressed through spoken words, and it is impossible to determine how reliable or representative their spoken comments are. The reader only has access to a masked version of what goes on in the

[146] Wurst, for example, claims that in this play, "excessive sensibility resulting in immoderate erotic love is shown as a source of illness and destruction of mind and body (Julie) – even within a marriage" ("Hazards" 328).

minds of the characters of the play, and the female characters, who drive the plot of the play, remain impenetrable.[147]

Conclusion

In *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe*, the heroines suffer physically as well as mentally, and the masked ball brings out the possibility and the eventuality of a weakened body. In both texts, the aberrant pulse is gendered, for it relates to the female figures, and dancing is related to women becoming sick and needing to remove themselves from the center of the dance floor and find respite elsewhere. The textual descriptions of weakness in these two texts invoke the pulse and its quickening or weakening due to the increased movement of the dancing and activity at the masked balls. These texts suggest that if women break out of carefully regulated dances that control their every step, the dangers they face result in illnesses of the body. The masked ball and its exposure to dancing foregrounds the moving body, which is "commonly considered a signifying medium, a vehicle of expression, a mode of rendering public and communicable what is essentially private (ideas, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, affects)" (Grosz 9). The ill female body was a common trope in literature around 1800, and the literary presence of such a weakened body established a correlation between a woman's voice (or lack thereof) and her sick or ill body (Richards 92). Female silence and female

[147] As Arons writes, "in their constructions of femininity it is possible to trace an acknowledgement of the essentially performed nature of womanhood–that is, its lack of essence and its status as masquerade–even as such works simultaneously participate in the reigning discourse of authenticity and transparency that served to naturalize sexual difference" (7).

sickness "are often found together in literary and medical texts" (Richards 90). At the masked ball, the female body is placed into a vulnerable position, and the woman is expected to perform in front of others and allow her dancing body to be gazed at. Her mask allows her some anonymity or at least changes the way men see her, but she is ultimately still controlled. The extent to which she controls her own performance and can move freely is limited. She remains censored and controlled, and these pressures culminate on her body.

Whereas *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* narrate a tension between the minuet and the waltz, which La Roche sets at a masked ball, *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* does not textually represent any dancing, and instead it only focuses on the ramifications of dancing, the masked ball, and how couples separate before coming back together. In both women-authored texts, the heroines recover from their moments of weakness, and the system returns to the way it was. The weaknesses they suffer threaten to overwhelm them, but the all-knowing male doctor, who is also a mouthpiece for what society deems appropriate for women (authors), helps to regulate the female body and the system from which it threatens to break free. The doctor is not only in charge of restoring the balance of the women's physical bodies, but also of maintaining a status quo led by and monitored by patriarchal society.

Both La Roche and von der Recke name one of their protagonists Sophie. Sophie von La Roche, who shares the first name with her protagonist, makes her a double of herself, and thus Sophie von Sternheim can be read as a mouthpiece for La Roche's own

perception of what it meant to be a woman author around 1770.[148] By choosing the name "Sophie" for her protagonist, La Roche performs her own femininity as well as masks it, and Sophie's name becomes an unstable signifier that reveals a tension between the ideal, domestic woman and the unruly authoress who dares to leave the domestic realm for the *Öffentlichkeit*. The name "Sophie" also harkens back to the same Sophie who is Émile's wife-to-be in Rousseau's Émile*, ou de l'Education* (1762), which is another idealized perception of how a woman's proper upbringing would make her moral and virtuous.[149] Sophie von Wellenthal, one of the main female characters in *Familien=Scenen* also points to the ideal "Sophie" (Greek for "wisdom"). Whether or not von der Recke and La Roche specifically chose the name Sophie to comment on its connotations of the "ideal woman," the omnipresence of the name reminds the reader of certain norms that went along with conceptions of femininity around 1800.[150]

Written roughly twenty years apart, *Sternheim* and *Familien=Scenen* are basically of two different generations (*Sternheim* is a novel of *Empfindsamkeit*, whereas *Familien=Scenen* is an early Romantic play), but von der Recke's play reveals that women faced similar problems even twenty years after *Sternheim* was published.[151]

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[148] Arons reads La Roche's use of the name Sophie in *Sternheim* "as both self-referential and as an *homage* to Rousseau, whose ideas of what constituted a proper–and properly educated–girl La Roche adopts" and that "was influential in establishing a model of ideal femininity for late eighteenth-century Germany" (18).

[149] See Arons for a discussion of the popularity of the name Sophie "among both real women and fictional characters" as influenced by Rousseau (18).

[150] The ideally imagined woman of the late eighteenth century "has been the subject of a great deal of feminist scholarship in the past half century, and her characteristics have been well established: she was expected to be modest, chaste, honest, loyal, subordinate to her husband, a good mother, patient, kind, generous, self-sacrificing, demure, fragile…" (Arons 17).

[151] The tension between the waltz and the minuet seems to have reached its pinnacle in the 1770s (in literature), and at that point, the waltz was seen as a subversive dance that

However, what has changed between the publication of these two novels is that the masked ball in *Sternheim* leads to Sophie deciding to marry Lord Derby in what is later revealed to be a sham marriage, whereas the masked ball in *Familien=Scenen* ends with a happy reunion between married couples, similar to *Die antike Statue* and "Die Flucht nach der Hauptstadt."

Women-authored texts serve a function like that of a mask: they can disguise the writing author and allow that persona to interact with the public sphere – but if a woman was too openly rebellious in her written texts, that text would not be published, for men were publishers and the gatekeepers to publication. The presence of illness in *Sternheim* and *Familien=Scenen*, then, offers a way to read the breakdown of the connection between the mask and the person wearing the mask. In this way, women authors can comment on the double-bind they exist in without having to speak in their own bodies and use their own voices. If women unmask, or reveal their authorial identities behind their published works, the established patriarchy that privileges an idealized projection of femininity is shattered. Women risk becoming vulnerable, and men risk seeing the established patriarchy and hierarchy that positions them as more powerful than women crumble. Eichendorff, with his idealized version of the masked ball, erases any sign of the female body in distress; instead, he places the masked female figures neatly within society's parameters. *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* exposes the tension between the minuet and the waltz, and Werther shows that, even if Lotte initiates the dance, he still controls her movements as well as the narration of the dance. La Roche and von der

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indicated the shifting ideologies in Germany. By the time *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* was written, the dancing is placed offstage, and the tension exists more between established couples that threaten to break apart.

Recke expose the ailing female body at its most vulnerable, but they also show how their heroines survive their vulnerability and eventually unmask and regain individuality and power. Their texts, although both have a traditional happy ending that keeps heteronormativity and patriarchy in place, introduce moments where women can be noticed for their (limited) power underneath their masks.

CHAPTER IV:

FAR FROM HOME: GENDER AND NATIONALITY AT THE ITALIAN CARNIVAL IN MARIANNE EHRMANN'S *AMALIE. EINE WAHRE GESCHICHTE IN BRIEFEN* (1788) AND GERMAINE DE STAËL'S *CORINNA, ODER ITALIEN* (1807)

"Es war der letzte Karnevals-Tag, das lärmendste Fest im Jahre, wo das Volk zu Rom von einer Art von Fröhlichkeits-Fieber ergriffen wird, eine Lustigkeits-Muth, von welcher man in andern Ländern nichts ähnliches sieht" (2.227). Here, the narrator of Germaine de Staël's *Corinna, oder Italien* (1807) narrates the dazzling experience of the Italian carnival and the overall atmosphere it creates. Italy, both as a real and as an imagined space, plays a tremendous role in German literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To speak of Italy around 1800 is to evoke the popularity of the Grand Tour,[152] discourses on classical art,[153] and the projection of the feminine onto this southern country. Although Italy was – and still is – coded as "feminine" in German literary depictions around 1800,[154] the designation of "feminine," I argue, is an idealized and aestheticized version created by male authors' point of view. Goethe and Winckelmann, who both wrote at length about Italy, imagined and narrated feminine and

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[152] Hachmeister discusses Chard's list of "potential components and devices of travel literature of the Grand Tour," which includes "the use of hyperbole; expressions of shock and wonder; details of excitement and danger; curiosity, which often leads to digression and promotes dilettantism; comparisons between home and abroad; a tendency to catalogue; and expressions of pleasure and frivolity" (8).

[153] See Beebee for a discussion on the importance of the Italian landscape for German "intellectuals' understanding of themselves, of history, and of culture" (322). Luzzi points out that Goethe and his contemporaries say Italy as "the land of poets" ("Europe" 12).

