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THE POLITICS OF AMBIGUITY:

REPRESENTATIONS OF ANDROGYNOUS WOMEN

IN EARLY 19TH CENTURY GERMAN-LANGUAGE LITERATURE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Politics of Ambiguity:

Representations of Androgynous Women

in Early 19th Century German-Language Literature

By REBECCA ELAINE STEELE

Dissertation Director:
Martha B. Helfer

My dissertation investigates the tension between political inertia and change in early 19th-century German-language texts through the representation of the female androgynous title figure. My analysis includes other border figures – political, geographical, temporal, epistemological, and aesthetic *Grenzfiguren* – which are all formulated in terms of the feminine in these texts. I argue that while each text attempts to contain the androgynous, emancipated or emancipating woman and by extension tries to stabilize the other ambiguous border figures, every attempt at containment is undermined by the text itself, thereby demonstrating that political stasis is neither possible nor desirable. Thus, women's emancipation is inextricably linked to political progress.

Paradoxically, the numerous literary representations of strong, independent, and politically successful women in German-language literature of the early 19th century stand in stark contrast to contemporaneous theoretical discussions of gender that declared

women to be naturally weak, subservient, and only suited for wifehood and motherhood. These literary representations call natural or essential femininity into question, thereby challenging the social and political mechanisms that kept women contained in the private sphere. This paradox informs my reading of Friedrich Schiller's *Maria Stuart* (1800), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Die natürliche Tochter* (1803), Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith* (1841), and Adalbert Stifter's *Brigitta* (1844/1847). Each of these texts was written in and is historically situated at a time of political upheaval and change. My analysis uncovers an intimate connection between the strategies used to contain these transgressive women and to stabilize the political volatility present in each text.

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Introduction

My dissertation investigates the tension between political inertia and change in early 19th-century German-language texts through the representation of the female androgynous title figure. My analysis includes other border figures – political, geographical, temporal, epistemological, and aesthetic *Grenzfiguren* – which are all formulated in terms of the feminine in these texts. I argue that while each text attempts to contain the androgynous, emancipated or emancipating woman and by extension tries to stabilize the other ambiguous border figures, every attempt at containment is undermined by the text itself, thereby demonstrating that political stasis is neither possible nor desirable. Thus, women's emancipation is inextricably linked to political progress.

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The Literary Tradition of Androgyny

The use of the word 'androgynous' to describe these women recalls a long tradition of the androgynous ideal, particularly prominent in German-language literature of the early 19th century. In *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism*, Sara Friedrichsmeyer traces the history of the "ancient dream of androgynous perfection" (8) and demonstrates that "the fusion of male and female into a single entity has remained for centuries a quintessential ideal of perfection" (7).[1] Thus, the figure of androgyny can be found in the Yin and Yang of Taoism (10), the long-haired Dionysus and the bearded Aphrodite of the Greeks (11-2), and even in the Judeo-Christian tradition in the dual-sexed Adam and the dual-sexed Jesus (30-1).[2]

The first important documentation of the androgyne in Western tradition is introduced in Aristophanes' story in Plato's *Symposium*.[3] Aristophanes describes how human beings and their desire for each other came into being:

> First of all, the races of human beings were three, not two as now, male and female; for there was also a third race that shared in both, a race whose name still remains, though it itself has vanished. For at that time one race was androgynous, and in looks and name it combined both, the male as well as the female; but now

[1] See also Aurnhammer: "'Androgynie' soll [..] jede Relation zweier komplementärer Elemente heißen, die eins waren, eins sind oder eins sein möchten, sofern die Komplementarität geschlechtlich erkennbar ist" (2).
[2] As Friedrichsmeyer explains, the Protestant mystic, Jakob Böhme, read Adam as androgynous "from the Biblical account of Eve's creation out of Adam's rib" (30). She adds that Böhme, "drawing on legends inherent in various strains of Jewish mysticism and Christian Gnosticism, [..] called Adam's feminine half Sophia, the Virgin or Heavenly Wisdom" (30). Böhme also read Jesus as dual-sexed: "Christ offered redemption specifically because to the man he was a 'bride,' to the woman a 'bridegroom.' By loving Christ, each man and woman would thus be reunited with the counterpart which had previously been lost" (31).
[3] The other 'androgynous' tale is that of Hermaphrodite, which Kari Weil discusses in tandem with Plato's *Symposium* in *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference*. While most critics distinguish "hermaphroditism as biological fact, and androgyny as poetic fiction" (MacLeod, *EA* 28), Weil demarcates these terms differently. Thus, the androgyne is "a figure that, by definition, asserts original difference (the male and female 'halves' it unites), and claims to transcend that 'most virulent' of binary oppositions by defining our origin as one" (11). By contrast, the hermaphrodite "presents the union of male and female as forever incomplete, two bodies competing with, rather than complementing, each other" (10).

> it does not exist except for the name that is reserved for reproach. Secondly, the looks of each human being were as whole round, with back and sides in a circle. And each had four arms, and legs equal in number to his arms, and two faces alike in all respects […] and two sets of genitals […]. (19)

Because these beings were overly proud and challenged the gods, Zeus decided to weaken them by splitting them in half (19). In this state, the now divided beings were so consumed with the attempt to reunite themselves that they began to die of hunger (20). Out of pity, Zeus came up with a solution: By rearranging their genitals to the front, he made copulation possible (20).[4] As Friedrichsmeyer explains, the image of the male-female being – coupled with Böhme's teachings – was particularly of interest for the Romantics:

> Wholeness was believed to result from a synthesis of those antipodal forces. Their premise that a perfected human being was the necessary preliminary stage for a harmonious world thus ensured that heterosexual love would become the prototypical synthesis of all polarities and the singular most important medium for effecting the restoration of universal accord. (8)

Thus, the figure of androgyny suggests a way to reunite the male and female into an ideal of wholeness.

In addition to the androgynous ideal, as figured in the unification of man and woman in heterosexual marriage, the figure of the androgyne itself was also influential for writers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a period also known as the *Sattelzeit.* Catriona MacLeod's *Embodying Ambiguity* looks at the figure of the androgyne from Winckelmann to Keller, and argues that the androgyne "seems to hold particular fascination for those historical moments when cultures are actively engaged in rethinking

[4] Within this tale, the male and female beings were also split in two and then yearned for their same-sex counterpart (21). As Weil explains, "a gesture common to the tradition of readers of Plato" is "neglecting to mention that Aristophanes describes *three* primal beings, not only one of a male and a female joined together" (3). Weil suggests that Freud, for example, ignores the male-male and female-female beings so that "Plato's theory will not conflict with Freud's presentation of homosexuality and lesbianism as 'deviations'" (3).

the most basic assumptions about gender and sexuality" (13). In contrast to the androgynous ideal, which celebrates the union of two individuals, the figure of the androgyne is an individual, or, as MacLeod repeatedly shows, a statue, embodying both male and female, masculine and feminine (*EA* 21). As MacLeod demonstrates, Winckelmann's androgyne was 'male,' meaning that the figure (statue) generally had male genitals but a female/feminine face, round shoulders, perhaps even breasts. MacLeod traces the shift from the male androgyne to the female androgyne, and concludes that "the texts […] express the urge to investigate the conditions of difference, and the idealizing impulse to suspend its effects; on the other hand, what they reveal is literature's entanglement in the very system it seeks to evade, in a fantasy of unity" (90).[5]

The androgynous images of the *Sattelzeit* – the androgynous ideal of heterosexual marriage and the androgyne statues – can be expanded to include an additional category: the androgyne which incorporates the masculine and feminine within an individual. This androgyne goes beyond Winckelmann, because it displays internal and external masculine and feminine characteristics. This is the figure of androgyny that is relevant for my discussion here, although my focus will be specifically on the 'female' androgyne – that is, on women who display (also) masculine traits.

This final figure of androgyny belongs to a more recent feminist tradition that seeks to explode traditional gender roles developed and prescribed at the turn of the 19th

[5] In addition to the androgynous ideal and the image of the androgyne, another dominant image of the 18th and 19th centuries to promise wholeness can be found in 'das Weibliche.' In *Imaginierte Weiblichkeit*, Silvia Bovenschen discusses the use of the literary image of *das Weibliche* and explains that the image appears in fiction "als Ergebnis des Phantasierens" (11). *Das Weibliche* functions "emphatisch als Trägerprinzip einer regressive-utopischen Einheitssehnsucht, realiter, indem es eine passive, 'natürliche' Knetmasse in männlicher Hand bleibt" (33).

century (to which I will return shortly). Beginning with Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929), the androgynous ideal is to be imagined within the individual:

> I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain, the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually cooperating. (128)

More recently, in *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn Heilbrun attempts to reclaim the androgynous myth for feminists as a new way of "responding to the circumstances of our own lives and the literature of our own times" (x). As Heilbrun argues:

> Androgyny suggests a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes; it suggests, further, a full range of experience open to individuals who may, as women, be aggressive, as men, tender; it suggests a spectrum upon which human beings choose their places without regard to propriety or custom. (xi)

This image of androgyny is viewed as a "psychic unity, either potential or actual, conceived as existing in all individuals" (Gelpi 151).

The concept of androgyny as representing wholeness in the individual found in Heilbrun's book has, in the meantime, been largely rejected.[6] The overarching argument against the androgynous ideal is that it does not break free of the masculine/feminine binary (Stimpson 242).[7] Instead it represents "cultural investments in sexual difference as

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[6] Many of these critical voices can be found in the journal *Women's Studies*, which dedicated their second volume in 1974 to the topic of androgyny. Several of these essays look at the way in which the figure of androgyny also is a product of a "reactionary and terribly threatened homophobia" (Epstein 101).

[7] Cynthia Secor's objection to androgyny is framed differently. In "Androgyny: An Early Reappraisal," she argues that her "fundamental objection to the concept of androgyny is precisely that it is rooted in a static image of perfection, in eternity, an image which cannot take into account the rough going of historical process" (164). For Secor, it is possible to read androgyny outside of rigid binaries: "Androgyny is the capacity of a single person of either sex to embody the full range of human character traits, despite cultural attempts to render some exclusively feminine and some exclusively masculine" ("The Androgyny Papers" 139).

an absolute and invariable binary opposition" (Epstein 101),[8] which, as several feminists have argued, is informed by patriarchy (Gelpi 154).[9] An additional problem is to be found in the application of the concept of androgyny. As Barbara Gelpi argues, most visions of androgyny see only a "masculine personality fulfilled and completed by the feminine," but not vice versa (151). The theories, she continues, "simply take for granted woman's inferiority: it is impossible for the female vessel to contain masculine influence and spirituality" (152). Daniel Harris goes further and contends that an attempt to construct androgyny devalues woman and enslaves man: "in seeking 'feminine' elements with which to complete himself, the man reduces woman to merely symbolic status, plays parasite, and paradoxically demands from the creature he has thus mentally enslaved his own freedom" (172).

The major points of critique of the figure of androgyny – the masculine/feminine binary, the inherent perpetuation of patriarchal structures, the denigration of women in order to uplift and complete men – all inform my reading of the works in this study and lead me to consciously use the contentious term 'androgynous' to describe the texts' title figures. Within this context, the designation 'androgynous woman' encapsulates and critiques the masculine/feminine binary of the *Sattelzeit* within the German-speaking realm.

[8] See also MacLeod's essay "The 'Third Sex'": "androgyny does not simply leave gender binarisms intact; more instrumental than such a definition would allow, androgyny may even serve as a mythical, theoretical vehicle for the inscription of difference" (195).
[9] See also Stimpson (243).

The Polarization of *Geschlechtscharaktere*

The masculine/feminine binary originates in the polarization of sexual characteristics (*Geschlechtscharaktere*) as first detailed by Karin Hausen. As numerous studies have since shown, the restructuring of society based on Enlightenment ideals, the rise of the bourgeoisie, the shift from single household economy to the split into public and private spheres, the hopes for equality from the French Revolution and then the terror thereafter, all led to an increased polarization of *Geschlechtscharaktere* [character of the sexes].[10] Hausen demonstrates in "Die Polarisierung der 'Geschlechtscharaktere'" that the 'character of the sexes' was derived from nature as a combination of biology and destiny, and at the same time was transferred (as the essence of masculinity and femininity) to human mentality" (57).[11] Presenting passages from encyclopedias of the early 19th century, Hausen details the categories of men and women. According to the 1815 *Brockhaus*, men are associated with power, creativity, force, and the public sphere. They have a great effect, can process abstract knowledge, form plans, and are swift, volatile, eager, loud, and defiant. (54). The later 1848 *Meyers Lexikon* connects men with the individual, which is associated with self-confidence, independence, completeness: men are hard-hearted, firm, steady, bold, certain of purpose, above pettiness, and "inclined to measure everything in terms of self" (54-5). The *Brockhaus* associates women with emotion, sensibility, a livelier imagination, beauty, slowness, secrecy, being inward-looking, having a small, intimate circle, patience, preservation, virtue or wiles,

[10] In addition to Hausen, see also Marion Gray's *Productive Men, Reproductive Women* which is an in-depth study of materials from the *Sattelzeit* that supports Hausen's theory. Rooted in Hausen's theory, Ulrike Gleixner and Marion Gray's edited volume *Gender in Transition* presents various essays of concrete examples of women in the *Sattelzeit.* Some essays demonstrate how women did, indeed, participate in the public sphere, demonstrating that discourse and practice did not necessarily correspond (5).

[11] I quote from the 1981 English translation of Hausen's essay "Family and Role-Division."

domesticity, and subservience. In contrast to men, who work hard and then need to rest, women are always busy (54). The counterpart of the 'individual,' i.e., the man, found in *Meyers Lexikon* is the universal, which is applied to woman. The universal constitutes dependence, uncertainty, sacrifice, sympathy, higher morality and religion than in the 'individual,' love, fickleness, hastily made decisions, composure, and innocence of spirit, purity of heart, honor, and inward participation. Unlike defiant men, a woman "endures the worst trials and tribulations" (54-5). It is also in her nature to love "not her own sex" but man and "tender, helpless little ones" (55).

Additional change in the conception of woman came with increased knowledge of woman's body. From the time of the Greeks, it was assumed that women were basically imperfect men. Under this one sex model: "the vagina is imagined as an interior penis, the labia as foreskin, the uterus as scrotum, and the ovaries as testicles" (Laqueur 4). By understanding that, physically, women were not imperfect men with inverted penises, but instead had similar but different bodies; the two-sex model came into being (5). However, this shift in conceptions of the body did nothing to improve the status of woman in patriarchal society. Instead, it was determined that "not only are the sexes different, but they are different in every conceivable aspect of body and soul, in every physical and moral aspect" (5). Thus, the subordination of woman to man socially, mentally, and legally was deemed legitimate by doctors due to the natural occurrence of greater physical strength in men (Sharpe, "Zusammenhang" 216).

In addition to doctors, philosophers, educators, writers, scientists, legal scholars, and even army officers debated the character of the sexes in various essays and treatises.

The most dominant and widespread opinion was based on Rousseau's description of men's and women's roles in *Émile*:

> In what they have in common, they are equal. Where they differ, they are not comparable. A perfect woman and a perfect man ought not to resemble each other in mind any more than in looks, and perfection is not susceptible of more or less. In the union of the sexes each contributes equally to the common aim, but not in the same way. From this diversity arises the first assignable difference in the moral relations of the two sexes. One ought to be active and strong, the other passive and weak. One must necessarily will and be able; it suffices that the other put up little resistance. Once this principle is established, it follows that woman is made specially to please man. (358)

Rousseau's text was immediately translated into German in the same year it was originally published (1762), and enjoyed far-reaching popularity. The bottom line became apparent to everyone: women are determined by nature to be constrained to the private sphere as wives and mothers (Hausen 60).