[154] The cultural understanding of Italy was that it "and its people were effeminate, a gender characteristic that helped explain their prowess in the imaginative arts and their role in providing cultural access and opportunities to otherwise hearth-bound northern European women" (Luzzi, "Europe" 54).

androgynous portrayals of Italy as an imagined space. Whereas Goethe's *Italienische Reise* reaches canonical status as a text that projects the German imagination of Italy around 1800 as one of order and under his control, Marianne Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788) and Germaine de Staël's aesthetic novel *Corinna, oder Italien* (1807) offer alternative understandings of how the (male) authorial and authoritative texts about Italy continue to control and monitor women in women-authored fiction. To this end, this chapter considers how Ehrmann and de Staël negotiate gender within the parameters of fiction – specifically, in novels. Italy might at first glance seem to allow women an escape, a land of opportunity where they could redefine themselves as separate from German norms, but this chapter argues that even in a country with a reputation for allowing a freer expression of the self, women's freedom was only an illusion. The trope of a mask offers one way to explore this tension; women can don a mask to project a new identity, but they are still scrutinized by the male gaze. Specifically, the carnival scenes in Ehrmann's and de Staël's texts tease out the implications of literal and figurative masking. Italy is, I suggest, perhaps the most violated space of all, for it was seen as a "feminine" space, and male artists, authors, and philosophers who use the land and its objects for their own artistic interests always occupy it.[155]

Much of "*the* German imagination of Italy" is based on an idealized, male-oriented projection, but women authors' representations of Italy suggest that another Italy existed in the literary imagination around 1800. The all-too-frequent phrase "*the* German

[155] See Brown for a discussion on Goethe's *objective vision*, by which Brown means a "clear focus on objects," which she reads as a "central theme of *Italienische Reise*, "of the extant diaries of the journey, and of many scholarly discussions of them" ("Renaissance" 78).

imagination of Italy"[156] often refers to a *male* imagination of Italy. Even today, the historical women who traveled to Italy still remain tightly bound to their male contemporaries (we ask, for example: "How was she linked to Goethe?"), but their works should be considered independent of their own historical connections to male "literary giants." More along the vein of J. G. Seume, who exposes the poorer and shadowy side of the Italian region in his *Spaziergang nach Syrakus im Jahre 1802*,[157] women authors like Ehrmann and de Staël do not idealize Italy the same way as Goethe does in his *Italienische Reise*. To this end, I discuss women's imagination*s* of Italy, particularly as narrated by Ehrmann and de Staël (who both visited Italy around 1800 and fictionalize their perceptions of this country in the novels) in order to question and complicate the idealized Italy that is often portrayed in (male-authored) literature from around 1800.

Italy, as depicted in German literature, was a space for men to acquire sexual knowledge – by which I do not presume heterosexual or heteronormative relationships. Winckelmann's homosexuality, for example, was well known by his contemporaries (Kuzniar 9), and his texts and philosophies greatly influenced Goethe. It is important to consider how a man's sexual experience in Italy is coded as intimacy with "the feminine" (which does not always refer to the partner's biological sex). Goethe's artwork from Italy portrays "male nudes with prominent genitalia," which "suggests that male as well as

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[156] Hachmeister, for example, titles her monograph *Italy in the German Literary Imagination.*

[157] Seume, for example, writes in response to his sojourn through Venice: "Das Traurigste ist in Venedig die Armuth und Betteley. Man kann nicht zehn Schritte gehen, ohne in den schneidendsten Ausdrücken um Mitleid angesieht zu werden: und der Anblick des Elends unterstüzt das Nothgeschrey des Jammers" (96); "Ich war seit Venedig überall so sehr von Bettlern geplagt gewesen" (136).

female sexuality preoccupied him in this period of time" (Tobin 97).[158] Goethe, for his part, refers to what is often considered his first sexual experience (which takes place in Italy) when he alludes to "Faustina" (also the name of the beloved in his *Roman Elegies*) vaguely and briefly.[159] Although evidence remains scarce about this sexual encounter, scholars suggest that Goethe lost his virginity to Faustina (Block 67; Gilman 34). The true identity of Faustina has never been discovered, and, in Goethe's sketchbooks, there is no image that "could be the beloved Faustina" (Gilman 48). By not revealing the identity of Faustina, Goethe censors his sexual experience and any details about the historical Faustina. In addition to scant evidence as to Faustina's identity, Goethe actively avoided sexual contact with women during his Italian travels (Gilman 44). This part of Goethe's Italian journey remains a mystery and a gap in Goethe's history and narrative self-depiction, similar to gaps seen in Kleist's and Lessing's works (as examined in Chapters 1 and 2), where an alternative experience remains unnarrated. This gap is one place where women authors can have spaces to fill in an alternative picture of Italy.

Italy, a common setting of German-language literature, also offered its visitors a glimpse into the unique Italian carnival. The Italian carnival challenges preconceived notions of stability, including the hierarchical power relations between genders, and foregrounds the act of seeing, namely the male gaze.[160] Whereas Goethe seems

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[158] Goethe's Roman sketchbook depicts anatomical drawings "of young males" (Gilman 48). "[Goethe] sees the male as sexual object (in his art) and describes (in his poetry) the female as the representation of touch" (Gilman 48).

[159] In January 1788, according to Goethe's text, he "found himself in bed with a Roman girl named Faustina, tapping out the meter of the poem he was composing on a supine spine" (Gilman 34).

[160] See Bakhtin's description of the carnival and how it relates to laughter, which falls outside the parameters of daily life. Bakhtin writes, for example, "The men of the Middle Ages participated in two lives: the official and the carnival life" (96).

disconcerted by the breaking of rules and boundlessness that occurs that the Italian carnival, Ehrmann depicts a similar unease, but she links it more closely to a problematic power structure between genders. More than a decade after the publication of Goethe's "Das römische Carneval," de Staël rewrites Goethe's description of the Italian carnival, but she includes it in her fictional *Corinna, oder Italien*, and so her description of the carnival comments on the male desire to censor the female genius.

Linked to Winckelmann and Goethe is neo-classical painter Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807).[161] Kauffman, along with J. H. W. Tischbein (1751-1828), and Goethe were all "part of the Roman circle associated with the Arcadian Academy, in which she was welcomed as a member in 1789" (Dabakis 25-26). Of Austrian and Swiss background, the "eighteenth-century celebrity" who was known throughout Europe for her talents in portraits and history paintings first gained fame in England before pursuing her talents in Italy (Maierhofer 578). History painting, in particular, was "coded a masculine artistic practice" because it had "access to the public realm." Other more "private and thus more feminine genres – still life and portraiture – were less appreciated in academic circles" (Dabakis 27).[162] Kauffman, although married, was an independent businesswoman, and she was known for her talents, which makes her somewhat of an anomaly of her time. Kauffman's studio in Italy was a "popular stop on the Grand Tour" (Roworth 224). As a

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[161] "Kauffmann and Goethe shared an intimate friendship from their initial meeting in January, 1787 until his departure from Rome in April, 1788. He would customarily see Kauffmann on Sundays when they would visit different art collections throughout the city" (Dabakis 38). "Kauffmann, eight years Goethe's elder, demonstrated much affection toward him. In June of 1787, she began a portrait of Goethe with which she was never satisfied" (Dabakis 38).

[162] "Whereas history painting represented an ideal world in which noble ideas were fostered, the lesser genres, the European art academies believed, merely replicated nature without claiming the intervention of the intellect" (Dabakis 27).

type of salonnière, Kauffman created her own *Frauen-Zimmer* in Italy that centered her as a person in charge of gazing, for her artistic eye had to stare intently at the people she painted.

Order in Goethe's *Das römische Carneval*

Goethe's *Das römische Carneval*, which depicts the Italian carnival in the late eighteenth century, calls for systematization and order. *Das römische Carneval*, based on Goethe's travels to Italy in the late 1780s, was published by J. F. Unger in 1789,[163] and the roughly seventy-page text details the carnival Goethe witnessed in 1788.[164] Goethe engages in a form of masking during his trip to Italy in 1786: trying to escape his fame and the public's automatic linking of him to his famous Werther, Goethe traveled under the pseudonyms "Möller" (a merchant) and "Miller" (an artist) and remained in disguise (Luzzi, "Europe" 13; Dabakis 30).

Although Goethe explains that the carnival is chaotic and cannot be described, he still tries to organize its events in his text by writing it with various constraints. Goethe tries to ascribe order to the elusive and overwhelming carnival by designating his observations into clearly labeled topics/categories, which are as follow: "Der Korso"; "Spazierfaht im Korso"; "Klima, geistliche Kleidungen"; "Erste Zeit"; "Vorbereitungen

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[163] "Goethe included the "Roman Carnival" in the Göschen edition of his collected works in 1792" (Kiefer 7). Goethe's own trip to Italy was informed, to a great extent, by reports he hears from his father about the elder Goethe's own trip to Italy, undertaken before he was born.

[164] In 1787, Goethe "had little interest in the traditional Roman carnival and seems to have given it no further thought until preparations for the following year's festivities began. Despite his disavowal of the subject, Goethe did indeed venture, a year later, to put of paper a description of the events based on the carnival of 1788" (Hachmeister 54). Goethe, in his "Roman Carnival" "insists that chaotic and even spontaneous outbursts are in fact regular and law-bound" (Block 81).

auf die letzten Tage"; "Signal der vollkommnen Carnevalsfreiheit"; "Wache"; "Masken"; "Kutschen"; "Gedränge"; "Zug des Gouverneurs und Senators"; "Schöne Welt am Palast Ruspoli"; "Konfetti"; "Dialog am obern Ende des Korso"; "Pulcinellenkönig"; "Nebenstraßen"; "Abend"; "Vorbereitung zum Wettrennen"; "Abrennen"; "Aufgehobne Ordnung"; "Nacht"; "Theater"; "Festine"; "Tanz"; "Morgen"; "Letzter Tag"; "Moccoli"; and "Aschermittwoch." These twenty-eight categories are more-or-less arranged in chronological order (for example: "Erste Zeit"; "Abend"; "Nacht"; "Letzter Tag"), whereas other headings focus on carnival-related images, such as masks, races, Pulcinello, and the theater. Although Goethe tries to categorize his impressions of the Italian carnival into these sections, it is clear that the topics themselves are disorganized and do not fall into a hierarchy or clear order. The headings of these topics do not inform one another to provide a clear or causational narrative, and so Goethe's observation remains disjointed and discrete, and, ultimately, Goethe fails to give the *Roman Carnival* the ordered schema he tries to lay on top of it.

Goethe emphasizes the limits of language when he explicitly writes that the Roman Carnival *cannot* be described. He begins his description, "Indem wir eine Beschreibung des römischen Carnevals unternehmen, müssen wir den Einwurf befürchten: dass eine solche Feyerlichkeit eigentlich nicht beschrieben werden könne" (3). The repetition of the stem "beschrieb" emphasizes the act of description and reiterates the distance between what is seen and how it can be described. Although the act of seeing can, according to Goethe, be unmediated, the act of *describing* the carnival, of relating it to others, is always mediated, and this is where language fails. At the Italian carnival, the "unzählige Menschen" waltzing to and fro "ist nicht zu übersehen" (4). With

the phrase, "indem wir eine Beschreibung […] unternehmen," Goethe includes the reader with his own voice, and his failure at being able to describe the carnival thus becomes the reader's concern, as well. Furthermore, one cannot discern between strangeness and familiarity, according to Goethe, who creates a dichotomy in which the Italians are the "other": "Ebensowenig fremd wird es uns scheinen, wenn wir nun bald eine Menge Masken in freyer Luft sehen, da wir so manche Lebensscene unter dem heitern frohen Himmel das ganze Jahr durch zu erblicken gewohnt sind" (10). However, this foreignness becomes less obvious, according to Goethe, when one "aus dem Hause tritt" and "glaubt […] nicht im Freyen und unter Fremden, sondern in einem Saale unter Bekannten zu seyn" (16). Goethe directly addresses the image of masking in his section "Masken," in which he writes, "Nun fangen die Masken an, sich zu vermehren. Junge Männer geputzt in Festtagskleidern der Weiber aus der untersten Klasse, mit entblösstem Busen und frecher Selbstgenügsamkeit lassen sich meist zuerst sehen" (17). Goethe positions himself as an outsider when he brings together the idea of being a foreigner with the seeing eye: "Noch bedenklicher wird diese Einwendung, wenn wir selbst gestehen müssen, dass das römische Carneval einem fremden Zuschauer, der es zum erstenmal sieht und nur *sehen* will und kann, weder einen ganzen, noch einen erfreulichen Eindruck gebe, weder das Auge sonderlich ergötze, noch das Gemüth befriedigte" (3). Although Goethe tries to see all that he can and order his textual descriptions, he cannot be sovereign over the carnival, for its sheer mass eludes the totality of his gaze.

In terms of spatial representations, Goethe attempts to create a topography of the carnival's layout and narratively control the parameters of the carnival. I argue that Goethe details his descriptions of the streets in order to constrain his description of the

carnival and give the text a scientific, factual quality that he, in general, cannot do when describing the *Das römische Carneval*.[165] The streets control the flow and movement of its people.[166] Although the carnival, according to Goethe, is a public event that streams out into the Italian streets, it remains bounded by the shape of the streets and the general geography of the town: "Diese Straße [der Korso] beschränkt und bestimmt die öffentliche Feierlichkeit dieser Tage" (7). Goethe offers more details and precise dimensions of the carnival's area and explains how the street "geht von der Piazza del Popolo schnur gerade bis an den venetianischen Pallast" (7). He figures that the length of the street is "ohngefähr viertehalbtausend Schritte lang und von hohen, meistentheils prächtigen Gebäuden eingefasst" and that on "beyden Seiten" the "Pflaster-Erhöhungen" "nehmen […] für die Fussgänger ohngefähr sechs bis acht Fuss weg" (7). The level of specifics here indicates his desire for those figures, and the minute details distract from the indescribability of the carnival, and the sheer amount of figures in this section serves as a sort of overcompensation for the failure of language. The Italian carnival, narratively or spatially, resists Goethe's desire for order, and it is here, in the midst of the chaos, that de Staël and Ehrmann can place their fictional heroines to reframe questions of gender and nationality around 1800.

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[165] Goethe's *Italienische Reise* influenced not only Goethe's contemporaries, but also his own future works. Both the *Römische Elegien* and the *Venezianische Epigramme* were fictional works "directly influenced by his Italian experiences," with the sexually explicit content of the *Römische Elegien* causing a scandal when it first appeared in Schiller's *Die Horen* in 1795 (Hachmeister 60).

[166] See Block for a discussion of how "freedom and equality exist only in a frenzied madness or in the experience of voluptuously sweet and anxious moments whereby danger and pleasure are equated. But the carnival that gives rise to such emotions–the immediacy of which is denoted by an admixture of contradictory sensations–is as staged as Goethe's account of the festival" (82).

Sitting outside at the carnival in *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen*

Much of Book Two of Marianne Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788) is set in Venice, Italy, and the novel's two letter writers, Amalie and Fanny, discuss Amalie's experience in Venice under her uncle's observing eye. It is in Italy that the mask, previously a figurative trope related to deception throughout the novel, becomes literalized. Before Amalie spends time in Italy, she and Fanny discuss through their letters the problems of a society that encourages its individuals to mask themselves. Fanny, for example, warns Amalie of how novels serve the purpose of masking male aristocratic seducers, and she warns Amalie of these types of men's intentions. Amalie experiences just such a masked male seducer when she marries her first husband to discover only later that he is addicted to gambling and flies into fits of rage when he loses money, which causes him to abuse her physically and verbally. In Italy, the mask transforms from being a metaphor of danger and deception to being a literal mask when Amalie ventures out unmasked during carnival, at which point she is subject to harassment. In response to these experiences, Amalie engages Fanny in an epistolary dialogue where she considers the gendered ramifications of masking (or refusing to mask) during the Italian carnival. Amalie's reluctance to unmask refers back to a larger tension that persists in the novel that concerns Amalie's preoccupation with how to identify and deal with deceptive men (as well as women).

The first time Amalie wants to leave the inn where she is staying and explore the streets of Italy during carnival, she plans on going to the Markusplaz unmasked. Her landlady, however, insists: "Sie müssen sich maskieren" (2.69), but Amalie continues her refusal, and she responds to the landlady: "Nicht doch, Frau Base! – Warum soll ich das

Gesicht, das mir Gott gegeben hat, verkappen? – Darf ich dasselbe nicht sehen lassen?" (2.69). Amalie takes offense at being told to wear a mask, and she links her distaste with issues of religion and shame, for, to Amalie, masking her face would be akin to denying what God has given her. Wearing a mask also arouses Amalie's suspicion of the correlation between masking and deception, and masking is, in her point of view, indicative of having a bad reputation: "Bei uns sezt diese Art Verkleidung ein Frauenzimmer in übeln Ruf, und hier dient sie zu seiner Vertheidigung" (2.70). This "bei uns" evokes Amalie's identity as a German woman, and differentiates her from the Italian people. She continues: "Nein, so wahr ich eine Teutsche bin, Frau Base, ich verdekke mein Gesicht nicht!" (2.69-70). In Amalie's mind, masking herself would be an affront to her national identity. Perhaps if she were to mask herself, her response implies, she would be giving up her German identity, and so it is not just her female gender that Amalie defends, but it is also her national background. Although the landlady continues to insists that Amalie mask herself "um den Nachstellungen der Mannsleute zu entgehen" (2.69), Amalie does not seem to care about the reactions of men, and she persists in her refusal.