Women's Emancipation

The polarization of *Geschlechtscharaktere* of the *Sattelzeit* is intimately connected with the contemporaneous debate regarding women's emancipation.[12] The recognition of women's rights is, in turn, considered for many a logical result of a society based on principles of Enlightenment, as the newly-founded societies in Europe and the United States in the late 18th century considered themselves to be (Lea 1).[13] However, for the leading minds of these new societies, liberty was to be restricted solely to the white, property-owning man.[14] With the economic, social, and political changes occurring

[12] Just as the Enlightenment and issues of the emancipation of the individual meant in actuality bourgeois men, the issue of women's emancipation in the *Sattelzeit* also only addressed bourgeois women (Hausen 68).

[13] "Philosophically, the emancipation movement emerged from the enlightenment which considered religious tolerance and equality before the law as basic tenets of a secularized state" (Lea 1).

[14] "The new society was to be founded on the liberty of the individual and of property; it was to do away with all privileges, with all legal disabilities imposed on the grounds of social position or religion, so as to

during the *Sattelzeit*, the move away from Church dogma and toward Enlightenment and rationality, meant that "the subjugation of woman to man could no longer be justified as divinely ordained" (Krimmer 9). Thus, "a reaction against socially unacceptable demands for emancipation was the search for a new form of legitimation for the traditional subjection of the woman to her husband and her limitation to the domestic sphere" (Hausen 59). Following Rousseau, this legitimation was found in ascribing essential masculinity and femininity to Nature. From Kant and Fichte to Humboldt and Campe, this legitimation was secured through philosophical essays and treatises. Wilhelm von Humboldt, for example, explains the importance of understanding the *Geschlechtscharaktere* as inscribed by Nature in his essay *Über den Geschlechtsunterschied*:

> Die Natur wäre ohne ihn [den Geschlechtsunterschied] nicht Natur, ihr Räderwerk stände still, und sowohl der Zug, welcher alle Wesen verbindet, als der Kampf, welcher jedes einzelne nöthigt, sich mit seiner, ihm eigenthümlichen Energie zu waffnen, hörte auf, wenn an die Stelle dieses Unterschiedes eine langweilige und erschlaffende Gleichheit träte. (268)

He then goes on to explain the difference between men and women:

> Hier nun beginnt der Unterschied der Geschlechter. Die zeugende Kraft is mehr zur Entwicklung, die empfangende mehr zur Rückwirkung gestimmt. Was von der erstern belebt wird, nennen wir männlich, was die letztere beseelt weiblich. Alles Männliche zeigt mehr Selbstthätigkeit, alles Weibliche mehr leidende Empfänglichkeit. (277)

Humboldt attaches specific character traits to each sex, thereby declaring the subordination of one to the other natural. Kant also argues for a natural order of subservience. He explains that in marriage "it is not enough for two people to associate as

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give each individual the opportunity of freely unfolding his potential. These were the principles spelled out in the programme of the European Enlightenment and European Liberalism. […] Bourgeois emancipation, then, did not usher in an ideal age of liberty, yet it established a society which, irrespective of its new compulsions and limitations, offered greater liberties and broader scope for development than ever before" (Rürup 3-4).

they please; one party must be *subject* to the other, and reciprocally, one must be *superior* of the other" (303). Thus, the logical conclusion is that men and women cannot be equal. Although Fichte, like others, was "not willing to relinquish the Enlightenment premise that all human beings, including women, are complete and equal as creatures of reason" (Kenkel 280), in *The Science of the Right*, he sees man's prerogative to dominate and rule over woman as supported by history and, thus natural:

> Has the woman the same rights in the state which the man has? This question may appear ridiculous to many. For if the only ground of qualification for legal rights is reason and freedom, how can a difference in rights exist between two sexes which both possess the same reason and the same freedom. Nevertheless, it seems that, so long as human beings have lived, this has been differently held, and the female sex seems not to have been placed on a par with the male sex in the exercise of rights. Such a universal sentiment must have a deep-set ground, to discover which was never a more urgent need in our days. (439)[15]

Politicians such as Carl Theodor Welcker (1790–1869) certainly agreed with Fichte's sentiments and contended that granting women equality "would contradict human destiny and happiness and destroy family life" (qtd in Hausen 62).[16]

Not all voices of this age spoke out in agreement with a continued (and sometimes even increased) subjugation of women under men. Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, a German army and intelligence officer, published a lengthy essay *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* anonymously in 1792. His essay critiques patriarchy and searches for the origins of man's superiority over women in ancient history, where the physical strength of men resulted in the natural domination of woman (84-90). Hippel recognizes that man has made woman into his slave and he demonstrates that the

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[15] Legal scholar, Wiguläus Xaverius Aloysius von Krittmayr (1705-1790), makes the same argument that men have dominated over women so long that it must be natural (Gray 160).

[16] As historian Joan Landes has effectively argued, "the exclusion of women from the bourgeois public sphere was not incidental but central to its incarnation, […] the bourgeois public is essentially, not just contingently, masculinist" (7).

conventions of marriage, unequal education, and societal norms such as the demand for female modesty perpetuate women's subordination (98-115).

For the most part, however, even the voices that called out for equal rights, better education, and citizenship for women did not envision women completely outside of the private sphere. In *Über die Bestimmung des Weibes zur höheren Geistes Bildung*, Amalia Holst, a Prussian educator, argues for better education, but "accepted the norm of marriage and domestic roles for women" (Gray 224). Marquis de Condorcet spoke out powerfully on behalf of French women during the Revolution: "Either no individual of the human species has any true rights, or all have the same. And he or she who votes against the rights of another, of whatever religion, colour, or sex has thereby abjured his own" (qtd in Landes 114). At the same time, he insisted that giving women citizen rights would not draw them away from their primary function of motherhood, but that, instead, "they would be only the better fitted to educate their children and to rear men" (114). Despite Hippel's recognition that women are unjustly treated unequally, he explains that his essay is not a call to free women: "I have little intention of freeing the other sex this very moment from its slavery; rather, I would content myself with encouraging it to earn this deliverance" (60-1). Even Mary Wollstonecraft, who famously spoke out against Rousseau's evaluation of women with her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by arguing that women can and should be educated and trained professionally (32), still insists that "women in the common walks of life are called to fulfill the duties of wives and mothers by religion and reason" (31). Only "women of a superior cast" should "pursue more extensive plans of usefulness and independence" (31).

In addition to political treatises, a critique of gender binaries and, perhaps to some extent, of the oppression of women can be found in the literary works of the Romantics. As Martha Helfer argues,

> [T]he discourse on gender set forth by these male authors, while perhaps not truly feminist, programmatically and progressively challenges the status quo. […] both male and female Romantic authors experiment with a fluidity of gender categories in their writing. Indeed, a critique of gender is essential to the Romantic project. ("Gender Studies" 233)

She notes that Friedrich Schlegel was critical of "repressive conceptions of the feminine propagated" by Rousseau, Schiller, and Jacobi, but "noncommittal about the sharply regressive statements about women made by his friend and philosophical mentor" Johann Fichte (235).

In returning to the Romantics here, we come full circle from my initial overview of the tradition of the androgynous ideal. Clearly a study which uses the term 'androgyny' in its title might expect to analyze the 'usual suspects' of androgyny, namely Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre,* Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde,* and Heinrich von Kleist's *Penthesilea.*

The Usual Suspects

The 'usual suspects' of androgyny are absent from my study, as its focus is on androgynous female title figures, i.e. women who challenge 19th-century notions of femininity.[17] *Wilhelm Meister* may present many cross-dressing women and Amazons

[17] Perhaps another 'usual suspect' missing from my study is a female-authored text. While the acts of writing and publishing were transgressive for the *Sattelzeit,* the fictional women portrayed by female authors are often more conventional (i.e. ascribing to 19th-century notions of femininity and gender roles). However, this does not mean that female-authored texts did not challenge the status quo. Texts such as Sophie von la Roche's *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* and Gisela von Arnim's *Das Leben der Hochgräfin Gritta von Rattenbeiunszuhaus* challenge patriarchal structures in more subtle ways than the texts presented in my study.

(who are often, incorrectly equated with androgynes),[18] but the novel is ostensibly 'about' Wilhelm Meister and not any of the women. As Helfer has convincingly argued, "for all its exploration of gender identity, the narrative desexualizes, textualizes, and commodifies woman" ("WMW" 247). If anything, *Wilhelm Meister* can be seen as a text that reinscribes patriarchy and the polarization of *Geschlechtscharaktere*: "women as autonomous subjects […] are written out of this order [the Tower Society], they are assigned a subordinate role in the novel's text. Women are domesticated into useful, cooperative females subordinate to the needs of males" (Becker-Cantarino, "Patriarchy" 52).

Lucinde, by contrast, has a female title figure and the concept of the androgynous ideal has been demonstrated repeatedly through the role-play and gender-switching suggested by Lucinde's lover, Julius (MacLeod, *EA* 205). However, as Inge Stephan explains, although the text is called *Lucinde*, "tatsächlich geht es in dem Text in erster Linie um die Vollendung des Mannes" ("Daß ich eins" 162). Theresa Kelley argues along the same lines: "for if the hero of *Lucinde* is a woman, she functions principally as the passive agent of her lover Julius's androgynous identity" (327). Outside of the bedroom, there is nothing androgynous about Lucinde, whose motherhood is emphasized at the end. As Sigrid Lange suggests, the text reinscribes the gender roles of Schlegel's time:

> Einerseits wird der Roman als Dokument einer bis dahin in der deutschen Literatur beispiellosen partnerschaftlichen Beziehungen von Mann und Frau gelesen, andererseits gilt eben dieser Partnerschaft der Vorwurf, tradierte, die

[18] Unlike the androgyne or androgynous ideal, which promise wholeness, the matriarchal structure of Amazon society and the individual Amazon generally function as a challenge to patriarchy (Frenzel 12). The Amazon is then a figure of transgression. As Helfer explains in her interpretation of the women in *Wilhelm Meister*, the word Amazon was "in vogue in the 1790's in European critical discourse, and was used to refer to women who stepped out of traditional sex roles: women who fought in the French Revolution, champions of women's rights, educated women, and women who wore men's clothing" ("WMW" 245).

> Frau benachteiligende Geschlechterrollen unter dem Schein der Gleichberechtigung um so festzuschreiben. ("*Lucinde*" 624)

In the end, as Helfer contends, "Lucinde actually plays a very conventional female role […], the text's treatment of androgyny, which relies on the male projecting himself onto the female is clearly androcentric" ("Confessions" 175). As Helfer's groundbreaking analysis goes on to show, Schlegel's text says at least as much about homoerotic desire (177)[19] as it does about the "perfect androgynous union" of "complementary heterosexuality" (MacLeod, *EA* 206).

The final likely candidate for a study on female androgynous border figures is the Amazon of Kleist's *Penthesilea*. The title figure, Penthesilea, seems to fit the bill: She demonstrates many of the same masculine traits and rejects many of the same feminine traits that serve as the basis of my analysis for the chosen texts. In this way, the text appears to defy 19th-century notions of femininity. However, the Amazons and their queen, Penthesilea, do not challenge prevailing patriarchal structures. As Kate Rigby convincingly demonstrates, the Amazons yearly reenact the domination of patriarchy and pervert a once emancipating gesture into a system of renewed oppression – even if they are no longer the victims (326).[20] Penthesilea's destabilization of language is often read as the suggestion of a feminist aesthetic (Jacobs 114). However, Rigby correctly questions the feminist import of a language that brings about "murder, mutilation and suicide by speech-act" (326). While Penthesilea's death can, perhaps, be read as a critique of the patriarchal structures which dominate her life even as she is part of a

[19] This text "propounds a graphically explicit, aesthetic theory of a male sexuality that is infused with homoeroticism. Moreover, this same-sex desire, an expression of Romantic reflexivity, is related, ironically, critically, and self-consciously, to artistic production" (Helfer, "Confessions" 177).
[20] See also Sigrid Lange: Each year the Amazons repeat their "Gründungstrauma, das Patriarchat überwinden zu müssen" ("Kleists *Penthesilea*" 709).

'matriarchal' society, her death points then to a bleak and hopeless attempt to overcome the bounds of patriarchal power (Lange, "Kleists *Penthesilea*" 707). Because Penthesilea fails on every level in the end – as a leader, as a woman, as a lover – she is disqualified from a study which seeks to understand the underlying paradox of literary representations of strong, independent, *successful* women, who through their masculine traits and appearances on the political stage, challenge the polarization of *Geschlechtscharaktere* and call the interconnected 'essential' nature of women into question.

Penthesilea's fate is not unique. As Sigrid Weigel demonstrates in "Die opferte Heldin," many female protagonists in German literature do not survive the end of their text. Even more so do the women who challenge societal norms fail to survive the end of a text, often dying an unnatural death (141). Within the context of increased gender polarization during the early 19th century, it comes as no surprise when female protagonists, who transgress against the strict gender definitions and expectations, pay for their transgression with their lives. It is then all the more extraordinary when such a heroine not only survives the text, but also is, in some way, successful, while the 'ideal' women – those who perfectly model gender expectations – die.

The Politics of Ambiguity

My study discusses why these seemingly transgressive women survive the texts that attempt to contain their transgression, and are even successful or victorious in the end. My investigation spans the period from the early 1800s, a time characterized by considerable gender flux, through early poetic realism, which, on the surface at least, exhibits more stable gender constructions. I discuss two texts from the beginning of the

century – Schiller's *Maria Stuart* and Goethe's *Die natürliche Tochter* – and two from the middle of the century – Hebbel's *Judith* and Stifter's *Brigitta* – in order to mark the shift in the representation of androgynous women. My study reveals that, perhaps paradoxically, the containment strategies of these literary figures become less forceful as the gender categories of the century become increasingly stable. The very uncontained and uncontainable ambiguity of these women calls this stability into question.

In each chapter, I discuss the ways in which the female androgynous title figures challenge 19th-century notions of femininity through their position as border figures of gender: i.e., they demonstrate masculine traits, but are women.[21] In this context, I find Marjorie Garber's description of the 'category crisis' useful. For Garber, the presence of a gender ambiguous individual in a text (for her, it the figure of the transvestite): "indicates a *category crisis elsewhere*, an irresolvable conflict or epistemological crux that destabilizes comfortable binarity, and displaces the resulting discomfort onto a figure that already inhabits, indeed incarnates, the margin" (17).[22] In my analysis of these four texts, I read a 'category crisis' in a multitude of border figures – sexual, epistemological, aesthetic, geographic, temporal, political *Grenzfiguren* – which are defined in terms of

[21] By challenging femininity and gender roles, these texts demonstrate that femininity (and masculinity) is a social construct and that gender is "performative." According to Butler, "no gender is 'expressed' by actions, gestures, or speech, but that the performance of gender produces retroactively the illusion that there is an inner core. That is, the performance of gender retroactively produces the effect of some true or abiding feminine essence or disposition" (Butler, "Melancholy Gender" 220). After all, "there is very little agreement […] on what it is that constitutes, or ought to constitute, the category of woman" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 1).

[22] Elisabeth Krimmer's *In the Company of Men: Cross-Dressed Women Around 1800* focuses on historical and representations of cross-dressing women in female-authored texts. She argues that stories about cross-dressers "were employed to work through competing concepts of the body and to imagine different models of gender identity" (1-2) and that "most female authors of the late 18th century used their female cross-dressers to refute a theory that conceives of female anatomy as destiny" (3). Gertrud Lehnert rejects the idea that female cross-dressers challenge gender binaries and argues that they, instead, reinforce male superiority (55).

the feminine.[23] That means the texts are positioned on and delineate a variety of borders, which inform and are informed by the female title figure. At the intersection of the various borders, through the female androgynous protagonist, particularly the political subtext of each work stands out.[24]

In the first chapter on *Maria Stuart*, I investigate the border figures of gender, sexuality, language, aesthetics, and politics. Schiller's drama presents two androgynous, transgressive women: Elisabeth and Maria.[25] Each woman demonstrates masculine traits and refutes traditional gender roles (Elisabeth refuses to marry, Maria takes one man after the other), thereby challenging 19th-century notions of femininity and female sexuality. The text repeatedly attempts to contain these transgressive border figures. Elisabeth cannot be contained as she creates a female discourse and explodes traditional meanings. Maria is more easily contained through a desexualizing myth that invokes her innocence and declares her a *schöne Seele*. In the end, the various strands of containment come together to reveal an attempt to contain the woman – specifically Elisabeth – on the political stage through a rhetoric of personal revenge. Upon closer reading, however, it is clear that the shift in motivation from political necessity to personal revenge is a construct. Yet, the regicide of Maria recalls the, for Schiller, contemporary horror of the Reign of Terror. The bloody head of a queen indicates the danger of women's

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[23] Thus, my use of 'feminine' here does not denote 'feminine' within the context of the discussed *Geschlechtscharaktere*, but instead as an adjective for the female protagonist. Just as my designation of "androgynous" does not imply a desire for or state of wholeness, but instead signifies a combination of 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits within the woman.

[24] Krimmer notes a similar pattern in her analysis of the figure of the woman cross-dresser. There she notes that in many of the texts she discusses "though ostensibly concerned with the construction of gender, are in effect using gender as a metaphor to talk about models of politics, truth, and writing" (14).

[25] *Maria Stuart* has, effectively, dual title figures: Maria *and* Elisabeth. The English Queen could just as well have been the title figure, for the text is split equally between Elisabeth and Maria.

emancipation to women and to society in general by placing the violence of revolution within the private sphere.

The second chapter on *Die natürliche Tochter* also presents a challenge to 19th-century notions of femininity, sexuality, gender roles, and marriage. Eugenie is a daughter illicitly conceived out of wedlock, who grows up to be an 'illegitimate woman,' a woman who refuses to be limited to the private sphere. In this chapter, I also discuss the containment of Eugenie through the ambiguity of knowledge represented in a language of disorientation and confusion, of labyrinths and secrecy. In addition, I analyze the containment strategy of petrification, which entombs Eugenie in an image of death and of fantasy. Each containment strategy is inverted and ultimately empowers Eugenie: as the secret incarnate hidden in an image of death, Eugenie can choose the location from which she will implement her return to the political stage. It is only in the most ambiguous border figures of space and time that the containment of Eugenie achieves some success. By placing the emancipating woman in a kind of time warp, her direct relevance for the political realm is temporarily eliminated.

The third chapter on *Judith* introduces the parallel issues of Jewish emancipation and women's emancipation. In this chapter, I read across the various border figures – gender, sexuality, Judaism –which are all defined in terms of the feminine. The text demonstrates a clear desire to stabilize these ambiguous border figures, which, by extension, attempts to halt the emancipating Jewess, Judith. I first discuss how the figure of Judith challenges 19th-century notions of masculinity and femininity, as well as female sexuality, through Judith's desire to experience sexual intercourse. In particular, I challenge the status quo reading that Judith was raped. This reading functions as a

containment strategy that attempts to remove agency from woman. Finally, I investigate the containment of the border figure of the Jew through anti-Semitic rhetoric. However, through Judith, the Jewess who saves her people, the text ultimately shows that neither the woman nor the Jew can be contained, thereby indicating that the emancipation movement originating from Enlightenment principles means freedom for all: man *and* woman, Christian *and* Jew.

In the fourth and final chapter, I contend that *Brigitta* reveals the most extreme border transgressions of all the texts in this study. However, the attempts of containment are paradoxically less forceful than would otherwise be assumed and are easily undermined. Instead, this already emancipated woman is uncontained and uncontainable: Brigitta's ambiguity remains unbound. With Brigitta's androgyny and a pervasive homoerotic undertone, the text challenges 19th-century notions of femininity and sexuality. In addition, I discuss the attempt to contain the woman through silence and the way in which the text undermines that containment by suggesting that a resolution is only possible in communication. As seen with *Die natürliche Tochter*, there is also an attempt here to contain the emancipated woman through temporal and spatial ambiguity. However, this containment strategy fails, as Brigitta and Stephan can be clearly identified with the historical political situation of Hungary in the early 19th century. The text culminates with an androgynous vision that places woman at the forefront of progress and reform in Hungary.

For the first two texts, *Maria Stuart* and *Die natürliche Tochter*, I demonstrate that each play positions the androgynous protagonist in the political aftermath of the French Revolution. As I uncover the containment strategy for each border figure, it

becomes apparent that the failure of the French Revolution as it dissolved into the Reign of Terror is mapped onto woman's struggle for emancipation in the text. As both Elisabeth and Eugenie struggle to define themselves within a constricting, patriarchal society, their emancipating gestures can be hampered but not completely squelched.

As we move forward forty years to Hebbel's *Judith* and Stifter's *Brigitta*, the containment strategies, while apparent, are less focused, less desperate. On the one hand, this shift can indicate that the necessity to contain gender categories had become less urgent. The turn of the 19th century was a time of considerable gender flux (Kuzniar, Introduction 30); thus, the efforts to stabilize representations of ambiguous gender would be much greater than in a time of – at least outwardly – gender stability. On the other hand, and this I believe to be more likely, a less frantic containment mirrors the (slowly) growing acceptance of real woman rejecting restricting notions of 'acceptable' femininity and entering the public sphere. The attitude change runs parallel to the renewed movement of the 1840s toward a more democratic government (and a rebirth of the woman's movement). These texts no longer engage with the French Revolution, but with socio-political issues of their day: Jewish emancipation in *Judith* and Hungarian independence in *Brigitta*.

The fact that the polarization of *Geschlechtscharaktere* was intimately interconnected with the issue of women's emancipation during the *Sattelzeit* suggests that I am correct in reading the texts I have chosen for my analysis not only for the ways in which gender is constructed and the binary masculine/feminine is called into question, but also for the ways in which these texts pose a challenge to the relevant political stages of the early and mid-nineteenth century. What I discovered for each text is that there is a

clear attempt to contain ambiguity of the various border figures, but that, in the end and to varying degrees, the texts undermine that very containment. As each of the following chapters will demonstrate, this failure to contain ambiguity makes a direct reference to the ultimate inability to contain the androgynous emancipating or emancipated woman. In other words, the categories of freedom and equality which sprang from the Enlightenment and formed the basis for not only the French Revolution, but also the later revolutions across Europe, subtly inform these texts. The representation of androgynous women in these texts – the politics of ambiguity – confirms that true freedom and true equality do not exist as long as "*der Menschheit Hälfte blieb noch ohne Recht*" (Otto-Peters 57).

Chapter 1

The Devious Woman – The Dangerous Queen: Friedrich Schiller's *Maria Stuart*

Queen Elisabeth's jealous rage over a man functions as the perfect cover-up and containment strategy for the politically motivated execution of her rival in Schiller's *Maria Stuart*. As one of the many changes Schiller made to his historical source,[26] covering up the political necessity of Maria's execution with reasons of fabricated personal revenge particularly damages the figure of the woman ruler.[27] Some scholars read in this shift of motivation that Schiller "makes clear his didactic message that female nature is biologically determined and cannot be overcome simply by adopting a male role in society and that negative consequences result when female inclination is given political power" (Calkin 101). In other words, Schiller's *Maria Stuart* demonstrates that women are naturally disinclined to be effective rulers.[28] In my opinion, this argument does not go far enough. By shifting Queen Elisabeth's motivation for signing the death warrant from political necessity (the public sphere) to personal revenge (the private sphere), Schiller's

[26] Other changes include the creation of the fictitious character Moritmer, the love affair between Maria and Leicester, other changes to Elisabeth's character, an elimination of Maria's participation in intrigues against the queen, and the meeting of the queens. For a discussion of Schiller's historical changes, see Witte, Lokke, and Sammons.

[27] Lesley Sharpe suggests that "the gender discourse that is woven into the moral/political dilemma thus serves to expose the danger of a sentimentalized view of the feminine" ("Gender and Genre" 41).

[28] For most critics, the text demonstrates that women and rulership are mutually exclusive categories (Leistner [175], Fuhrmann [340], Mansouri [316-26], Sautermeister [185], Lokke [139]). By contrast, Prandi (33) and Sharpe (*Schiller* 115) argue that the texts speaks only against Maria as a woman ruler (Prandi 33). For Wittkowski, this play says nothing about women rulers in general because any interpretation is specific to these two women ("Schiller" 387).

text enters the debate on women's emancipation at the turn of the nineteenth century.[29] At the same time, the French Revolution – which first gave voice to the issue of women's emancipation – and the Reign of Terror loom in the background of Schiller's text. Through the bloody event of regicide, the text aligns Elisabeth's personal motivation with the violence of revolution, suggesting the possible violence to society through women who dare to demand a place on the public stage.

Elisabeth is particularly dangerous, for in her androgyny she challenges early 19th-century notions of femininity by proving that she is just as effective a ruler as a man.[30] Throughout Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, there is a clear attempt to contain the emancipated Queen and by extension to bring stability to aesthetic, linguistic, and political categories. However, the text subtly undermines these attempts in various ways, which shows that such containment is futile. Ultimately, Schiller's drama suggests that the 'ideal' woman does not exist and that political stasis is neither possible nor desirable: Women's emancipation is an integral part of freedom.

This reading is not readily apparent on the surface of the text. *Maria Stuart* presents the last days of the Scottish queen's life. We hear of Maria's past sins and the events leading up to her trial through conversations and confessions. In the first act, Maria learns the court's verdict that she is guilty of treason. She writes letters to both Queen Elisabeth for the purpose of a meeting and to Leicester, Elisabeth's court confidant and Maria's lover, for the purpose of secretly obtaining her freedom. The

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[29] See Calkin for a discussion of the separate spheres. See Kontje ("Sublime"), Delbrück, and Herbst for a commentary on the role of the bourgeoisie and Andreas Müller for a look at absolutism and gender. By contrast, Swales reads Maria Stuart historically within the context of the 16th century and remarks that the motifs of the text "acquire metaphorical force which extends beyond the discrete events to the very core of the Elizabethan Age" (*Schiller* 26).

[30] See also Lokke (139), Herbst (236), and Leister (181).

second act centers on Elisabeth's quasi-engagement to the French prince as well as the initial discussion with her councilmen, Leicester, Burleigh and Talbot, regarding the fate of Maria. While Burleigh would like to see the convicted woman quickly executed, both Leicester and Talbot argue for mercy and convince Elisabeth to meet Maria face-to-face. In the third and central act, the meeting of the two queens is carefully constructed as a coincidental occurrence. Maria, who initially humbles herself to beg for mercy, seals her fate by hurtling insults at Elisabeth after being provoked. The act closes with reports of an attempt on Elisabeth's life.

In the following act, Elisabeth's engagement to the French prince is dissolved after it is discovered that the French ambassador played a role in the assassination attempt. After renewed discussions with her councilmen regarding Maria's fate, Elisabeth signs the death warrant, but gives it to her secretary, Davison, for 'safekeeping.' Burleigh later sees the death warrant and, together with Leicester, leaves the palace to carry out the execution. The fifth and final act depicts Maria's preparation for death through a final confession and her partaking of the Eucharist. The beheading itself is not shown on stage, but is instead reported by Leicester as a kind of hallucination as he refuses to actually watch the death sentence being carried out. The play closes with Elisabeth learning that Maria has been put to death. Due to the 'confusion' with the death warrant, she is able to accuse both Davison and Burleigh of treason for not following her orders. Abandoned by Talbot since he was not able to save her "edlern Teil" and by Leicester, who was revealed by Maria to be a traitor, Elisabeth stands alone at the end. The stage directions read: "*Sie bezwingt sich und steht mit ruhiger Fassung da*" (V.15).[31]

[31] Schiller, Friedrich. *Sämtliche Werke, Dramen II*. Ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert. Vol. 2. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1959. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

For many critics, the final lines of the play underscore Elisabeth's failure – as a woman, as a ruler, as a tragic figure.[32] In fact, in most scholarship to date, Elisabeth is harshly evaluated and generally juxtaposed with the 'moral winner' of Schiller's text, Maria. Elisabeth is considered the weak, indecisive (unattractive) ruler obsessed with appearances, Maria the honest, beautiful, reformed sinner who in her final 'sublime' moment performs sweeping acts of forgiveness before she freely goes to her tragic death.[33] Elisabeth has been called a tyrant and dictator (Wittkowski, "Schiller" 406) and is accused of "unconquered moral convictions" (Pugh 112). While Harro Müller suggests that the English queen is trapped as the "sich durchsetzende und siegende Elisabeth zugleich Verliererin und Besiegte" (238), Steven Martinson contends that the English queen's entrapment is "self-imposed" by her "moral ineptitude" (*Tensions* 222).

By contrast, Maria, who is the focus of most interpretations, is held up as an example of Schiller's concept of the sublime or *schöne Seele*. For the majority of critics, the processes of confession, forgiveness and execution are seen as "the dramatic fulfillment of Schiller's moral, philosophical, and aesthetic views" (Reeve 132).[34] In her final moments, Maria "wird zur schönen Seele" (Sautermeister 320) and her "vom Stoffe befreite Seele läßt alle irdischen Gebrechen, alle Not des Schicksals weit hinter sich"

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[32] Lesley Sharpe contends that "Elisabeth is left alone and deserted at the end of the play, not, […] as a sign of punishment but as acknowledgement of the complexity of her situation, in which there is no ready-made role for her to assume" ("Gender and Genre" 38).

[33] Another way the queens differ is in their religious confessions. Only a few critics to date have commented on the religious aspects of the text. Brother Gregory, for example, reads Schiller's *Maria Stuart* through a Catholic lense evaluating the authenticity of the proclaimed Catholic elements in the text. In the end, he argues that "Schiller would seem to be taking his stand on the side of Catholicism. This, however, is true in only a very general way, for the opposition of Catholicism to Protestantism is not the essential conflict of the drama" (Nugent 8). Sammons agrees that this text is not particularly focused on comparing religions. In his analysis, he looks at the figures of Mortimer and Maria within the Catholic cause. He explains that Maria does not die for religious causes because her goals are separate from that of the Catholics in this play (164).

[34] See also Finger (178), Müller, A. (271), Leistner (168), Mansouri (316), Ingen (*Maria Stuart* 247), Witte (247), Thalheim (18), Hart (*Friedrich Schiller* 46), Mücke (110), Diecks (245), Field (336), Menhennet (89), and Pütz (299).

(Wiese, *Tragödie* 247). The Scottish queen becomes an "angel […] transformed in the irresistible glory of a humanity grown consummate and whole" (Graham, *Schiller* 170) and she dies "als Märtyrerin [..] ihrer königlichen Tugenden" (Wittkowski, "Schiller" 406). For Lesley Sharpe, Maria's motives are suspect, yet she still concludes that we should read the "play as a moral triumph" as far as Maria is concerned (Introduction xxvi).[35]

More recent scholarship is more tempered and reads the figure of Maria more critically and the figure of Elisabeth less so. Not all critics agree that Maria Stuart can be seen as a *schöne Seele* or as having reached some sublime state. For Sigrid Lange, Maria is not a "schöne Seele," but she achieves "menschliche Größe" (*Utopie* 115). Todd Kontje also argues that Maria does not reach any kind of sublime state ("Sublime" 94). In his contrast of the two female protagonists, Kontje contends: "Neither is morally superior to the other, and neither stands closer to ultimate truth. Mary puts on a better show, so to speak, as she stages her execution as an effective melodrama, but she only masks the moral vacuum that Elizabeth confronts" (89).[36] Andreas Mielke convincingly argues that Elisabeth is judged harshly because we "evaluate [Elisabeth] in terms of the fate and demise of Maria Stuart" (51). Mielke successfully frames the problem of interpretation

[35] See also Leipert, who suggests that the final act shows a moral triumph for Maria (43). Whereas most critics read Schiller's aesthetic category of the sublime as secular, Jennifer Short reads it as a Christian ideal (191). Short also suggests that there are similarities between Jesus and Maria Stuart: Both "are unjustly condemned, yet, by dying, they triumphantly demonstrate their royal generosity, their majesty, and their reign in the kingdom of heaven. If, as it appears, Schiller utilizes his heroine as the female counterpart of Jesus, he is making a profound statement indeed" (179).