Amalie's vulnerability to male taunts in the Italian streets is a result of her refusal to mask, for, by keeping her face bare, she distinguishes herself from the Italian carnival tradition. She finds herself harassed by other Italian masked people: "Die hiesigen Masken nehmen sich gegen ein fremdes unmaskiertes Frauenzimmer die ungezogensten Frechheiten" (2.70). The men provoke her "am hellerleuchtetem Tag," a possibility she previously scorned: "Ei was Mannsleute! – die werden mich doch nicht mit Gewalt am hellen Tag anpakken!" (2.69). Amalie continues trying to walk, but she tells Fanny,

"[K]aum hatte ich einige Schritte vorwärts gethan, so tändelte schon wieder eine Maske an meinen Haaren, die bis über meine Hüften hinunter hiengen" (2.71).[167] The masked men use her hair to access her body, and, while they do not cause Amalie lasting physical harm, they pose a physical threat to her that calls back to the time her husband beat her to the point of miscarriage. The connotations that go along with masking in Germany are reversed in Italy, where the mask offers a woman protection during carnival because it conceals her identity and integrates her into society. Amalie points out that in Italy a woman's body is the recipient not only of the male gaze, but also of unwanted touch. Women might survive in Italy as faceless masks, for male gazes cannot abide the naked face. The naked face challenges the desire for women's masked faces to be interchangeable. Masked women can serve as placeholders for one another, and a masked face does not have to be tied to an identity.

During the carnival days, Amalie – dressed in *Männskleider* (2.83) – accompanies her uncle to "öffentliche Lusthäuser" (2.83), which he intends to be a warning for her not to fall into bad company and likewise travel down this path. Amalie describes her first experience at the *Lusthaus* in detail in her letter to Fanny:

> Da es eines Abends anfieng dunkel zu werden, führte er mich in eines dieser Häuser. Eine sehr dunkle Treppe leitete uns in ein Vorzimmer, worinnen ein altes Weib saß, die laut betete. – Sie lies uns gerade so lange stehen, bis sich noch einige Korallen ihre Rosenkranzes hin und her geschoben hatte; dann schlug sie das Kreuz über die Brust, gieng ohne ein Wort zu reden ins Nebenzimmer, und

[167] This moment calls back the assault scenes as discussed in Chapter 1. Both Amalie in *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* and Sophie in *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* are grabbed by their unpinned hair, and their hair becomes the access point of assault.

> eilte bald wieder mit der Antwort zurük: 'Daß ihre Tochter bereit wäre, uns zu empfangen.' – Gerechter Himmel! schon wieder eine solche heuchlerische Satans-Christin, die ihre lasterhafte Tochter unter frommer Lüge verkuppelt. (2.83)

A shocked Amalie narrates this scene in which religion is a type of mask that the mother figure ("das alte Weib") wears. With this passage, Amalie suggests that certain moments of morality or piety are merely illusions. The rituals that the "altes Weib" undertake are all shams of little religious significance. Amalie and her uncle accompany the "lasterhafte Tochter" to the room, and she undresses before them. Amalie becomes embarrassed: "Das Blut stieg mir wie Feuer ins Gesicht; ich wandte meine Blikke von dieser Schandmesse weg; – sie merkte meine Verlegenheit, und spottete laut über die blöde Schamhaftigkeit der Teutschen" (2.84). At this moment, the male and female gaze meld, for, although Amalie is dressed as a man, she describes her gaze to Fanny from the position of a woman. The special connection between Germany and the Italian "Lusthäuser" appears when Amalie meets another woman who tells her she is a "Kauffmanntochter aus A…" and that a "Böswicht entführte sie," who then left her "in einem fremden Lande dem Mangel" (2.85). With these descriptions, Amalie shows the more problematic part of Italy that oppresses women and places them in vulnerable positions. Amalie has access to these sexually coded spaces dressed as a man, and it is this disguise that allows her to penetrate what is usually only accessible to the male gaze.

When Amalie goes out again during the last days of carnival alongside her uncle, she wears a "Kouriersmaske" this time and thus complies with the Italian society's expectation of how to present oneself during carnival, but she is still subject to

harassment. While her uncle is at a coffee shop, Amalie sits down next to two "schlafenden Masken" who awaken at the sound of her "plumpen Stiefeln" (2.94). On the bench, Amalie overhears the men bicker about whether or not Amalie is a *Frauenzimmer*, at which point one of the masked men turns to Amalie and requests her to unmask so he can see if she is really a *Frauenzimmer*. Amalie narrates this ensuing dialogue in her letter to Fanny, and she changes her epistolary form from her usual prose to a dramatic recreation of this conversation. By adopting a new genre, Amalie steps outside her role as a first-person narrator and transforms into another masked performer in a play she performs textually for Fanny. This new arrangement foregrounds what Amalie says, not what she thinks. The ensuing conversation between Amalie and the masked man is centered not only thematically, but also formally; the dialogue in the original 1788 edition is centered on the page and also masked as a play:

Die Maske.
Schöne Maske! – hätten Sie nicht Lust, unsern
Streit durch Ihr eigenes Bekenntnis zu entscheiden? –

Ich.
Wenn ich erkannt seyn wollte, würde ich mich nicht
maskiert haben. –

Maske.
O! Ihre Stimme verräth Sie! – Sie sind ein Frauen-
zimmer. –

(2.95)

By writing her own voice as a dramatic performance, Amalie disembodies herself and presents herself as a masked figure in her letter to Fanny. In the first few lines of the dramatic representation, the male gaze and its desire to see the disguised *Frauenzimmer* is emphasized. Amalie, when she vocally responds that she wishes to be masked and unrecognizable, reveals her gender ("O! Ihre Stimme verräth Sie!"). Thus, her masking is

only a partial masking; she can cover up her facial features, but she cannot mask her voice when she speaks. Although Amalie refuses to unmask, her conversation partner does not relent, and he asks her, "Wenn wir Sie aber recht freundlich bitten, uns ihr liebes Gesichten zu zeigen; würden Sie uns diese Gefälligkeit abschlagen?" (2.95). Although the masked man does not seem to pose a physical threat the same way that the men who harassed an unmasked Amalie in the Italian streets previously did, his persistence intimidates Amalie, who remains firm: "Es ist wider meine Gewohnheit, mit meiner Larve zu prahlen, um so weniger würde ich es wagen, da mein Gesicht dem Wuchs nicht das Gleichgewicht hält" (2.95). The masked man continues to want to see Amalie unmasked and to have complete access to her identity through his gaze. He references her petite body ("zierlichen Körper") as a way of assuming that she must have a beautiful face ("ein hübsches Gesicht") (2.95). The masked man connects Amalie's hidden face with a projection of the ideal: "Wagen Sie es kühn, ihr Gesicht sehen zu lassen, wenn es auch nicht ganz unserm Ideal entspräche" (2.96). He continues his tact of trying to sway Amalie and presumes that he has the right to see her uncovered face.[168] Amalie resolves, "ich demaskiere mich nicht" (2.96). Her refusal to unmask echoes her previous refusal to mask at her landlady's suggestion ("ich verdekke mein Gesicht nicht!"). To this end, Amalie maintains some agency in deciding when she will or will not be masked. At the same time, Amalie's decisions are trapped within a larger framework of a world in which men insist on unmasking women, such as Sternheim's assault, when Derby rips open her

[168] The masked man's desire for Amalie to unmask harkens back to both the masked ball as well as to Ludwig's desire to see the statue without her veil in Elise Bürger's *Die antike Statue aus Florenz*. Ludwig wanted the Vestale to reveal her face to him, which would give him power again by being able to gaze at her in her totality, which is similar to the masked man's desire to see Amalie also unmasked.

clothes (and it is insinuated that he rips even more), or where Ludwig insists that Laura (disguised as the *Vestale*) unveil herself. Italy, in *Amalie*, encapsulates the larger story of how male gazes configure, imagine, and puppeteer masked women, forcing them to mask and then to unmask at their command.