[36] See also Robin Harrison, who argues against both the notions of the sublime and of the "schöne Seele" (52), for "to describe [Maria] as merely sublime is to concentrate unduly on her acceptance of inevitable death, reducing her wish for atonement to a supporting motive such as *Über das Erhabene* does not allow for" (52). Other tempered analyses include those of Schäublin, Reeve, Prandi, Ingen, Köhnke, Thacker, Sharpe (*Schiller*), Lokke.

by stating that the issue is one of the manipulation of the senses through the category of time:

> We *see* the unfortunate Queen Maria, but we only *hear* of her past vices, and prefer to disregard them. We *see* the fortunate Queen Elisabeth, but we only *hear* of her past virtues, and prefer to disregard them. The main dramaturgical difference between the fatal actions is a chronological one. Maria's admitted crime […] is a crime of the past, whereas Elisabeth's crime is happening, now and obviously, before our very eyes. (55)

In my analysis, I will take Mielke's idea further and suggest that this issue of temporality is what allows for the figure of Maria to be mythologized. At the same time, Elisabeth's 'crime' has everything to do with the way she inserts temporal elements into her statements, thereby delaying action and deferring responsibility.

As several critics have noted, Elisabeth's negative portrayal lies not only in the juxtaposition with the angelic Maria, but also stems from the numerous changes Schiller made to the historical character of Elisabeth.[37] Kari Lokke points out that Schiller's "treatment of Queen Elizabeth I systematically distorts the historical record in order to emphasize stereotypically feminine traits like jealousy, manipulativeness and weakness rather than the independence and political skill for which the historical Elizabeth was known" (131). William Witte suggests that "Schiller found it necessary to stress the unlovable features in Elizabeth's nature" in order to make the difference between the two queens more striking. Witte continues:

> The result is an unbalanced portrayal which fails to bring out what was good in Elizabeth's complex character – her rich humanity, her devotion to the task to which she had been called, her political astuteness, her sense of humour, and her intellectual distinction: all those qualities, in fact, which gave her such a magic hold over the hearts of her people and which compelled the admiration even of her enemies. (244)[38]

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[37] See also Kord (97).

[38] See also Robertson, who reminds us that "throughout her whole reign Elizabeth was cautious, but decisive; and, by her promptitude in executing her resolutions, joined to the deliberation with which she

Only through the changes Schiller makes to the historical Elisabeth can the element of female jealousy come out so strongly, which ultimately leads – according to the play – to Elisabeth's act of personal revenge.

This shift in motivation from political necessity to personal revenge is one of the many strategies Schiller employs to contain the androgynous emancipating woman. In this chapter, I investigate the various strategies of containment that stabilize the ambiguous border figures. In the category of gender, my analysis reveals that both Elisabeth and Maria challenge nineteenth-century notions of femininity and female sexuality. The text attempts to contain Elisabeth's masculinity and desire to remain a virgin through the institution of marriage. Maria's surprising masculine traits are contained through repeated references to her beauty. Suggesting that her whorish ways are a thing of the past contains her licentious sexuality. These strategies of containment are undermined by the text itself: Elisabeth never marries and Maria remains a sensuous being. However, both women ultimately reinscribe themselves within the patriarchal structure.

In the following section on the border figure of language, I explore Elisabeth's attempt to create a female discourse by inserting both temporal and linguistic elements into traditionally understood objects and events. The newly created female discourse cannot entirely break through the dominant male discourse, as only one man actually listens to and understands Elisabeth's resignification. Her voice does not register beyond this single listener. Although the English queen reaches her goal for resignification, it comes at a price.

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formed them, her administration became remarkable no less for its vigour than for its wisdom" (quoted in Short 115).

The subsequent discussion of the aesthetic *Grenzfigur* looks more closely at the ways in which Maria is contained within a myth. The "myth of Maria" – as I am calling the careful construction of Maria's innocence in and through the text – is engineered through a confusion of the senses. Because we are told in her absence how she will appear, her actual presence conveys no pertinent information. Enshrined within a myth, the transgressive Maria is removed from any possibility of action. This containment strategy appears to be successful: decades of literary critics can only see the mythical Maria as evidenced by the commentary of Maria the sublime or the *schöne Seele*. A closer reading reveals that the text itself undermines the myth through self-reflexive comments.

In the final discussion on the *Grenzfigur* of politics, the various strands of containment come together to reveal an attempt to contain the woman on the political stage. In this section I investigate the issue of political necessity as a reflection of Machiavellian politics. The predominant political necessity is that of deception, which is practiced by most, if not every, character on the political stage. Specifically the two queens make use of political necessity: Maria utilizes deception in an attempt to free herself from captivity. And Elisabeth readily admits to the necessity of deception and clearly struggles with the political necessity of murder. Maria as political woman is contained through the myth construct; hence, her political action and even her own turn to personal revenge are largely ignored. Elisabeth, by contrast, is contained through a rhetoric of personal revenge. Upon closer reading, however, it is clear that the shift in motivation from political necessity to personal revenge is a construct and a cover-up. Elisabeth signs the death warrant out of political necessity to secure her place on the

throne and bring peace to her people. Yet, the regicide of Maria recalls the, for Schiller, contemporary horror of the Reign of Terror. The bloody head of a queen indicates the danger of women's emancipation to women and to society in general by placing the violence within the private sphere.

I. Gender and Sexuality at the Border

Literary scholars have questioned the validity of reading *Maria Stuart* as a critique of woman, because there is no obvious juxtaposition of man versus woman. There are, however, two women who display many masculine characteristics, which challenge nineteenth-century notions of femininity and female sexuality.[39] To be sure, both queens also exhibit feminine characteristics, but for each, the feminine traits appear to be part of the containment strategy of these politically active women. Both women are critiqued for acting outside nature: Elisabeth for her insistence on retaining her virginity and for refusing to be subjected to a man's authority, and Maria for her licentious behavior and sexual escapades. While both queens call attention to the inherent inequality of women, in the end, they both adhere to and remain contained in the patriarchal structure. For although Elisabeth refuses to marry and subject herself to male authority, she is also incapable of stepping outside of the patriarchal order to imagine anything outside of marriage or life-long chastity. Maria renounces her 'unnatural' licentiousness

[39] Herbst suggests that "Schillers Text [widerspricht] allerdings vereinfachenden Kategorisierungen […], indem für Elisabeth 'weibliche' und 'männliche' Eigenschaften und Reaktionen kunstvoll verzahnt werden und Maria sich letztlich zur reinen, d.h. eher geschlechts-unspezifischen Menschlichkeit erhebt" (238). By contrast, Andreas Müller argues: "Innerhalb des Stücks geht es aber weniger um eine Katelogisierung des weiblichen Geschlechtscharakters als vielmehr um die Stärken und Schwächen des Menschen Maria. Sie hat ausdrücklich 'menschlich, jugendlich' und nicht *weiblich, jugendlich gefehlt*" (269). See also Calkin (81).

only to reinscribe herself even more firmly within male expectations of femininity by presenting herself as the de-sexualized *schöne Seele*.

The gender ambiguity of the leading ladies reflects the gender ambiguity at the turn of the nineteenth century. The text demonstrates the devastating consequences of such ambiguity and the necessity of definitions. Maria's sexual freedom proves to be more threatening than Elisabeth's virginity, for Maria is first squeezed into a mythical mold of the ideal woman and then put to death.[40] In the end, the only place for woman is envisioned through a new understanding of *Geschlecht*, as the lineage aspect of the word is aligned with the female gender throughout the text. There, the subtext of the interchangeability of *Geschlecht* = gender and *Geschlecht* = lineage underscores the threat of female sexuality to the patriarchal order.

The Androgynous Women

The masculine traits of the leading ladies stand out against what the text defines as constituting femininity. In addition to the typical feminine attribute of beauty, woman is "ein gebrechlich Wesen" (II.3.1373) with a "weiche[s] Herz" (II.3.1343) and "zarte[s] Mitleid" (V.10.3853). In addition, women are uneducated (I.7.764), inclined to be overwhelmed and dictated by their sensuality (II.8.1800-3), and must practice justice in a way that befits their 'naturelle': "Das Richterschwert, womit der Mann sich ziert, / Verhaßt ist's in der Frauen Hand" (I.8.1018-9).

[40] As I will argue in the final section of this chapter, Maria is put to death out of political necessity in order to uphold peace in the English kingdom. For my argument here it is important to note that although a woman signed the death warrant, Maria was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death by a court of 42 men (I.7.697).

For the most part, neither queen demonstrates these feminine characteristics. (They do exemplify other traits such as pettiness and vanity.) They are both intelligent, strong, and independent women. To be sure, Elisabeth's lack of femininity stands out more clearly than Maria's. Elisabeth challenges outright the notion that women are weak. When Talbot suggests that women are "gebrechlich" (II.3.1373), she retorts:

> Das Weib ist nicht schwach. Es gibt starke Seelen
> In dem Geschlecht - Ich will in meinem Beisein
> Nichts von der Schwäche des Geschlechtes hören. (II.3.1374-6)

In addition, Elisabeth is seen only in the company of men (Kord 97). The English queen is very unfeminine in her plain looks. As Mortimer declares in a monologue referring to Elisabeth: "die Frauenkrone hast du nie besessen" (II.6.1655). She also rejects marriage as she does not wish to be subjugated to a man. Instead, she sees herself as both man and king: "ich meinte doch, regiert / Zu haben wie ein Mann und wie ein König" (II.2.117-01).[41]

Similar masculine traits detailed in Hausen's essay – self-confidence, independence, power, and energy – can also be found in Maria. The Scottish queen likewise refuses to be subject to a man in marriage. As the text and history show, she will gladly dispose of one in order to pursue another. In addition, Maria also refers to herself as king. In her confrontation with Elisabeth, the Scottish queen seals her fate by exclaiming: "Regierte Recht, so läget *Ihr* vor mir / Im Staube jetzt, denn *ich* bin Euer König" (III.4.2450-1).

[41] Best argues that against the idea of an androgynous Elisabeth, contending instead that she is "required to act out the unnatural role of a man, and always assumes this mantle with a clear awareness of her inability to play it fully" (107).

Sexual Deviants

Both Maria and Elisabeth stand on the border of female sexuality and reject the constrictions of nineteenth-century notions of proper female sexuality based in subservience, modesty, and chastity. Maria's expression of sexuality is licentious, aligning her with Eve. By contrast, Elisabeth is a prudish virgin, which is considered equally distasteful by patriarchal society as she refuses to submit to male authority. There is an attempt to contain and punish these women on the border[42] for their scandalous behavior and their refusal to allow their bodies to be dictated by men. In the end, the containment appears partially successful: Maria dies a martyr more akin to the Virgin Mary than the seductress Eve, and Elisabeth is pressured into an engagement.

The attempts to stifle Maria's reputation as an Eve-like seductress by presenting her sexual escapades as crimes of the past and by simultaneously staging Maria as a penitent reformed sinner are unsuccessful. Her sensuality cannot be ignored, as evidenced by the men willing to sacrifice their lives in order to save her – beginning with Babington and Parry up to Mortimer and, to some extent, Leicester, who lost everything in the end, even if he hadn't planned to make that sacrifice. In addition, repeated references to Maria as a snake underscore her connection with the temptress Eve. Burleigh calls Maria a "gift'ge Schlange" (I.8.1043) and Elisabeth refers to the rival queen as the "Höllenschlange" (IV.10.3233) and "Natter" (III.4.2329). Maria is not only regarded as a serpent by her enemies, but she also draws the comparison herself by referring to her "Schlangenhaare" (III.3.2186). The "Schlangenhaare" also evoke the image of the beautiful Medusa who was punished by Athena for unacceptable sexual intimacy with

[42] Andreas Müller has commented on Maria as a border figure. He talks about her in the context of American sociologist Robert Ezra Park's "marginal man, i.e., the individual who finds himself on the margins of two cultures and not fully or permanently accommodated to either" (quoted in Müller 273).

Poseidon (Garber and Vickers 2). This image of Medusa also underscores Maria as a border figure:

> For what is most compelling in the long history of the myth and its retellings is Medusa's intrinsic doubleness: at once monster and beauty, disease and cure, threat and protection, poison and remedy, the woman with the snaky locks who could turn the unwary onlooker to stone has come to stand for all that is obdurate and irresistible. (1).[43]

Figured simultaneously as Eve and Medusa, Maria's deviant sexuality, which destabilized the Scottish court, is presented as a threat to society.

Prudish Elisabeth is on the opposite extreme of the sensuous Maria – she wishes to live and die the "jungfräuliche Königin" (II.2.1160). For the English queen, to retain her virginity is to retain power and freedom, even as she herself notes how unnatural it is for a woman to remain a virgin. Elisabeth's deviant sexuality – her insistence on remaining a virgin – is also presented as a threat to society. As a virgin, she cannot produce an heir for her country.

Repeatedly throughout the text, Elisabeth observes that being an effective female ruler is incompatible with marriage. For Elisabeth, the suggestion of her councilmen to forge an alliance with France through marriage means only that "der Gebieter wird [ihr] aufgedrungen" (II.2.1168). This demonstrates to her that she is seen only as a woman, and not a queen. When she does finally agree to this alliance, the French representative insists on more than her verbal affirmation. Elisabeth hands him a ring noting,

> Hat die Königin doch nichts
> Voraus vor dem gemeinen Bürgerweibe!
> Das gleiche Zeichen weist auf gleiche Pflicht,
> Auf gleiche Dienstbarkeit. (II.2.1207-10)

[43] Medusa also makes an appearance in *Faust*. Stuart Atkins contends that the passage "stresses the image of the Medusa as a beautiful seductive force against which men are weak" (73).

Elisabeth also laments the disadvantage of political power, which limits her personal freedom and desires (II.9.1970-1). For Elisabeth, the incompatibility of wife and ruler is most clearly seen in Maria, who tried to be both and failed:

> Sie hat der Menschen Urteil nichts geachtet.
> Leicht wurd' es ihr, zu leben, nimmer lud sie
> Das Joch sich auf, dem ich mich unterwarf.
> Hätt' ich doch auch Ansprüche machen können,
> Des Lebens mich, der Erde Lust zu freun,
> Doch zog ich strenge Königspflichten vor.
> Und doch gewann sie aller Männer Gunst,
> Weil sie sich nur befliß, ein Weib zu sein,
> Und um sie buhlt die Jugend und das Alter. (II.9.1979-87)

For as a ruler, one must be at the pinnacle of power, and as a wife, one is automatically property of another, thus placing the husband in the position of power.[44] As Prandi asserts, "Elizabeth does not marry precisely because she assumes that the socially dictated loss of self-determination for women in marriage will result in her own case in the loss of her political sovereignty over England" (Prandi 114). Elisabeth can only be a successful ruler by denying her sexual desires and remaining free of male dominance.

Containing Deviance

Both queens – deviant in their androgyny as well as their sexuality – are contained and self-contained. Maria accepts her death sentence for her past crimes driven by her immoral behavior. She is reincorporated into an acceptable understanding of female sexuality by becoming a *schöne Seele*. Yet her final lines demonstrate that she has not wholly reached this higher state (if at all), and, in the end, she remains a highly sensual

[44] See also Herbst: "Bei Elisabeth handelt es sich aber nicht um Eheunwilligkeit schlechthin, sondern um die Schwierigkeit, die ungewöhnliche Rolle der Frau als Herrscherin und die gewöhnliche, d.h. damals übliche Rolle der Frau als Ehefrau und Mutter zu vereinen. Die eine Rolle ihr Männer untertan, die andere macht sie dem Mann untertan" (Herbst 243).

and troublesome woman. Only through a death constructed as the act of a martyr can the myth be created that Maria is a *schöne Seele*. Maria's true, unchanged sensual nature is revealed in the final act through her physical reaction to Leicester. As she leaves her chamber to head to her execution, she sees Leicester and "*bei diesem Anblick zittert Maria, die Knie versagen ihr, sie ist im Begriff hinzusinken*" (677). The mere sight of the man she loves causes this extremely visceral reaction. While her political role is repeatedly refuted in the text, Schiller's play demonstrates the logical consequences for a woman who dares to behave sexually outside of the norms of accepted femininity. Maria's deviant sexuality is neutralized in myth and removed by death.

The English queen is more self-contained than externally contained. Since she refuses to marry and rejects the role of subordinate wife, Elisabeth is able to retain her autonomy. However, Elisabeth herself undermines the thrust of this seemingly feminist decision. First, the queen does not attempt to conceive of any other role for a woman within marriage. Only two options are presented for the queen: virginity or marriage. The text offers no place for woman to operate outside of patriarchal structures. The choice of virginity at least rejects physical domination in the form of penetration, leaving woman whole within herself. Yet the choice of virginity still traps Elisabeth within a masculine discourse, keeping her contained within an ideal of femininity.[45] Second, the English queen contends that this option is not and should not be for every woman. Instead, she sees herself as an exception to the rule:

Wohl weiß ich, daß man Gott nicht dient, wenn man

[45] For Lokke, "the eloquence of Elizabeth's expression of opposition to marriage suggests that the idealist and liberator in Schiller has once again triumphed over the defender of male privilege" (134). Calkin argues that Elisabeth's decision not to marry is because she is "power hungry" and that the English Queen is a "double exception" for she refuses the 'natural' role of wife and mother as well as her duty to her country, since "all rulers […] were expected to make political marriages" (123).

> Die Ordnung der Natur verläßt, und Lob
> Verdienen sie, die vor mir hier gewaltet,
> Daß sie die Klöster aufgetan und tausend
> Schlachtopfer einer falschverstandnen Andacht
> Den Pflichten der Natur zurückgegeben.
> Doch eine Königin, die ihre Tage
> Nicht ungenützt in müßiger Beschauung
> Verbringt, die unverdrossen, unermüdet
> Die schwerste aller Pflichten übt, *die* sollte
> Von dem Naturzweck ausgenommen sein,
> Der *eine* Hälfte des Geschlechts der Menschen
> Der andern unterwürfig macht – (II.2.1172-84)

Elisabeth does not call out for equality between the sexes, but instead, wishes only that the rule of nature not apply to her.[46] With that, she reinscribes herself into the patriarchal order and the very structures and prejudices she attempts to resist.

A New Order

Female sexuality seems then doomed to be forever contained within the patriarchal order. However, the subtle subtext of *Geschlecht* in Schiller's drama suggests a small breakthrough. The discussion of *Geschlecht* as lineage is pronounced in the text. Elisabeth's claim to the throne is precarious only because of her father's fickle pronouncements on her legitimacy. According to the Roman Catholic Church, Elisabeth is an illegitimate offspring of Henry VIII, because divorce is not permitted. However, Henry VIII broke away from the church in Rome and established the Church of England specifically in order to marry Anne Boleyn, Elisabeth's mother. Because the king wished to marry again after Anne did not produce the male heir he had hoped for, Anne was found guilty of treason. Naturally, her child by Henry VIII, Elisabeth, had to be declared

[46] "Elisabeth appears to believe in the biological theory that women are inherently lower than men. Yet one must not forget that this speech is for public consumption and that this woman, a skilled politician, does not wish to alienate the support she needs from her court by denying traditional values" (Calkin 118).

a bastard. Mortimer and Maria, adherents to the Catholic faith, repeatedly refer to Elisabeth as “Bastard” (III.4.2447), “Bastardkönigin” (VI.4.2815) and “Bastardtochter” (I.6.524). The question of legitimacy and lineage is underscored through a repeated use of the word *Geschlecht*. Maria recognizes Elisabeth to be of the same family lineage (I.2.167-76), whereas Burleigh sees Maria as part of the House of Lorraine (II.3.1254-94). Talbot refers to *Geschlecht* in a much broader sense to incorporate humankind (II.3.1323-9). Traditionally, the lineage is determined through the father, which is why the existence of a male heir was so important to Henry VIII.

Throughout the text, the word *Geschlecht* appears a number of times in its meaning of ‘gender’ as well, thereby tying together issues of lineage and gender. Each mention of *Geschlecht* as gender is associated with the female gender. The French Ambassador refers to Elisabeth’s “reizende[s] Geschlecht” (II.2.1132). Elisabeth speaks of *Geschlecht* in connection with her argument against male dominance over the female sex (*Geschlecht*) (II.2.1183-4) and then again with her vehement response to Talbot’s comment of women as weak (II.3.1374-5). Maria also speaks of the female gender when referring to *Geschlecht* (V.9.3803). In another comment made by Maria, the two meanings of *Geschlecht* collide: “Elisabeth ist meines Stammes, meines / Geschlechts und Ranges” (I.2.174-5). The fact that the female gender and lineage are closely intertwined hints at a possibility of matrilineal succession, which, in history, becomes reality as Maria’s son, James VI, heir to Maria’s Scottish throne, inherits Elisabeth’s throne after her death.

II. Language at the Border – The Temporality of Meaning

Throughout *Maria Stuart*, the androgynous Queen Elisabeth utilizes language to forcefully insert herself into male discourse. She resignifies various objects and events by inserting temporal and linguistic elements into the meaning of traditionally silently understood moments. Thus, an engagement ring does not mean engagement, a signature on a death warrant does not mean death, and the royal countenance does not bring mercy to the condemned.[47] Within an attempt at female discourse, the objects and events in and of themselves no longer carry meaning, but are dependent on a speech act to be issued at a later date. Austin defined a speech act, or illocutionary act, as "to *say* something is to *do* something" (12). For the discourse in *Maria Stuart* this means that the objects and events no longer 'do' anything. Instead, the action is deferred to a later time and is attached to Elisabeth's speech act.

This new language defined in terms of the feminine is most clearly contained through the simple act of the men refusing to understand the resignification. They hold to the traditional meanings, which, in the case of the death warrant, lead to a disastrous ending. This is not to suggest that Maria would have otherwise survived, but the text intimates that the failure to understand Elisabeth's language is just as controversial as her explosion of male discourse. In the end, the text suggests that Elisabeth and her language are only contained through her own pettiness and vanity. Elisabeth's sexual jealously drives her to meet with Maria, which then leads to her complete speechlessness and even 'death.' However, this containment of Elisabeth and female discourse remain

[47] In "The Stage and The State," Hart very briefly mentions the resignification of the ring and death warrant (103).

unsuccessful, as Elisabeth is ‘resurrected’ in the fourth act and proceeds to resignify the death warrant.

The Ring ≠ Engagement

By inserting a temporal element of delay, Queen Elisabeth challenges the traditional systems of meaning in several instances, often privileging language over the visual to the benefit of achieving her goals. The first occurrence takes place when the French ambassador, Bellievre, (along with her own councilmen) repeatedly presses her to finally make a commitment to his master’s entreaties to marriage:

> Erhabne Majestät von Engelland,
> Vergönne, daß wir unsern Urlaub nehmen
> Und Monsieur, unsern königlichen Herrn,
> Mit der ersehnten Freudenpost beglücken.
> Ihn hat des Herzens heiße Ungeduld
> Nicht in Paris gelassen, er erwartet
> Zu Amiens die Boten seines Glücks,
> Und bis nach Calais reichen seine Posten,
> Das Jawort, das dein königlicher Mund
> Aussprechen wird, mit Flügelschnelligkeit
> Zu seinem trunknen Ohre hinzutragen.
> […]
> Nur dein Versprechen gib uns, Königin,
> In frohern Tagen folge die Erfüllung. (II.2.1134-44, 53-4)

Elisabeth relents, removes a ring from her hand, and gives it to Bellievre. Each of the men understands the ring within the traditional system of meaning as engagement – an understanding that requires no words, but carries the meaning within itself. However, Elisabeth introduces a verbal element. She declares, “es ist / *Noch* keine Kette, bindet mich noch nicht, / Doch kann ein Reif draus werden, der mich bindet” (II.2.1212-4). With that, the ring no longer performs a meaning of engagement, but instead the engagement is linked with a speech act Elisabeth will issue at a later date. The ring

becomes nothing more than a scrap of metal, for its meaning has been displaced to a later time.[48] Yet despite the Queen's proclamation of the ring's destroyed signification, it quickly becomes clear that meaning is a construct of both speaker and listener. The ambassador and her councilmen misunderstand her. Her words carry no weight. Her order is ignored and each understands the ring to mean engagement, as evidenced by the fact that, from this point on, the men no longer insist that she commit herself to marriage. By using language to her advantage, Elisabeth remains uncommitted and, at the same time, puts off further discussion of an engagement.

Re-Envisioning Mercy

The English queen also resignifies the traditional meaning of the mercy brought by the royal countenance. The resignification occurs in the third and central act, in which everything appears to be reversed. In a conventional understanding, the royal countenance brings mercy to the convicted. Burleigh immediately recognizes the traditional outcome of such a meeting:

> Sie ist verurteilt! Unterm Beile liegt
> Ihr Haupt. Unwürdig ist's der Majestät,
> Das Haupt zu sehen, das dem Tod geweiht ist.
> Das Urteil kann nicht mehr vollzogen werden,
> Wenn sich die Königin ihr genahet hat,
> Denn Gnade bringt die königliche Nähe. (II.4.1522-7)

Because Burleigh understands this traditional meaning, he discourages Elisabeth from agreeing to meet the convicted queen. Leicester also understands the traditional

[48] Hart makes a similar observation: "The Queen of England makes a semiotic adjustment that alters the character of an ancient token of betrothal and marriage – a token ring that does not betoken what rings betoken, but could do so sometime in the future – and she does so with full awareness of the vulnerability of 'fixed' signification before sovereign power" (*Friedrich Schiller* 51).

significance of the royal countenance. As he later tells Mortimer, he hopes this step will bind the hands of the queen, forcing her to free Maria:

> Vielleicht, daß ich durch List sie überrede,
> Das Angesicht der Gegnerin zu sehn,
> Und dieser Schritt muß ihr die Hände binden.
> Burleigh hat Recht. Das Urteil kann nicht mehr
> Vollzogen werden, wenn sie sie gesehn. (II.8.1902-6).

Elisabeth never verbally rejects the signification behind such a meeting. However, she also never confirms her acknowledgement of its traditional import. Her conversation with Leicester in Act II indicates, instead, that she seeks visual confirmation of her physical superiority over her rival:

> Und ist's denn wirklich wahr, daß sie so schön ist?
> So oft mußt' ich die Larve rühmen hören,
> Wohl möcht' ich wissen, was zu glauben ist.
> Gemälde schmeicheln, Schilderungen lügen,
> Nur meinen eignen Augen würd' ich traun. (II.9.1995-9)

In her silence, we can read a rejection of the idea that the royal "Angesicht" – the literal "looking at" or "looked at" – means mercy: in other words, that the death of the convicted will be delayed. At no time does Elisabeth consider this meeting to have any significant impact on Maria's execution.

The delay of death Elisabeth refuses to recognize in this act paradoxically seems to drive Elisabeth to her own "death." In an apparent role reversal, Elisabeth relies increasingly on her sense of sight and ultimately becomes speechless, while Maria, who initially appears humble and weak, becomes increasingly arrogant and verbose. In the presence of the womanly Maria, Elisabeth appears to become more feminine, as indicated in her increasing lack of speech. However, even as Elisabeth initially does leave the verbal dialogue, she does not become a passive object. Instead, her words are replaced

with potent looks and visual daggers. From the start, "*sie fixiert mit den Augen die Maria*"[49] und her look is "*gespannt*[]". Maria comments on the Queen's "Eisesblick" (III.4.2275) and later calls her a basilisk – that legendary reptile reputed to bring death with its gaze. She later gazes at Maria "*mit einem Blick stolzer Verachtung*" and after Maria begins to insult her, Elisabeth "*schießt wütende Blicke auf Marien*."

After becoming speech-less, the Queen loses her spot on the stage, only to reappear when she has regained her voice. Maria's declaration that she is the proper King of England silences Elisabeth. The English queen does not speak for the remainder of Act III. Instead, she immediately leaves the stage. In her absence, the stage becomes a place of confusion. Mortimer reveals his plan to save Maria and seeks physical intimacy with the Scottish queen: "Wenn ich dich , Heißgeliebte, umfange – / […] An dieser Brust, / Auf diesem Liebe atmenden Munde" (III.6.2539-41). Maria's renowned sensuousness is turned against her. Mortimer believes he has earned her body because of his sacrifice. His passionate advances are interrupted by his uncle's panicked arrival:

> Mortimer. Was gibt's? Was ist geschehn?
> Paulet. Die Königin!
> Verfluchte Hände! Teuflisches Erkühnen!
> Mortimer. Die Königin! Welche Königin?
> Paulet. Von England!
> Sie ist ermordet auf der Londner Straßen! (III.7.2601-4)

We do not immediately learn that the assassination attempt has failed. Mortimer's fellow conspirator arrives, but is at first too incoherent to set the record straight:

> Mortimer. Bin ich im Wahnwitz? Kam nicht eben jemand
> Vorbei und rief, die Königin sei ermordet?
> Nein, nein, mir träumte nur. Ein Fieberwahn
> Bringt mir als wahr und wirklich vor den Sinn,
> Was die Gedanken gräßlich mir erfüllt.
> Wer kommt? Es ist Okell'. So schreckenvoll!

[49] Act III, Scene 4, p. 621. The subsequent stage directions can be found in Act III, Scene 4, p. 621-8.

Okelly. (*hereinstürzend*). Flieht, Mortimer! Flieht. Alles ist verloren.
Mortimer. Was ist verloren?
Okelly. Fragt nicht lange. Denkt
Auf schnelle Flucht.
Mortimer. Was gibt's denn?
Okelly. Sauvage führte
Den Streich, der Rasende.
Mortimer. So ist es wahr?
Okelly. Wahr, wahr! O rettet Euch!
Mortimer. Sie ist ermordet,
Und auf den Thron von England steigt Maria!
Okelly. Ermordet ! Wer sagt das?
Mortimer. Ihr selbst!
Okelly. Sie lebt!
Und ich und Ihr, wir alle sind des Todes.
Mortimer. Sie lebt!
Okelly. Der Stoß ging fehl, der Mantel fing ihn auf
Und Shrewsbury entwaffnete den Mörder.
Mortimer. Sie lebt! (III.8.2605-20)

Although we eventually learn that Elisabeth has survived the assassination attempt, she is considered to be dead by her friends and enemies alike over the course of several scenes.

Elisabeth's silence is not represented as a dumb woman on stage, but rather she is completely absent from the scenes. The English queen remains silent for over 400 lines and does not speak again until well into the Fourth Act. We hear of her presumed death and shortly thereafter that she is alive. For the first and only time in the play, an incident of Elisabeth's weakness is not brought to center stage. We do not see the assassination attempt. Elisabeth as the passive object is never displayed to the audience. Metaphorically reborn, the English queen emerges from 'death' and once again enters the male dominated discourse at court with her resignification of the death warrant.