Although most of this dramatic scene in *Amalie* is recreated in spoken dialogue, Amalie twice interjects with a commentary that resembles stage directions: first to describe how the crowd around her intensifies and second to narrate her exit. Both of the narrative interjections resemble stage directions in that they describe the scene and locate people's placement in front of the coffeehouse. In her first interruption, Amalie writes to Fanny: "Hier wurde mir für diese Wendung so feurig die Hand geküßt, daß der laute Schall davon plözlich mehrere Masken herbeilokte" (2.96). The sound of this moment of physical touch attracts more viewers, and this interaction becomes even more of a performance, for it attracts a larger audience. The dialogue around Amalie and the masked men becomes heated ("hizzig") and all the masked viewers that surround them "streuten [ihr] Weihrauch" and they "drängte sich an [sie]" in order to satisfy their curiosity (2.96).[169] The separation between viewer and performer here decreases, and Amalie is again subject to being monitored by the male gaze that tries to see her and thus have access to her.

The masked man tries a new approach to access Amalie: he suggests that the men be able to contact her via letters: "Einige von uns werden sich die Freiheit nehmen an Sie zu schreiben. […] und dann mögen Sie selbst entscheiden, wer unter uns Ihrer

[169] This moment calls back the assault scene in La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, for Derby writes in his letter that he "drang in sie [Sternheim]," and this moment implies rape/penetration.

Bekanntschaft würdig ist!" (2.97). The theme of masking is continued here and complicated, for the identities of the men and Amalie remain masked, disguised in letters, but the letters at the same time serve to unmask, to allow for conversation without needing to expose physical traits. Amalie records and replicates these epistolary exchanges with the men in her letters to Fanny, so that the letters Amalie exchanges with the men become letters within letters. Recreated and re-narrated, the novel's epistolary structure contains itself. In this way, the idea of writing letters is doubled, first on a formal level, and then again as a narrative arch bound to the motif of writing. Thus, the letter also performs itself in that its contents reveal identities that the dramatic form of the exchange between Amalie and the masked men could not. The dialogue, and the ensuing epistolary conversations with various men, juxtaposes two different genres, both of which serve to unmask. Although Amalie's dramatic recreation adopts a different genre form, it is still bounded within the form of the epistle.[170]

The use of the dramatic form complicates the representation of Amalie's body in the text. Amalie's identity in the recreated conversation with the two masked men is disguised as well as revealed: Fanny (and the reader) knows Amalie's identity (which is underscored by her use of "Ich" in the dramatic section), but the two masked men (and the people of the crowd) do not. In addition, Amalie is able to mask her face, but not her identity as a "Frauenzimmer." When Amalie narrates her experience unmasked, she does so in the prose form, but when she writes this masked conversation, she recreates it in a dramatic form. Amalie clearly plays with genre conventions and the performance of

[170] The juxtaposition of the dramatic scene with the incorporation of the directly-cited letters challenges the stability of the novel's form and anticipates the Schlegelian idea of a "universal Poesie" as described in the *Athenäeum* Fragment 116.

identity. These two different scenes, however, are not as different as they first appear, since Amalie is provoked by men both times. Amalie's visit to the "Lusthäuser" occurs between these two instances, and, as such, by the time Amalie decides to wear the mask, she has seen and heard the tragic story of women being forced to work in the "Lusthäuser." Amalie now better understands the power and control men have over her – in Italy as well as in Germany. The gender controls in place prove that Italy replicates and even magnifies how the male gaze controls women. "Das ewig weibliche," so to speak, is a Faustina whose masked appearance in a poem is actually more than a literary mask or trope; it is an apt description of how masking female identities allowed men to engage in all sorts of play (even with each other). Italy is a type of Germany-away-from-home where the true nature of gender dynamics can be played out as if it were nothing but a carnival.

The Illusion of Women's Freedom in Italy as Portrayed in de Staël's *Corinna, oder Italien*

Madame Germaine de Staël (1766-1817) writes the life of a free and independent woman genius and *Improvisatorin* who lives in Rome in her aesthetic novel *Corinna, oder Italien* (1807). The novel's eponymous heroine Corinna's depiction of a woman who rebels against British and northern European societal norms that encourage women to stay bound to the domestic sphere inspired women readers and authors across Europe (in general) and Germany (specifically).[171] Corinna occupies two spaces in the novel:

[171] See Martin, who argues that de Staël's "bold vision of the exceptional woman of genius" in *Corinna, oder Italien* "inspired several generations of German writers to

Italy and Scotland – and her identity remains caught between these two nations and what they seemingly represent. Born in Italy, Corinna has to move to Scotland to live with her stepmother as a teenager, but she finds the north so depressing and confusing that she insists on returning to her life of freedom and artistic inspiration in Italy. Her family in Scotland relents, but on the condition that she live in Italy without any ties to her family; her heritage must remain a secret (and thus be masked from the Italian people). Corinna, as a young woman who has return to Italy to live a free and anonymous life, beguiles the people of Rome with her talents as a poet and *Improvisatorin*, and the novel's characters – as well as de Staël's readers – admire Corinna's genius.

De Staël's *Corinna, oder Italien* first appeared in French as *Corinne, ou l'Italie* in May 1807, and the novel was almost simultaneously translated into German that same year.[172] Dorothea Schlegel, who writes in a letter to her friend Karoline Paulus in June 1807, "Jezt bin ich von Morgen bis Abend beschäftigt den neuen Roman der Frau von Staël zu übersetzen" (Martin, "Authority" 268), presumably undertook most, if not all, of the novel's translation (Martin, "Authority" 38-39), which introduced the German reading public to Corinna. Contemporary responses to the novel as traced in various letters, memoirs, and books reviews soon followed the novel's publication, and they demonstrate that de Staël's "presence in the German cultural discourse on women writers was substantial" (Martin, "Authority" 12). Although *Corinna* was not originally written in German, nor is de Staël generally considered a "German author," the connections between her literary works and historical biography tie her to the German literary

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depict female artists who suffer from Corinne's tragic clash between artistic glory and the dictates of femininity" (3).

[172] De Staël traveled to Italy in 1804 (Hillman 239), and this trip became the source for and inspired *Corinna, oder Italien*.

tradition.[173] For one, de Staël was personally invested in German culture and had personal relationships with various German literary figures.[174] She spent considerable time in Germany and there she conversed with Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and A.W. Schlegel (with whom she traveled to Italy) (Martin, "Authority" 2).[175] De Staël's influence from German male authorial figures is clear, and she works their portrayal of the Italian culture into her fiction and essays. Corinna, for example, offered the European reading public a new type of female heroine, and, as a "national muse par excellence" (Hillman 239), Corinna piqued the interest of women readers in Germany and in France.[176] Concomitant with the bent in recent feminist scholarship and criticism that focuses on German literature around 1800, this chapter argues that women authors were not cut off from the influences of other national literature, but rather that women's writing crossed national boundaries. As women-authored literature was a trans-

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[173] A few biographical details: de Staël was the only daughter of Louis XIV's finance minister Jacques Necker and well-known salonnière Suzanne Necker, who raised her daughter by the educational precepts intended for boys in Rousseau's *Emile* (Lewis 420). De Staël went on to marry the Swedish ambassador Baron de Staël-Holstein in 1786 in a "marriage of convenience," but it was not a happy marriage, and de Staël became famous for not only her texts, but also for her multiple lovers and fathers of her children (Lewis 420).

[174] De Staël's *d'Allemagne* (1813) deals at depth with how she perceived the German cultural landscape. See Hillman 244 for more details on the history of *de l'Allemagne*'s publication.

[175] De Staël, whom Napoleon sent into exile, wrote her novels and essays in foreign countries. De Staël "sent her first publications to Goethe, who in turn decided to honor the young writer by translating her *Essai sur les fictions* (1795) for Schiller's *Die Horen*, where it appeared in 1796 under the title *Versuch über die Dichtungen*" (Behler 131). De Staël wrote about the "lack of social cohesiveness in the Italian peninsula" in her letters:– 'Everywhere there is a mixture of wealth and poverty, of love for the fine arts and of bad taste, of education and ignorance, of greatness and pettiness–in a word, this is not a nation, because there is no coherence…no vigor in its life'" (Gray 158).

[176] See Martin, who points out that the "literary stir" caused by the novel's publication was "as great a phenomenon in Germany as elsewhere in Europe" (3).

national phenomenon, women authors tried to overcome the limitations that wanted to keep them in their homes and within domestically oriented discourses.