The Speech Act of Death

As with the ring, Elisabeth employs linguistic gymnastics to achieve her aim of eliminating her greatest threat without the responsibility of being the executioner. In the signing of the death warrant, Elisabeth introduces both speech and time into a conventionally silent – and immediate – act. The signing of the death warrant (*Todesurteil*) traditionally means more than both the English and German terms suggest, for it is neither a warrant, a document certifying or authorizing something, nor is it technically the death sentence – *Todesurteil*. The latter was previously decided by the court, which found Maria guilty and pronounced the death sentence. Instead this piece of paper, repeatedly referred to in the stage directions as merely "die Schrift," means death, and the word Davison uses for it, "Blutbefehl" (IV.11.3298), comes closer in its actual meaning. For although the courts pronounced that Maria is to be put to death for treason, only the Queen's signature on the actual document makes the death sentence effective. In other words, an oral proclamation of guilt and punishment is meaningless without the written and therefore visual confirmation and order that the execution is to be carried out. Thus, traditionally Elisabeth's signature on the *Schrift* signifies the end of Maria. It is the execution itself on paper with only a shift in time between the strokes of the pen on the page and the stroke of the executioner's axe on Maria's neck. Davison recognizes this significance. He points out that there is no possibility of delay: "Hier ist kein Aufschub: jene hat gelebt, / Wenn ich dies Blatt aus meinen Händen gebe" (IV.11.3277-8).

In the same way Elisabeth devalues the ring through delay, she blunts the executioner's axe by refusing to recognize the traditional signification of the death warrant. The stroke of her pen issues only ink and not blood. She confirms the non-

specific status of the paper by ordering Davison to take back “dieses Blatt” (IV.11.3264) and emphasizes its insignificance: “ein Blatt Papier entscheidet / Noch nicht, ein Name tötet nicht” (IV.11.3267-8). Even though Davison proclaims, “*Dein* Name, Königin, unter *dieser* Schrift / Entscheidet alles, tötet” (IV.11.3269-70), he repeatedly insists on a verbal confirmation of the meaning of her signature. Instead, she remains speech-less and confers language to the paper, the name of which “speaks” its function: “Sein Name spricht es aus” (IV.11.3299). Yet even this proclamation is unsatisfactory, because the name it now speaks is ambiguous. Its hovers between “dieses Blatt” and “Blutbefehl” making it neither and rendering it silent. Its silence, however, does not penetrate beyond this moment between Elisabeth and Davison. Her councilmen, Burleigh and Leicester – the same men who refused to understand the designification of the ring – have no interest in learning of the paper’s absence of meaning. When Burleigh comes for the death warrant, Davison attempts to convey the new meaning conferred on the paper. However, the older statesman is unable to conceive of such a change and insists on the death warrant’s traditional meaning:

Davison. Sie verließ mich
In heft’gem Zorn. O ratet mir! Helft mir !
Reißt mich aus dieser Höllenangst des Zweifels.
Hier ist das Urteil - Es ist unterschrieben.
Burleigh. *(hastig).* Ist es? O gebt! Gebt her!
Davison. Ich darf nicht.
Burleigh. Was?
Davison. Sie hat mir Ihren Wunsch noch nicht deutlich -
Burleigh. Nicht deutlich! Sie hat unterschrieben. Gebt! (IV.12.3335-41)

Burleigh rejects the resignification of the death warrant and insists on remaining within the traditional male discourse, despite the wishes of his Queen.

Just as with the ring, there is a gap between meaning and intention. Elisabeth employs language to resignify the death warrant; however, her intention is not to spare Maria's life, but to remove her participation in the execution. While the ethical signification of the Queen's master sleight of hand is troubling, it only occurs in a system of male discourse, which refuses to recognize the voice of woman that dares to challenge traditional meaning. In effect, the men were disobedient because they did not follow the Queen's orders, while at the same time they did fulfill her wishes.

Through her use of language, Elisabeth breaks through the barriers of femininity. However, the newly created female discourse is only successful as long as there are listeners willing to participate. In *Maria Stuart*, only Davison appears acutely aware of the necessity to retrain his hearing. There is also the suggestion that Leicester and Burleigh have understood Elisabeth's resignification of the royal countenance, for neither questions her decision to sign the death warrant. Elisabeth may remain constrained within the patriarchal structure, yet her language proves powerful as it allows her to obtain her political goals, even as that language does violence to those around her.

III. Aesthetics at the Border

The *Grenzfigur* of aesthetics in *Maria Stuart* functions as a limit. Maria is contained through aesthetics, which is, according to Kant, that which pertains to the senses. With a confusion of the senses, a "myth of Maria" is created to neutralize the transgressive border figure Maria and contain her within 19th-century acceptable standards of femininity. Through the myth, Maria is constructed as innocent, angelic,

otherworldly, an emblem of the sublime, a *schöne Seele*. Even as the sense of sight is emphasized throughout the play,[50] we are repeatedly encouraged to 'see' something that is not there. Our sight becomes conditioned through reports of Maria so that when she physically appears, we can only 'see' what we have heard. The real, the physical Maria becomes inconsequential. Only in the final act do the real and the mythical correspond. There, Maria herself is invested in her myth creation and effectively stages herself as the angelic heroine, the sublime creature, the *schöne Seele* still celebrated by literary critics.

Creating the "Myth of Maria"

The "myth of Maria" is created from a delay in the senses: the delay between hearing about and then seeing Maria. Mielke correctly argues that we "*see* the unfortunate Queen Maria, but we only *hear* of her past vices" (55), with the emphasis being on the fact that her crimes are not played out on stage. Yet, this statement does not go far enough. Even instances in which Maria might show weakness are not presented to the audience. Instead, her close confidants, who have a vested interest in creating a specific myth about Maria, narrate these instances. In each instance, Maria first "appears" in verbal descriptions before she is physically present on stage. These reports then condition what we see.

[50] The core 'sense' of the drama is sight with *sehen*, *blicken*, *schauen* and similar words appearing frequently throughout the text. The sense of sight is emphasized through Mortimer's report of his conversion, for he is convinced of the truth of Catholicism first by the image of God presented to him in the Catholic Church and then underscored by the image of Maria Stuart. Focus on the act of seeing is accentuated further by Maria's insistence on the visual. She sends her image to Leicester to remind him of his promise. In addition, she is convinced she can persuade Elisabeth to free her, if only she could meet the queen face-to-face.

The start of the play has Maria's servant Hannah endeavoring to defend the honor of her mistress as the prison guard, Paulet, accuses the incarcerated queen of attempting to instigate a civil war in England:

> Doch wußte sie aus diesen engen Banden
> Den Arm zu recken in die Welt, die Fackel
> Des Bürgerkrieges in das Reich zu schleudern
> Und gegen unsere Königin, die Gott
> Erhalte, Meuchelrotten zu bewaffnen.
> Erregte sie aus diesen Mauern nicht
> Den Bösewicht Parry und den Babington
> Zu der verfluchten Tat des Königsmords?
> Hielt dieses Eisengitter sie zurück,
> Das edle Herz des Norfolk zu umstricken? (I.1.64-73)

However, Hannah refuses to acknowledge any of Paulet's charges and instead focuses on how Maria has been treated:

> Die Unglückselige, die seit dem Tag,
> Da sie den Fuß gesetzt in dieses Land,
> Als eine Hilfeflehende, Vertriebne
> Bei der Verwandten Schutz zu suchen kam,
> Sich wider Völkerrecht und Königswürde
> Gefangen sieht, in enger Kerkerhaft
> Der Jugend schöne Jahre muß vertrauern (I.1.86-92)

Hannah's words invoke pity for the "Unglückselige," the "Hilfeflehende," the "Vertriebne," creating a veil of innocence and lamenting the unjustified actions against the queen. She protests the unjust treatment they have received – "O schimpfliche Gewalt, die wir erleiden!" (I.1.21). Hannah evokes pity by calling Maria the "Jammervolle," the "Unglückselige," who has done nothing to deserve harsh treatment from the English (I.1.25; 86) and who certainly does not deserve to be "lebendig eingemauert" (I.1.118). When Maria does then enter the stage, veiled and carrying a crucifix, she personifies the myth of an unjustly wronged woman.

After the initial presentation, Maria is continuously introduced by others either through words or through her image. The image of the beautiful Maria arouses the sacrificial fervor of Mortimer (I.6.503-12) and a desperate love in Leicester (II.8.1725-6). Once Mortimer sees Maria's image, he is willing to sacrifice his life to free her. Maria's image overpowers him:

> Eines Tages,
> Als ich mich umsah in des Bischofs Wohnung,
> Fiel mir ein weiblich Bildnis in die Augen
> Von rührend wundersamem Reiz; gewaltig
> Ergriff es mich in meiner tiefsten Seele,
> Und, des Gefühls nicht mächtig, stand ich da. (I.6.501-6)

Mortimer's passionate account encourages the reader to be similarly swept away by the beauty of the queen and to be willing to unquestionably believe in her innocence. The young man's affectations awaken a heroic spirit as he brushes aside the harsh fate of the heroes, who have gone before him:

> Mich schrecken
> Nicht Babingtons, nicht Tichburns blut'ge Häupter,
> Auf Londons Brücke warnend aufgesteckt,
> Nicht das Verderben der unzähl'gen andern,
> Die ihren Tod in gleichem Wagstück fanden;
> Sie fanden auch darin den ew'gen Ruhm,
> Und Glück schon ist's, für Eure Rettung sterben. (I.6.654-60)

Mortimer's senses are first overwhelmed by the opulence of the Catholic Church, and then he is presented with the image of Maria and the stories of her rightful claim to the throne – all of which lead the young man to sacrifice himself for her freedom. Mortimer cannot see past the "myth of Maria," for her beauty alone convinces him that the myth is true and that she is wrongly imprisoned.[51]

[51] Of course, according to the Catholic Church, Maria's claim to the throne is justified.

The effect of Maria's image is repeated when Mortimer delivers Maria's letter to Leicester. The reaction is visceral and verbal. As Mortimer hands Leicester the letter, he announces who authored the letter. The stage directions read that Leicester "*schrickt zusammen und greift hastig darnach*" (II.8). He opens the letter and exclaims, "Was seh ich! Ach ! Es ist / Ihr Bild! (*Küßt es und betrachtet es mit stummem Entzücken.*)" (II.8.1725-6). Maria's image functions not only as a tool to secure Leicester's involvement but it also becomes the token of trust that joins the two men in their mutual cause. [52] At the same time, it functions as a tool to secure our affections and as a token of trust in her cause of innocence.

The image of Maria is an important part in the myth creation. This becomes glaringly evident in the final act, when Hannah relates to the other servants Maria's "edler Fassung" when she learns of the death sentence and that she will die "als eine Königin und Heldin" (V.1.3377-80). Although disappointed that the sounds heard from below were not those of her rescuer, but the construction of her place of execution, Hannah insists that Maria did nothing to dishonor herself:

> Kein Merkmal bleicher Furcht, kein Wort der Klage
> Entehrte meine Königin - Dann erst,
> Als sie Lord Leicesters schändlichen Verrat
> Vernahm, das unglückselige Geschick
> Des werten Jünglings, der sich ihr geopfert,
> Des alten Ritters tiefen Jammer sah,
> Dem seine letzte Hoffnung starb durch sie –
> Da flossen ihre Tränen: nicht das eigne Schicksal,
> Der fremde Jammer preßte sie ihr ab. (V.1.3409-17)

Instead, as Hannah eagerly relates, in her darkest hour of need, Maria can only think of others. When Maria then arrives in regal attire, she becomes the bodily representation of

[52] "Und zur Gewähr, daß ich's bin, die Euch sendet, / Bringt ihm dies Schreiben. Es enthält mein Bildnis" (I.6.673-4).

the mythical woman described by Hannah. The entire scene is staged to perfection in representation of a woman worth worshipping:

> *[Maria] ist weiß und festlich gekleidet, am Halse trägt sie an einer Kette von kleinen Kugeln ein Agnus Dei, ein Rosenkranz hängt am Gürtel herab, sie hat ein Kruzifix in der Hand und ein Diadem in den Haaren, ihr großer schwarzer Schleier ist zurückgeschlagen. Bei ihrem Eintritt weichen die Anwesenden zu bei den Seiten zurück und drücken den heftigsten Schmerz aus. Melvil ist mit einer unwillkürlichen Bewegung auf die Knie gesunken.* (V.6)

Maria dressed the part of a queenly martyr prepared to die for her faith as indicated by the religious artifacts, the Agnus Dei, the rosary, and the crucifix. Her servants' 'involuntary' kneeling and 'most tempestuous' wailing heighten the effect of the scene. Maria's status as mythical saint is further confirmed through eloquent farewells and speeches of forgiveness. Maria admonishes her servants to rejoice with her:

> Was klagt ihr? Warum weint ihr? Freuen solltet
> Ihr euch mit mir, daß meiner Leiden Ziel
> Nun endlich naht. (V.6.3480-2)

Embodying otherworldly grace and holiness, Maria graciously blesses friend and enemy alike (V.6.3520-8). She even apologizes to Elisabeth:

> Der Königin von England
> Bringt meinen schwesterlichen Gruß - Sagt ihr,
> Daß ich ihr meinen Tod von ganzem Herzen
> Vergebe, meine Heftigkeit von gestern
> Ihr reuevoll abbitte - Gott erhalte sie
> Und schenk ihr eine glückliche Regierung! (V.8.3781-6)

As Maria walks toward her execution, she heightens the drama through a last declaration:

> Nun hab ich nichts mehr
> Auf dieser Welt - *(Sie nimmt das Kruzifix und küßt es.)*
> Mein Heiland! Mein Erlöser!
> Wie du am Kreuz die Arme ausgespannt,
> So breite sie jetzt aus, mich zu empfangen. (V.9.3815-8)

The reference to the cross, Maria's call out to her "Heiland," and the presence of the crucifix overdetermine the myth of Maria's innocence by encouraging a parallel between Maria and Christ.

More than any other myth narrative in this text, the final one pronounced by Leicester is the most suspect, as he describes an event he cannot see, but can only distantly hear. Thus, the final "myth of Maria" is one that takes place entirely within language and no longer requires the physical presence of the mythical object:

> Wie? Fesselt mich ein Gott an diesen Boden?
> Muß ich anhören, was mir anzuschauen graut?
> Die Stimme des Dechanten - Er ermahnet sie –
> - Sie unterbricht ihn - Horch! - Laut betet sie -
> Mit fester Stimme - Es wird still - Ganz still!
> Nur schluchzen hör ich und die Weiber weinen –
> Sie wird entkleidet - Horch! Der Schemel wird
> Gerückt - Sie kniet aufs Kissen - legt das Haupt -
> *Nachdem er die letzten Worte mit steigender Angst gesprochen und eine Weile innegehalten, sieht man ihn plötzlich mit einer zuckenden Bewegung zusammenfahren und ohnmächtig niedersinken, zugleich erschallt von unten herauf ein dumpfes Getöse von Stimmen, welches lange forthallt.* (V.10.3868-75)

Leicester narrates the sounds he hears coming from Maria's execution. However, he also makes mention of things he cannot possibly hear. The text explains that he is one floor up and two closed doors away from the place of execution. Yet, he can still somehow hear every word that is spoken. He can hear Maria being undressed, then kneeling down on a pillow, and then laying her head on the executioner's block. At the same time, although the audience apparently cannot hear any of these movements, strangely, we can later hear the cries of the spectators after Maria has been beheaded. In the final extension of the "myth of Maria," Leicester stops his narration as he becomes the physical representation of Maria. Instead of seeing or hearing about the chop of the axe, we see Leicester "*mit einer zuckenden Bewegung*" and then in the place of the severed head, we see Leicester

"*ohnmächtig niedersinken.*" The myth becomes literally incorporated into one of its followers.[53]

At the same time, Leicester's account of Maria's execution demonstrates the confusion of the senses invoked in the "myth of Maria." Just as we learn all we need to know about Maria from the reports in her absence, making her presence inconsequential, this final scene stages the insignificance of Maria's actual presence. Leicester's account of something unseen, something imagined suggests that each report of Maria is equally fictional. This scene simultaneously demonstrates the height of the "myth of Maria" as well as its fictional creation.