Corinna, oder Italien is a novel that circles around ill-fated circumstances, sudden changes of fortune, and moments of chance.[177] In the novel's opening pages, Lord Oswald Nelvil travels on his doctor's recommendation from Scotland to Italy after his father's death. Once Oswald makes it to his Roman destination, he spies the magnificent Corinna be crowned at the capitol for her talents as a writer and *Improvisatorin.*[178] Corinna and Oswald meet, and they initiate a complicated and emotionally turbulent relationship that becomes even more problematic once Oswald and Corinna decide to marry, but only have they spend a year apart, for Oswald must first return to England to break off his engagement with the innocent and domestic sixteen-year-old Lucile. Unbeknownst to Oswald, Corinna is Lucile's half-sister, and Corinna was raised in her adolescent years by her stepmother and helped her to raise Lucile. When Oswald travels to Scotland to end his betrothal to Lucile, Corinna follows him in disguise and witnesses him falling in love with Lucile, to which she responds by terminating her relationship to Oswald, so Oswald and Lucile marry. Shortly after the marriage, Oswald leaves to go to war, and Lucile gives birth to a daughter, Julia, who, as fate would have it, uncannily resembles Corinna.[179] Oswald returns to Italy with Lucile and Julia for the sake of his

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[177] I offer a slightly longer, more detailed synopsis of this novel, for its plot might not be as well known to scholars of German studies.

[178] Corinne is "probably modeled on the celebrated improviser Corilla Olimpica (1727-1800), the only Italian woman writer ever to be crowned poet laureate" (Hillman 240). For more history of Corilla Olimpica, see Dabakis 32-33.

[179] Batsaki, for example, argues that "Juliette is not Corinne's biological progeny, but she becomes a ventriloquist copy that will enable the poet to live on, retroactively establishing her unsurpassable originality" (39).

health, and there he reunites with Corinna, who meets his daughter and teaches her some of her talents before passing away.

Although numerous scholars argue that the novel's title *Corinna, oder Italien* suggests that Corinna "both personifies Italy and enacts its tragic modern history" (Luzzi, "Europe" 14), the title also represents a chasm in Corinna's identity. The juxtaposition of "Corinna" with "Italien" shows how torn Corinna is – she can either be true to her name and British heritage, or she can hide her family name and instead be a part of Italy. Throughout the novel, Italy is set up in contrast to Scotland (and its surrounding areas), and Corinna is torn between the demands of both countries. The novel represents Scotland as cold, domestic, uncreative, and stable (which is linked to Lucile), whereas Italy is warm, turbulent, independent, and unpredictable (and linked to Corinna).[180] Either Corinna has to be tied to her ancestry and comply with the ideals of domesticity that are purportedly a part of Scotland, or she can choose Italy, a life of freedom where she is anonymous and not tied to her past. Although Italy offers Corinna the promise of freedom, she soon realizes that even in Italy she is not free of the northern European restraints she has tried to flee, for Oswald, who is linked to Scotland, moves to Italy and meets Corinna, and then controls her so much that she can no longer continue her pursuit of her independent lifestyle, which contributes to her death.

Oswald learns of Corinna on his first day in Italy. He awakens on the first morning in Rome, where "[e]in heller italienischer Tag traf seine ersten Blicke und seine Seele ward von einem Gefühle der Liebe und der Dankbarkeit gegen den Himmel

[180] To Oswald, Corinna is like Italy; she "seduces and entrances, plies with art," whereas Scotland, a "more masculine land, provides the 'true goods' of life: independence, liberty, and security" (Luzzi, "Italy" 70).

durchdrungen, der sich in diesen schönen Strahlen zu offenbaren schien" (1.53). He ventures out onto the streets and people tells him "daß diesen Morgen die berühmteste Frau Italiens auf dem Kapitol gekrönt werden sollte; Corinna, Dichterin, Schrifstellerin, Improvisatorin und eine der schönsten unter dem römischen Weibern" (1.53). Oswald hears more impressions of Corinna and learns that she is rich and independent ("reich und unabhängig") and that she comes from a noble background but desires anonymity ("sie sey von einer hohen Geburt und wolle nur nicht erkannt seyn") (1.58). With this hearsay in mind, Oswald watches as Corinna enters the capitol with all the fanfare that has attracted the Romans' imagination: "Corinna saß auf einem antiken Wagen, und junge weißgekleidete Mädchen gingen zu ihrer Seite" (1.58). The connection between Corinna and the projected ideals of Italy are conflated when the viewers all shout out: "Es lebe Corinna! Es lebe die Kunst! Es lebe die Schönheit" (1.59). Corinna, to the Romans, is both art and beauty, a corporealized feminine ideal of Italy. In a more explicit example, the Prince Castelforte gives an extended description of Corinna that likens her to an Italian identity:

> [I]hre Gegenwart ist für uns hier zu Rom gleichsam eine von den Wohlthaten unsers glänzenden Himmels, und dieser fantasiereichen Natur, Corinna ist das gemeinschaftliche Band ihrer Freunde; sie ist die Triebfeder und die Seele unsres Leben, wir vertrauen auf ihre Güte, wir sind stolz auf ihr Genie. Wir sagen zu dem Fremden: Gehet hier das Bild unsres schönen Italiens; sie ist das, was wir seyn würden, ohne die Unwissenheit, den Neid, die Uneinigkeit und Drägheit, wozu unser Schicksal uns verdammt hat. Wir mögen sie gern als eine bewunderswürdige Frucht unsers Klima's und unserer Kunstschönheiten

betrachten, als einen Sprößling der Vergangenheit und eine Ahnung der Zukunft. (1.72-73)

The prince's idealization of Sophie, as well as his repeated use of the first-person plural ("ihre Gegenwart ist *für uns*") claims ownership over Corinna. Couched in Prince Castelforte's description, Corinna belongs to the people of Italy. It is, of course, an irony of the text that Corinna is *both* northern European and Italian, and thus her identity is more complicated than the prince and the Romans believe. In addition, if Corinna is a harbinger ("eine Ahnung der Zukunft"), the future is indeed quite bleak, for Corinna's death would mark the end of Italy's identity, as well.

During the prince's speech at the capitol, Oswald hears Corinna's talents as an *Improvisatorin*, but once the two meet and begin their relationship, Oswald does not encourage her to continue this journey of freedom and self-expression, for his affection for Lucile silences and censors Corinna, who realizes that Oswald does not actually seek a woman of her talents and independence. Oswald describes Corinna through his own perspective when he first sees her and emphasizes her perfection: "Ihre Arme waren von einer glänzenden Schönheit; ihr hoher und etwas voller Wuchs hatte nach der Weise der griechischen Statuen den Ausdruck glücklicher Jugend in voller Kraft; ihr Blick hatte etwas begeisteres" (1.60). Oswald sees traits of ancient beauty in Corinna and concludes that she is antiquely formed, a remark that harkens back to Ludwig's fixation on antique forms in Elise Bürger's *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* or how Lord Derby, in Sophie von La Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* compares Sophie to an ancient Greek beauty. The conflation of the present woman with an idealized ancient Greek

woman runs through various woman-authored texts around 1800 that connect how men see women with an idealized view of femininity as something ancient and eternal.

Although the novel begins with Oswald's point of view, and the reader is introduced to Corinna through Oswald's eyes (and ears), the structure of the novel oscillates between Oswald's narration and Corinna's, thus setting up a power struggle between the two voices. Oswald's point of view begins the novel, and, because Oswald sees Corinna before she sees him, the reader is introduced to Corinna the same time that he is; thus, she is an object, not a subject, both to the reader and to Oswald. Only later does the focalization shift to her and allow her to be a subject. The novel remains in a third-person omniscient form, but the narrator's focalization alternates between Oswald and Corinna, so their points of views are alternatively expressed. This back-and-forth between a male and female voice is yet another way the novel depicts the conflicting versions of male and female experiences as the characters vie for power through the narrator's perspective.

After Corinna and Oswald begin their relationship, they spend time together during the Roman Carnival. The narrator's description of the carnival in *Corinna, oder Italien* closely resembles that of Goethe's *Das römische Carneval*. Both narrators describe the carnival from a position of distance, and, in both cases, the description of the carnival differs from the surrounding textual style. The carnival description in *Corinna* is stylistically discrete from the novel's plot, and, as such, it could almost be excerpted completely and stand on its own as a reflection just on the Italian carnival, separate from any goings on between Corinna and Oswald. It may seem that de Staël rewrites Goethe's *Carneval*, so similar is the narrative style of the two texts, but de Staël makes the

significant change of discussing the carnival within the parameters of fiction, so *where* the description is situated is remarkably different from Goethe's description.