Debunking the Myth

The manipulation of the senses in the creation of the "myth of Maria" is quite effective, as evidenced by the positive view of Maria both in the text and in much of scholarship.[54] However, its effect is all the more surprising, given that the text consciously comments on this manipulation, thereby undermining the attempt to contain Maria through the myth creation. Not only are issues such as *Schein* and *Sein* thematized throughout this work, but the creators of the myth also explicitly show that they are, in fact, producing fiction. In a conversation between Hannah and Maria, the queen,

[53] Hart suggests that "this replacement of the victim with her former lover is also a very conspicuously overdetermined instance of the indirect representation of the supersensuous' as it conceals and effaces the scene of execution" (*Friedrich Schiller* 51).

[54] Not all critics have unquestioningly accepted such a reading. For them, Maria clearly demonstrates "all-too-human" characteristics even in the final moments of her life, which invalidates a reading of the sublime (Reeve 132) and calls her "apparent transformation" into question (Kontje, "Sublime" 89). While most scholars compare and contrast the two queens, to the detriment of Elisabeth, the Virgin Queen is not universally seen in a bad light. Kontje argues that "neither [woman] is morally superior to the other, and neither stands closer to ultimate truth" (89). Instead, Maria "puts on a better show, so to speak, as she stages her execution as an effective melodrama" (89).

frustrated at the injustice of her imprisonment, decides to reinterpret her purpose for being there as the just punishment for her past crimes in Scotland:

> Frischblutend steigt die längst vergebne Schuld
> Aus ihrem leichtbedeckten Grab empor!
> Des Gatten racheforderndes Gespenst
> Schickt keines Messedieners Glocke, kein
> Hochwürdiges in Priesters Hand zur Gruft. (I.4.286-90)

Maria considers herself guilty of at least her husband's death. However, Hannah repeatedly seeks to deflect any criticism of her mistress by denying the queen any responsibility for her actions and knowledge of the murder of Lord Darnley, even as Maria insists on her guilt:

> Kennedy. Nicht Ihr habt ihn gemordet ! Andre taten's!
> Maria. Ich wußte drum. Ich ließ die Tat geschehn
> Und lockt' ihn schmeichelnd in das Todesnetz.
> Kennedy. Die Jugend mildert Eure Schuld. Ihr wart
> So zarten Alters noch.
> Maria. So zart - und lud
> Die schwere Schuld auf mein so junges Leben.
> Kennedy. Ihr wart durch blutige Beleidigung
> Gereizt und durch des Mannes Übermut,
> Den Eure Liebe aus der Dunkelheit,
> Wie eine Götterhand, hervorgezogen,
> Den Ihr durch Euer Brautgemach zum Throne
> Geführt, mit Eurer blühenden Person
> Beglückt und Eurer angestammten Krone.
> […]
> Ihr rächtet blutig nur die blut'ge Tat.
> Maria. Und blutig wird sie auch an mir sich rächen,
> Du sprichst mein Urteil aus, da du mich tröstest. (I.4.291-303; 320-2)

Thus, the myth of the innocent Maria is evoked and not even her actual counterpart on stage can dissuade her loyal servant from propagating this myth.

Shortly before Maria's execution, an additional scene reveals more of the myth construct. There, two of her servants, Melvil and Burgoyn, are concerned with how Maria appears to the English. Melvil's first question about the queen demonstrates his concern

with her appearance: “Nahm sie die Todespost mit Fassung auf?” (V.1.3381). Maria’s doctor, Burgoyn, openly admits his doubts to the other servants that Maria will be able to remain strong from inner willpower and is concerned that the English enemy might see beyond the façade:

> Sie fühlt sich stark, sie täuscht ihr Heldenmut,
> Und keiner Speise glaubt sie zu bedürfen;
> Doch ihrer wartet noch ein schwerer Kampf,
> Und ihre Feinde sollen sich nicht rühmen,
> Daß Furcht des Todes ihre Wangen bleichte,
> Wenn die Natur aus Schwachheit unterliegt. (V.3.3448-53)

Both men are very concerned that Maria will appear weak or dejected and they contemplate ways to disguise the truth.

The “myth of Maria” reveals itself as myth through Maria’s own words as well. In particular, her innocence of intrigue is called into question as she explicitly states several times that she believes herself to be the lawful ruler of England.[55] The Scottish queen first makes her thoughts explicit to Burleigh when he challenges her past attempts to claim the throne of England,

> Warum soll ich’s leugnen?
> Ja, ich gesteh’s, daß ich die Hoffnung *nährte,*
> zwei edle Nationen unterm Schatten
> Des Ölbaums frei und fröhlich zu vereinen. (I.7.828-31)

[55] According to the historical record, Maria Stuart was unquestionably involved in the conspiracy with Babington. Schiller chose to change this element in his text, making her only admittedly guilty of her second husband’s death. However, the discrepancy with the historical record seems to be lurking beneath Maria’s “innocent” surface throughout the play. In addition, Maria’s carefully constructed appearances become even more apparent when her actual execution is considered. Beyond the fact that it was a very bloody affair, when the executioner picked up her head by the hair to show the people their enemy was now defeated – as was a typical practice after beheadings – her head falls out of his hand as it becomes detached from the hairpiece Maria wore (Hart, “The Stage” 99). Mainland remarks that Maria is guilty, since Elisabeth’s assassination is logically “a possible result of [Maria’s] plea for help among the foreign powers,” and even though she “has vigorously denied the intention of assassination, she has cherished designs which might have had that end” (82). Wells disagrees with Mainland. He argues that “if [Maria’s] appeal to the Catholic powers to free her increases the danger to Elisabeth, the latter can meet it by liberating, rather than executing, her rival” (“Villainy”106).

In her conversation with Mortimer, Maria reveals a second time, and this time more forcefully, her belief that she is the rightful Queen of England:

> Mortimer Ich weiß nunmehr, daß Euer gutes Recht
> An England Euer ganzes Unrecht ist,
> Daß Euch dies Reich als Eigentum gehört,
> Worin Ihr schuldlos als Gefangne schmachtet.
> Maria. O dieses unglücksvolle Recht! Es ist
> Die einz'ge Quelle aller meiner Leiden.
> Mortimer […] Aufstehen würde Englands ganze Jugend,
> Kein Schwert in seiner Scheide müßig bleiben
> Und die Empörung mit gigantischem Haupt
> Durch diese Friedensinsel schreiten, sähe
> Der Brite seine Königin!
> Maria. Wohl ihr,
> Säh jeder Brite sie mit Euren Augen! (I.6.530-5; 556-61)

Finally, Maria's final speech to Elisabeth leaves no question as to Maria's unwillingness to ever relinquish her claim to England's throne: "regierte Recht, so läget *Ihr* vor mir/ Im Staube jetzt, denn *ich* bin Euer König" (III.4.2450-1). In these few words, she reveals that she believes herself to be the rightful ruler of England. Thus, her declared innocence in the various plots to remove Elisabeth from the throne can be read as part of the myth of innocence created about her. Through these various comments, it is abundantly clear that Maria did not enter England simply as "eine Bittende, / das heil'ge Gastrecht fordernd, in den Arm / der blutsverwandten Königin mich werfend" (I.7.939-41), but instead, that Elisabeth and the people of England have rightly judged her to be a usurper of power.

The "myth of Maria" culminates in the theatricality of the final scene. As Kontje suggests, Maria is "putting on an act" and in the end, she "canonizes herself" ("Sublime" 94). To begin with, Maria's attire should be more correctly categorized as a costume worn as part of the theatrical performance. At the start of Schiller's drama, as Maria's hidden jewels are confiscated, Maria exclaims, "diese Flitter machen / Die Königin nicht

aus" (I.2.154-5). Yet, in this very scene where she claims to have nothing left in this world, she is adorned with various religious artifacts, a queenly tiara, and a large black veil.

In addition, Maria's lines appear to be rehearsed, heightening the sense of theatricality. As Maria proclaims her final wishes, she is so caught up in her theatrical performance that she interrupts Burleigh and speaks out of turn.

> Maria. Und weil mein Leichnam
> Nicht in geweihter Erde ruhen soll,
> So dulde man, daß dieser treue Diener
> Mein Herz nach Frankreich bringe zu den Meinen.
> – Ach! Es war immer dort!
> Burleigh. Es soll geschehn!
> Habt Ihr noch sonst –
> Maria. Der Königin von England
> Bringt meinen schwesterlichen Gruß - Sagt ihr,
> Daß ich ihr meinen Tod von ganzem Herzen
> Vergebe, meine Heftigkeit von gestern
> Ihr reuevoll abbitte - Gott erhalte sie
> Und schenk ihr eine glückliche Regierung! (V.8.3776-86)

This interruption does more than reveal the theatricality of Maria's performance: it also suggests that the words are part of the theatrics. Maria's sweeping acts of forgiveness are lines correctly recited to further bolster the "myth of Maria."[56] Finally, the Scottish queen attempts to hide her emotions from even her attendants. After saying her farewells to her ladies in waiting, the stage directions read, "*sie wendet sich schnell von ihnen*" (V.7). For the most part, the "myth of Maria" has been very successful. Only more recently have literary critics begun to unravel the myth to investigate the woman it conceals. Maria moves from the ideal to the real, from the private to the public.

[56] "The most fundamental deviation from history occurs at the end of Schiller's drama. In Robertson's account there is no moving confession scene or promise to fulfill Mary's last requests, and Mary does not convey her forgiveness of Elizabeth. […] All of the elements that Schiller incorporated in order to underscore Maria's Christian grace and beautiful soul are entirely invented" (Short 124).

IV. The Politics of Necessity

In a political analysis of Schiller's drama, the various strands of containment come together to reveal the ultimate goal of containment: the removal of woman from the public sphere. *Maria Stuart* attempts to contain the emancipated androgynous queens: Maria, enshrined in a myth, is removed from the public stage. Her political actions, as well as her own act of personal revenge, are largely ignored. By contrast, the attempt to neutralize Elisabeth's political acumen is accomplished by shifting the motivation of her actions – primarily the signing of the death warrant – from one of political necessity to personal revenge. With that, Schiller's play intimates that violence and danger are linked with woman in the public sphere. Moreover, the play is informed by the political world of Schiller's time. The play traces the change from rule by divine right to parliamentarian monarchy,[57] which parallels the change in government from absolutism to democracy in the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century precipitated by the French Revolution. With the regicide in *Maria Stuart*, the Reign of Terror also looms large in the background, connecting violence with revolution. Thus, the motivational shift from public to private combined with the violence emanating from revolution suggests an inherent danger of women's emancipation to women in particular and to society as a whole.

[57] Mücke discusses this transition in government through the change in the use of the spectacle: There was first "the old-style spectacle of tyrannical power, which is displayed through the sovereign's body in the public theater of royal pomp or through public torture and execution. What distinguishes Schiller's *Maria Stuart* from the old-style spectacle is that it is set in an altogether new situation, one in which the sovereign's absolute power has already vanished" (94).

Political Realism

In order to better understand the political actions of the queens, I will briefly outline the framework of political necessity that appears to be functioning in Schiller's play. Niccolò Machiavelli first postulated the politics of necessity in the 16th century in *Il Principe*, which describes the shift from political Idealism to political Realism. In this political treatise, Machiavelli does not promote evil, tyrannical leadership. Instead, he recognizes that the human condition does not engender perfect humans and therefore, a good leader must "be so prudent as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices that would take his state from him and to be on guard against those that do not" (62).[58] He also posits that justice is relative: "The rules and laws that exist are those made by governments or other powers acting under necessity, and they must be obeyed out of the same necessity. Whatever is necessary may be called just and reasonable" (Mansfield xi).

For Schiller's text, two kinds of political necessity detailed in *Il Principe* are of importance: deception and murder. In the chapter on appearances, Machiavelli recommends that the ideal prince be a "great pretender and dissembler"[59] and that it is not necessary for a ruler to possess all good human qualities. This, he adds, is not possible because of the human condition. Instead, a prince needs only to appear to have good human qualities. For, "men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few. Every sees how you appear, few touch what you are" (71).[60] In addition, Machiavelli warns against "too much mercy" and

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[58] "[…] gli è necessario essere tanto purdente, che sappila fuggire l'infamia die quelli vizi che gli torrebbero lo Stato: e da quellie che non gliene tolgano, guardarsi, se egli è possible" (285). Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Il Principe.* Ed. L. Arthur Burd. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

[59] "[…] un gran simulatore e dissimulatore" (304).

[60] "[…] perchè gli uomini in universal giudicano più agli occhi che alle mani, perchè tocca a vedere a ciascuno a sentire a pochi. Ognuno vede quell che tu pari, pochi sentono quell che tu sei" (306).

instructs that "each prince should desire to be held merciful and not cruel; nonetheless he should take care not to use this mercy badly" (65).[61] For Machiavelli, "too much mercy" is to "allow disorders to continue [which] hurt a whole community" (65).[62]

In Schiller's text, the politics of necessity do not take sides. As mentioned, *Il Principe* describes the shift from political Idealism to political Realism. Thus, in a text informed by dichotomy (English/Scottish, parliamentarian monarchy/divine right, Virgin Mary/Eve, Protestant/Catholic), one would assume that the two queens would be split into realism versus idealism. However, Maria and her followers, as well as Elisabeth and her court, practice the politics of necessity to achieve their respective goals. For Maria, that is freedom and the crown of England. For Elisabeth, that is peace in her kingdom and retention of the crown.

The Necessity of Deception

In his analysis of *Maria Stuart*," Ferdinand von Ingen argues that "Täuschung und Verstellung beherrschen das Trauerspiel, naturgemäß meist verdeckt, aber auch wie selbstverständlich zugegeben" (284). While the first part ("meist verdeckt") is certainly true for all of the main characters, the latter part ("wie selbstverständlich zugegeben") only fits Elisabeth. For the English Queen is "openly deceitful" – her entire character revolves around appearances, and she admits as much. Throughout the play, Elisabeth is concerned with how she appears to her advisors, the court and her people. Particularly in the delicate matter of Maria's execution, Elisabeth must find a way to protect herself and

[61] "[…] ciascuno principe deve desiderare di essere tenuto pietoso, e non crudele. Nondimanco deve avvertire di non usar male questa pietà" (290).
[62] "[…] più pietoso che quelli I quail per troppa pieta lasciano seguire I disordini […] perchè queste sogliono offendere una universalità interna" (291).

her claim to the throne, while at the same time appearing just. Moreover, as Ingen correctly reminds us, a monarch willing to commit an act of regicide exposes him/herself to the same threat (292).