Like the narrator in Goethe's "Roman Carnival," de Staël's narrator highlights the pleasures of seeing and constructs the carnival as a spectacle to be gawked at, for all the different participants are put on display with elaborate costumes and masks. The carnival, known as a place where the pleasure of seeing reaches its pinnacle, is a display of "provocative visual elements" in that the carnival grants universal privileges to "voyeurism and self-display," and it is an event "ideally suited to the satisfaction of scopophilic and exhibitionist urges" (Castle, "Masquerade" 38). The narrator begins the description of the carnival with reference to the act of seeing: "Es war der letzte Karnevals-Tag, das lärmendste Fest im Jahre, wo das Volk zu Rom von einer Art von Fröhlichkeits-Fieber ergriffen wird, eine Lustigkeits-Muth, von welcher man in andern Ländern nichts ähnliches sieht" (2.227). What is visible in Italy is not visible in other countries; the phenomenon of the carnival is bound to this country. Not only is the carnival *seen*, but it also encourages its viewers to see while being seen: "Alles ist maskiert, kaum daß in Fenstern einige Zuschauer ohne Masken zu sehen sind" (2.227). This two-way act of seeing blurs the division between spectator and participant. Men and women wear masks, but the narrator points out specifically the effect of masks on women and observes that, at the carnival, "Man sieht eine Art Masken in Rom, die man sonst nirgend sieht, nämlich Masken nach antiken Statuen geformt, die in der Ferne die volkommenste Schönheit nachahmen; die Frauen verlieren oft sehr viel, wenn sie diese Maske abnehmen" (2.231). Although this comment is, in part, playful in tone, it is also indicative of how the idea of ancient Greek beauty is not one realized by the features of a

"modern" woman. Seeing is an action shared not only by the nameless people of Rome, but also by the narrator, who sees the carnival and translates the observations into the written text; but, while the narrator is occupied with descriptions of the Roman carnival, Corinna and Oswald are *not* seen. The narrator's description, which moves away from the novel's two main characters, is a type of inversion of narration, where the focal point changes from an intimate and psychologically-motivated understanding of Corinna and Oswald to their total absence. Throughout the narrator's description of the carnival, Corinna and Oswald are not present until the end, when they reappear in the text, both unmasked and lost in thought, which parallels the narrator's own digression into the description of the carnival. The carnival is a moment of displacement, of shifting attention away from Corinna. Her interactions with Oswald are, at this time, un-narratable, because the narrator focuses on the carnival instead of them, their thoughts, and their dialogue. The moment of the carnival is one that avoids any type of censorship or narrative control, for, when Corinna does come back into the scene, she is lost in thought, and her thoughts remain inaccessible to the narrator.

Undoubtedly, Corinna poses a threat to those who wish to silence her or restrain her. As a symbol of female poetic genius, she threatens the ideals that try to restrict women's access to the public realm. However, it is more than her poetic genius that threatens male powers; it is her identity as an *Improvisatorin*, which allows her to speak aloud without her voice being mediated and edited by a male figure. As an *Improvisatorin*, she can speak more freely than as a published author, and she speaks freely and eloquently at the capitol to the captivated Roman people in attendance. Improvisation and extemporization were established traditions around 1800, and northern

Europeans generally associated these performances with Italian culture and national identity.[181] Corinna's use of improvisation challenges notions of a stable identity,[182] and Corinna's multi-national background "complicates and expands the improvvisatrice's national affiliations" (Esterhammer 85). Improvised performances of poetry, notably, had "a special association with Italy" (Esterhammer 5). Indeed, *Corinne* "is the foremost example of how the discourse of improvisation makes its way from travel writing into imaginative literature, simultaneously feminizing the improviser and attaching to her performances a series of influential visual tableaux" (Esterhammer 78). As a woman whose identity is a mixture of Italian and Scottish descent, Corinna complicate the national affiliations that coincide with the *Improvisatorin*. The female improviser is no longer limited to Italy, but she can also be part northern European, which expands the national borders and transgresses the realm of improvisation. As an *Improvisatorin*, Corinna poses such a threat to the northern European ideals of feminine domesticity as they were seen around 1800 that the male voice resorts to drastic measures to censure and silence her. Corinna's improvisation does not lead to a life of free existence; rather, she ends up in a relationship with Oswald that weakens her vivacity and ultimately leads to her death.

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[181] "Historically, the northern European reception of the improvvisatore and the improvvisatrice coincided with the emergence of new poetic and aesthetic values that would later come to be called 'Romantic'" (Esterhammer 6). "In introducing a female improviser and mode of improvisation that engage the sympathy of French, English, and other readers as never before, Staël begins to delineate the conflict between the subjectivity of the poet and the objectification of the (female) performer" (Esterhammer 91). "Even as she seeks a genuine intellectual and emotional exchange with her audience, Corinne implicitly grants the spectators power over the construction of her identity, and commits herself to a performer-audience relationship that inevitably slides from reciprocity into dependence" (Esterhammer 91).

[182] "The improvising performer seems to create not only new verses, but a *new identity*, on each occasion and for every audience" (Esterhammer 7).

Corinna is a warning to her female readers: a woman around 1800 cannot be both free and accepted by society. Improvisation ruptures the censor, but it cannot indefinitely evade the powers that threaten it. Although Corinna offers German women writers and readers a new sort of heroine,[183] her life is filled with challenges and tragedy. Corinna tries to escape gendered restraints in a new country that allows for her skills as an *Improvisatorin* to be developed, but Oswald's relationship with her demonstrates that she cannot ultimately escape the power systems that weaken and destroy her. Even Julia (Oswald and Lucile's daughter), who seems to offer the promise of continuing Corinna's voice and legacy (for she both looks uncannily similar to Corinna and is also influenced by Corinna's teaching), is but a false promise, because, when the novel ends with Corinna's death, there is no guarantee that Julia's emerging voice will not also be silenced by Oswald's control and by the dictates of female domesticity that he reinforces.

Conclusion

The Italian carnival refuses an ordered narration, and, by addressing the Italian carnival in altered forms of their fictional works, de Staël and Ehrmann move out of their regular narrative structure and create a space for masked performances. Ehrmann writes a dialogue between masked figures as a dramatic piece, which makes Amalie a performer in her own interaction with other masked men. De Staël depicts the carnival as separate from the Corinna/Oswald plot, and she thereby allows the characters to interact "offstage," as it were, without being monitored by the narrator. Both authors temporarily

[183] Law-Sullivan reads *Corinna, oder Italien* as portraying "a utopian vision of feminine empowerment and creativity. The work embodies the possibility of drastic social change for women by depicting ambiguity at the levels of genre, nation, and gender" (53).

leave the narrative format the makes up most of their novel, and they thereby create an "alternate" space for the heroines.

In using masks to highlight and complicate the presentation of gender, de Staël and Ehrmann investigate women's positions in society as reliant on masks in order to negotiate the transition between the private sphere and the public sphere. De Staël and Ehrmann, by discussing the tensions explicit in the act of masking, explore a woman's position in society and show that women must, on the one hand, comply with gender norms that restrict their entrance into the public sphere, but, on the other hand, they can use their texts to mask their narratives and the subversive behaviors of their heroines to present them to a reading public. Women who mask refuse to let a male-dominated society see all of them, which rupture the power that comes from monitoring them.

Even though Italy may at first seem to offer women a type of freedom not available to them in German-speaking areas, they are still controlled and monitored in Italy. What Goethe's *Das römische Carneval*, in conjunction with his *Italienische Reise*, illuminates is that it is the feminine, not just *women* that are masked in Italy. Because Italy was coded as a "feminine" land around 1800, it might seem that it is a country where women can find more freedom with their identity, but it is precisely because Italy has been designated *feminine* by male (German) authors that there is no space in Italy for women to explore alternate identities. "The feminine" as it exists in Italy is only a projection of the male imagination, and, to this end, the country is already occupied and violated by the German male imagination.

CONCLUSION

Draußen so heller Sonnenschein

Draußen so heller Sonnenschein,
Alter Mann, laß mich hinaus!
Ich kann jetzt nicht geduldig seyn,
Lernen und bleiben zu Haus.

Mit lustigem Trompetenklang
Ziehet die Reuterschaar dort,
Mir ist im Zimmer hier so bang,
Alter Mann, laß mich doch fort!

Er bleibt ungerührt,
Er hört mich nicht:
»Erlaubt wird, was dir gebührt,
Thust du erst deine Pflicht!«

Plicht is des Alten streng Gebot;
Ach, armes Kind! du kennst sie nicht,
Du fühlst nur ungerechte Noth,
Und Thränen netzen dein Gesicht.

Wenn es dann längst vorüber ist,
Wonach du trugst Verlangen,
Dann gönnt man dir zu spät die Frist,
Wenn Klang und Schein vergangen!

Was du gewähnt,
Wonach' dich gesehnt,
Das findest du nicht:
Doch bleibt bethränt
Noch lang dein Gesicht.

(Dorothea Schlegel, *Florentin,* 86-87)

The claustrophobia that resonates throughout this poem, the desire to escape a darkened room, cut off from the light of the outside world, parallels women authors' desire to publish and enter the public realm. The persona is frustrated at being kept inside and at being told to be patient ("geduldig"). However, what the old man tells her is that

she can only do what is allowed to her, but she must first care to her duties. The sadness that comes across in the final stanza, where the negative "nicht" rhymes with the tear-covered face ("Gesicht"), reaffirms the power against which women authors had to struggle. I read this poem from Dorothea Schlegel's fragmentary novel *Florentin* (1801) as a comment on how women authors tried to find some freedom through publication. German women authors writing around 1800 address the double-bind they face in negotiating their position in the domestic and public realms by narrating the contested spaces of the bedroom, the theater, the masked ball, and in imaginations of Italy. Women authors, as investigated in this study, write about these various domains in a way that ties their female protagonists' identities to their surroundings and locates issues such as fear, power, and friendship within the literary spaces they construct. It is not only the content of these literary works that matter in addressing German women's double-bind, but it is also the genres they use to frame these issues, which become even more complicated and nuanced when the text concerns German women's position in a location away from Germany.

For a woman to be praised as a *Frauenzimmer*, she had to comply with the norms of her time. She had to be educated, but not *too* educated. She was probably adept at epistolary correspondence, but was encouraged to stay out of "masculine" topics, like politics. A *Frauenzimmer* was trapped in a room of society's making – her domain was reduced more and more, and her trespassing over the thresholds outside of this carefully proscribed space was seen as a danger to society, but it was really more of a danger for her. By publishing their works, women worked to expand the *Zimmer* they were trapped

in. They tried to let the light in and let their voice out. To remodel the *Frauenzimmer* is to allow women to have agency again in their own space and allow their space to expand outwards. A remodeled *Frauenzimmer* is also protected from various invasions and penetrations caused by literal or figurative assaults. A woman should be safe in her space, but her literature shows that both the domestic realm as well as the public realm offered her little-to-no safety. Therefore, the *Frauenzimmer*, as created by patriarchal society, was not even a woman's own; it belonged to the men in charge, those with power. To remodel the *Frauenzimmer*, then, might be to lock the door against the intruding male voices and powers that control, censor, and assault women.

The body is important to consider when thinking about women and their position in the eighteenth-century Germany. By writing, authors could try to escape limitations of their body. Women authors were not always healthy; Mereau, for instance, died in childbirth, and many women went through various pregnancies, which certainly strained their bodies. The expression of shaking or trembling at the masked ball is one that suggests a different problem that women had to face; they were physically trapped in the sense that they were often kept indoors, discouraged from traveling, and publishing and reading was limited. To be exposed, to be under scrutiny, to see the simultaneous revelations and concealments that occur in society, in mixed company, could invoke great stress. The shaking and trembling body is one that is no longer in control. By representing women who tremble and shake in narratives that likewise seem to tremble, La Roche and von der Recke link the stuttering voice to an understanding of the trembling body.

When La Roche wrote her *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, she changed the literary landscape for future German women writers. Although her novel may have begun to pave a way for other women to make their voices heard in the public realm by being able also to publish works, the cultural moment that was occurring at the same time was becoming more nuanced and decisive on what counted as a "woman's space." Treatises, essays, and didactic novels instructed women to stay at home, be in charge of the nuclear family, and instruct their children on proper etiquette. Although women increasingly had more access to novels, and German readership exploded in the second half of the eighteenth century, books were increasingly categorized as either appropriate for women or not. The term "Trivialliteratur" mostly applied to "women's literature," and Schiller's 1799 essay "Über den Dilettantismus" further reinforced the idea that women readers and authors were different from the male geniuses that represented their national language and literature.

Even a woman's act of reading was one that was monitored. A fear of women succumbing to "Lesesucht" and becoming so addicted to reading that they would let all responsibilities fall by the wayside was also a concern in the German nation states around this time. Thus, even though novels were becoming more available to women readers, their inflow was also carefully controlled. Women authors faced even greater challenges accessing the public realm. They had to comply with the wishes of male publishers, had to write in a way that was considered "suitable" for their gender, and had to think of future generations who would be affected by their texts. For, as Campe pointed out, women's role for the state (Staat) was tied to their roles at home.

This study is organized according to spaces, but it is worth a re-examination of the texts in chronological order (of when they were written) to allow for a look at the progression of women-authored texts in the period 1770-1820. The first text, La Roche's epistolary novel *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771), one of the first novels written by a woman, gives voices to male and female characters and depicts what is often considered a woman's virtuous course through life. Ehrmann's epistolary novel *Amalie. Eine wahre Geschichte in Briefen* (1788), published seventeen years after La Roche's text, engages with similar topics. Both depict struggles that are specific to women of their time that are communicated through letters. Amalie and Sophie also share a traumatic experience: they are survivors of assault by men they are in relationships with and previously trust. For both women, the aftermath of the assault causes them to adopt motherly roles in women's spaces: Amalie goes to a convent and teaches the young girls how to act, and Sophie von Sternheim changes her name to Frau Leidens and works as a governess for young women. Once these two protagonists regain strength, they eventually marry at the end of the novel. The novels may seem to conclude happily and normatively, but I wish to question how these texts end – for, what other "happy" option is there for a woman of this time period than marriage? Although the novels do end in marriage, neither novel romanticizes marriage in an all-encompassing way – both Amalie and Sophie are assaulted in the framework of their first marriage. Marriage then, as depicted in both novels, is not a panacea; it is actually the physical proximity to these men and the sharing of a domestic space that makes room for the assault. With this

reading in mind, the concluding marriages carry sinister undertones that are often overlooked.

Elisa von der Recke's play *Familien=Scenen oder Entwickelungen auf dem Masquenballe* (written around 1794), like *Sternheim* and *Amalie*, concerns marriage and its implications for a woman's identity. In *Familien=Scenen*, established couples separate only to come back together against the backdrop of the masked ball. The masked ball is an event that foregrounds issues of masking and hidden identities, which makes room for women's identities to be questioned and disguised. Like with *Sternheim* and *Amalie*, the ending is a "happy" one; everyone realizes they are with the person they actually love, and balance is restored. Sophie Mereau's "Die Flucht nach der Haupstadt," probably written around 1796, uses a more parodic form to show how a woman can try to escape the expectation of marriage, but that she, too, must end up in a "happily ever after." Mereau brings together the tropes of performance and a gendered identity in order to show how her unnamed narrator tries to take a different path. Her overly staged ending, which invokes terminology relating to performance – like comedy and tragedy, performs marital bliss in such a staged way that one can only wonder about the degree with which Mereau parodies this type of ending.

De Staël's *Corinna, oder Italien* (1807) moves outside of the realm of Germany both in terms of national background of the author as well as the setting of the novel. The protagonist Corinna gains fame in Rome as a female genius and *Improvisatorin*, but the novel ends with her tragic death, the result of a failed relationship with Oswald Nelvil, who is representative of stifling northern European expectations for women. Instead of

the happy ending written in the other works I examine, *Corinna* serves as a warning to what happens when a woman desires both her freedom as well as the temptation as offered by a male figure with patriarchal expectations. This piece anticipates the fear Laura in Elise Bürger's *Die antike Statue aus Florenz* (1814) feels when she realizes that her husband no longer loves her. Laura regains agency, however, in becoming the ideal that her husband desires, and then showing him the cracks in this idealized form when she reveals her actual identity. Laura – along with the help of her sister Rosaura – reestablishes the marriage by redirecting Ludwig's mis-directed male gaze.

German women authors around 1800 write against canonical male-authored texts and patriarchal ideals that try to control and censor them by narrating fictional spaces that allow for their perspectives, experiences, and even subversive identities. Although there remain limitations women have to overcome in accessing the public realm, the women authors in this study all push back on gendered norms by expanding the domain of German literature around 1800 and re-envision what it means to be a woman connected to physical and imaginative spaces: a *Frauenzimmer*.

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