Although many critics want to see Elisabeth's actions as the result of hypocrisy and selfish motivations, she is, above all, politically motivated. The harsh criticism rarely takes into account that Elisabeth herself is fully aware of and openly admits her need to uphold appearances. In her meeting with Mortimer, in which she hints at her desire to see Maria die without the means of public execution, she exclaims:

> Ich wollte die Gesetze handeln lassen,
> Die eigne Hand vom Blute rein behalten.
> Das Urteil ist gesprochen. Was gewinn ich?
> Es muß vollzogen werden, Mortimer!
> Und ich muß die Vollziehung anbefehlen.
> Mich immer trifft der Haß der Tat. Ich muß
> sie eingestehn und kann den Schein nicht retten.
> Das ist das Schlimmste! (II.5.1592-9)

Not understanding the machinations of the court, Mortimer replies, "Was bekümmert dich / Der böse Schein bei der gerechten Sache?" (II.5.1599-600). The key to understanding Elisabeth's actions in light of political necessity rather than personal weakness is evident in her response:

> [...] Was man scheint,
> Hat jedermann zum Richter; was man ist, hat keinen.
> Von meinem Rechte überzeug ich niemand,
> So muß ich Sorge tragen, daß mein Anteil
> An ihrem Tod in ew'gem Zweifel bleibe. (II.5.1601-5)

Here the English queen echoes Machiavelli's assertion of the importance of appearances: "men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few. Every sees how you appear, few touch what you are" (71). It is within this context that Elisabeth's non-verbalized request for Mortimer's assistance in

the secret disposal of Maria can be understood. If, in the end, Elisabeth is to remain free of *apparent* guilt for Maria's death, then it does not matter how Maria dies. In fact, a secret assassination is preferable. Until this point, Elisabeth is considered by all to be a just ruler; however, the necessity of Maria's execution for the continued order of the English government goes against the very grain of her being. In the monologue shortly before she signs the death warrant, she laments:

> Warum hab ich Gerechtigkeit geübt,
> Willkür gehaßt mein Leben lang, daß ich
> Für diese erste unvermeidliche
> Gewalttat selbst die Hände mir gefesselt!
> Das Muster, das ich selber gab, verdammt mich!
> War ich tyrannisch, wie die spanische
> Maria war, mein Vorfahr auf dem Thron, ich könnte
> Jetzt ohne Tadel Königsblut verspritzen. (IV.10.3200-7)

Despite the fact that Elisabeth understands the necessity of deception as part of politics, she reveals here that she wants her image of a just ruler to be more than a façade.

Elisabeth is repeatedly and openly concerned with appearances throughout the play. When Talbot provides new evidence for Maria's innocence, Elisabeth immediately approves of reopening the investigation, because, as she tells Talbot "an unsrer königlichen Ehre soll / Auch nicht der Schatten eines Zweifels haften" (V.13.3958-9) – despite the fact that she is fully aware that the execution has most likely already taken place (V.11.3880-7). In addition, even though she has acceded to Leicester's wish that she meet Maria, she "*stellt sich überrascht und erstaunt*" when she sees her rival in person (III.4.621). Further, at the end of the play, after she has ordered Burleigh and Davison to be arrested, Talbot has resigned from her council, and she learns that Leicester, her lover and the final man of her council, has gone to France, she remains

calm and composed. Ever aware of appearances, even in the moment she discovers that all have abandoned her, she refrains from human emotion and composes herself.

Maria also practices the political necessity of deception. She hides her duplicity under a semblance of honesty, and instead, projects her own faults onto her cousin. When Burleigh reports to her the court's decision that she is guilty and will be put to death, she exclaims:

> Nicht vom Gesetze borge sie das Schwert,
> Sich der verhaßten Feindin zu entladen,
> Und kleide nicht in heiliges Gewand
> Der rohen Stärke blutiges Erkühnen.
> Solch Gaukelspiel betrüge nicht die Welt!
> Ermorden lassen kann sie mich, nicht richten!
> Sie geb' es auf, mit des Verbrechens Früchten
> Den heil'gen Schein der Tugend zu vereinen,
> Und was sie ist, das wage sie zu scheinen! (I.8.966-74)

The Scottish queen repeats the theme of Elisabeth's "Schein der Tugend" in their face-to-face confrontation:

> Ich habe menschlich, jugendlich gefehlt
> Die Macht verführte mich, ich hab es nicht
> Verheimlicht und verborgen, falschen Schein
> Hab ich verschmäht mit königlichem Freimut.
> Das Ärgste weiß die Welt von mir, und ich
> Kann sagen, ich bin besser als mein Ruf.
> Weh Euch, wenn sie von Euren Taten einst
> Den Ehrenmantel zieht, womit Ihr gleißend
> Die wilde Glut verstohlner Lüste deckt.
> Nicht Ehrbarkeit habt Ihr von Eurer Mutter
> Geerbt: man weiß, um welcher Tugend willen
> Anna von Boleyn das Schafott bestiegen. (III.4.2421-32)

Maria declares her contempt of "falschen Schein" immediately following her use of this very deceit in order to persuade Elisabeth to grant her a pardon. In addition, with the allusion to Anne Boleyn, who was beheaded for adultery, Maria suggests that Elisabeth is as wanton as both herself and her mother, despite the fact that there is no evidence for

any such licentious behavior either in the text or in the historical record. By essentially projecting her own faults onto Elisabeth, instead of naming real faults Elisabeth possesses, Maria clearly conceals her plans "under the semblance of honesty" (Kontje, "Sublime" 94).

The goal of Maria's necessary deception is twofold: to regain her freedom and to claim the crown of England. Maria's attempts to obtain freedom range from arguing the relevance of English law, to pretending ignorance, to begging Elisabeth for mercy. The Scottish queen challenges the decision of the court based on legal issues including the fact that, as a queen and a Catholic, she can only rightfully be judged by her peers – i.e. Catholic kings – and the fact she is a Scottish citizen and, therefore, not subject to English law. Her comments belie her vast knowledge of English law. Yet, she retains a "guise of innocence" (Kontje, "Sublime" 93). At one point, she responds to Burleigh with "wie werd ich mich, ein ungelehrtes Weib, / Mit so kunstfert'gem Redner messen können!" (I.7.764-5). In the meeting of queens, Maria masks her feelings behind a performance of brokenness and humility. In the end, she fails to persuade her cousin to be merciful, because she forgets the importance of appearances (III.4.2419-20). Maria's pursuit of freedom is interconnected with her desire for the English crown. However, because she openly admits her belief that she is the rightful queen, she makes her desired freedom impossible.

Containing the Political Woman

Both queens act out of political necessity and for each there is a containment strategy to neutralize their political influence and significance. Maria is contained within

the "myth of Maria," and in her motivation for signing the death warrant Elisabeth is contained by a notable shift from political necessity to personal revenge. The "myth of Maria" as a containment strategy has been so effective that Maria's acts of necessary deception have been largely ignored. In addition, even her act of personal revenge has been elided in most interpretations, as they prefer to focus on the sublime elements or her status as *schöne Seele*. Only recently have literary critics begun to see the political force of Maria in the text. Kontje correctly argues that "Mary's position is deliberately inconsistent. If it works to her advantage to pretend ignorance, she does not hesitate to do so" ("Sublime" 91). Maria's act of revenge is particularly significant, for it occurs in the final moments of her life, which immediately calls into question the overwhelming view of Maria as a *schöne Seele*. [63]

Maria's final words in the text do not commend her soul to God or bid farewell to her loved ones; instead, she enacts revenge on Leicester, who did not save her as promised.[64] As she leaves the stage, Maria sees Leicester and falls into his arms. When he catches her, she proceeds to slyly reveal his promises to her – and, therefore, his betrayal of Queen Elisabeth – in words couched as a final surrender of her earthly troubles:

> Ihr haltet Wort, Graf Leicester - Ihr verspracht
> Mir Euren Arm, aus diesem Kerker mich
> Zu führen, und Ihr leihet mir ihn jetzt!
> *(Er steht wie vernichtet. Sie fährt mit sanfter Stimme fort.)*
> Ja, Leicester, und nicht bloß
> Die Freiheit wollt' ich Eurer Hand verdanken.

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[63] Wittkowski, for examples, argues that Maria's comments to Leicester should be seen "als Warnung vor Tyrannei," because he has sold her out to Elisabeth ("Schiller" 387). Benno von Wiese suggests that "Selbst der Anblick Leicesters kann jetzt weder Bitterkeit noch Haß hervorrufen, weil das Herz seinen Frieden mit der Welt geschlossen hat" (*Tragödie* 247).

[64] By contrast, Henkel comments on the ambiguity of Maria's honesty and motivation in her comments to Leicester (400). Swales argues along the same lines: "There is a sarcastic sting to her closing words which contrasts rather sharply with the assured serenity of such previous assertions as 'Ich fürchte keinen Rückfall' (V.7.3761). Such textual detail suggest that there is no clear-cut turning-point in Maria's stance, that ambiguities persist to the very end" (*Schiller* 64).

> Ihr solltet mir die Freiheit *teuer* machen,
> An Eurer Hand, beglückt durch Eure Liebe,
> Wollt' ich des neuen Lebens mich erfreun.
> Jetzt, da ich auf dem Wege bin, von der Welt
> Zu scheiden und ein sel'ger Geist zu werden,
> Den keine ird'sche Neigung mehr versucht,
> Jetzt, Leicester, darf ich ohne Schamerröten
> Euch die besiegte Schwachheit eingestehn –
> Lebt wohl, und wenn Ihr könnt, so lebt beglückt!
> Ihr durftet werben um zwei Königinnen;
> Ein zärtlich liebend Herz habt Ihr verschmäht,
> Verraten, um ein stolzes zu gewinnen:
> Kniet zu den Füßen der Elisabeth!
> Mög' Euer Lohn nicht Eure Strafe werden!
> Lebt wohl! - Jetzt hab ich nichts mehr auf der Erden! (V.9.3819-38)

As Reeve notes, "this is hardly the speech of a genuinely forgiving woman but rather of a sufferer seeking vengeance on the man whom she has loved and continues to feel drawn toward" (128). There is no change of heart, no sublime state, no *schöne Seele*.[65] However, one can only see the real beneath the ideal when the mythical veil is lifted. Thus, the containment strategy of the "myth of Maria" fails only when one recognizes the construct of the myth.

A Necessary Evil

While Maria is contained in the ideal, Schiller attempts to contain Elisabeth's political agency by grounding her actions in jealousy, pettiness, and vanity. It is clear that Schiller constructed the meeting of the queens solely for the purpose of providing a non-political reason for Elisabeth to sign the death warrant.[66] To be sure, Elisabeth initially

[65] "There are those who see in her superb bearing in the hour of death merely the farewell performance of a consummate actress who was determined to sustain the role of a noble martyr to the very end" but there are historical accounts "which speak of her steadfast courage and serene composure" (Witte 247).
[66] In her analysis, Kord explains that the meeting of the queens is added to show that the women are mere women (97).

makes remarks that point toward a decision out of revenge. When she learns of Leicester's betrayal, she responds:

> Sterben soll sie!
> Er soll sie fallen sehn und nach ihr fallen.
> Verstoßen hab ich ihn aus meinem Herzen,
> Fort ist die Liebe, Rache füllt es ganz. (IV.5.2846-9)

This is Elisabeth's reaction immediately following her meeting with Maria, during which the Scottish queen humiliated her rival in front of their mutual lover. Talbot attempts to soothe her wrath and he continues to encourage her to display mercy – even after the assassination attempt. After each of her councilmen makes his final statement (Talbot counsels patience, Leicester and Burleigh demand immediate execution), Elisabeth retreats to her chamber. In her monologue, her motives first point toward personal revenge:

> Sie entreißt mir den Geliebten,
> Den Bräut'gam raubt sie mir! *Maria Stuart*
> Heißt jedes Unglück, das mich niederschlägt!
> Ist *sie* aus den Lebendigen vertilgt,
> Frei bin ich, wie die Luft auf den Gebirgen. (IV.10.3234-8)

Had she signed immediately after these words, then a solid case could be made for acting out of revenge. However, she then remembers Maria's final words ("regierte Recht, so läget *Ihr* vor mir / Im Staube jetzt, denn *ich* bin Euer König!"), which drive her to the conclusion that Maria's death is a political necessity. When Elisabeth does finally sign the death warrant, the idea of personal revenge becomes secondary to the true reason: securing Elisabeth's right to the English throne.

Elisabeth's hold on the throne is precarious, due to the fact that she is considered a bastard according to the Catholic Church[67] and that her father later declared her a bastard in order to change the order in which his children should inherit his throne. Although her rule is confirmed by the English parliament, the existence of Maria, Henry VIII's niece and an additional legitimate heir to the throne, repeatedly highlights the issues surrounding Elisabeth's legitimacy. The existence of a possible Catholic heir to the throne threatened the peace in England, as many English Catholics were eager to have a Catholic queen. "Da Maria den Aspruch auf den englischen Thron folglich nicht aufgibt […] ist allein schon ihre Existenz eine ständige Bedrohung für Elisabeth, denn Elisabeths Tod würde Maria zur sofortigen Königin von England erheben" (Immer, "Schuldig" 135).

Maria poses a genuine threat to the English queen. As Kontje explains, even though the text indicates Maria is not directly responsible for Babington and Parry, "she is clearly guilty of creating an atmosphere in which such crimes are all but inevitable. She has refused to sign the 'Edinburger Vertrag,' […]. She will later admit that she has been in contact with any foreign power willing to help free her from prison" ("Sublime" 91-2).[68] Thus, in order to insure peace, the English Queen realizes that this threat must be removed (Mücke 95). "Elisabeth knows that the days of divine right are over in England, that monarchs have to prove themselves equal to the task of prosperous government" (Sharpe, *Schiller* 119).

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[67] In his thorough analysis of the Catholic elements, Brother Gregory also remarks on the Catholic Church's opinion of Elisabeth's claim to the throne: "References to Elizabeth's illegitimacy by members of the two opposing faction in *Maria Stuart* are based quite definitely upon the Catholic teaching that the Sacrament of Matrimony is indissoluble" (Nugent 20).

[68] See also Paulson (28). The underlying historical record contends that Maria "was not merely an innocent bystander, ignorant of the wishes of the Cardinal of Guise, bur rather that she was personally engaged in conspiracies against Elisabeth, even during her youth in France" (Robertson quoted in Short 110). As "Mary's intrigues become so obvious and apparent that even the English people, who had previously perceived her to be falsely imprisoned, began to turn on her" (Short 111).

The assassination attempt heightens the immediacy of the threat posed by Maria. Burleigh reminds Elisabeth of the urgency of the matter:

> Erwarte, zögre, säume, bis das Reich
> In Flammen steht, bis es der Feindin endlich
> Gelingt, den Mordstreich wirklich zu vollführen. (IV.9.3101-3).

Elisabeth's final words before signing the death warrant make apparent the underlying political necessity of Maria's death:[69]

> Ein Bastard bin ich dir? - Unglückliche!
> Ich bin es nur, solang du lebst und atmest.
> Der Zweifel meiner fürstlichen Geburt,
> Er ist getilgt, sobald ich dich vertilge.
> Sobald dem Briten keine Wahl mehr bleibt,
> Bin ich im echten Ehebett geboren! (IV.10.3243-8)

While most critics ignore this element of political necessity in Elisabeth's speech and focus solely on a critique of acting out of personal revenge,[70] Ingen argues, by contrast, that "im Stück handelt Elisabeth ausschließlich politisch" (293).

Talbot's comment that he could not save her "edlern Teil" (V.15.4028)[71] as well as the overwhelmingly negative commentary and accusations of Elisabeth exacting personal revenge indicate that the containment strategy has been largely successful. By shifting the motive of her actions from the political to the personal realm, Schiller has inserted the bloody effects of revolution within the sphere of women. In Schiller's rewriting of history, androgynous, emancipated women – as represented by both Elisabeth and Maria – are a dangerous threat to society. Through the transgressive figure

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[69] As Schäublin notes, "Elisabeths Monolog ist eine ebenso scharfsinnige wie kurschlüssige Analyse ihrer Situation" (167-8).

[70] Martinson argues that "Elizabeth reacts only to the dictates of her sensuous nature when signing the death warrant" ("Physiology" 221).

[71] Sharpe illuminates the hypocrisy of Talbot's words by arguing that Elisabeth's counselor "can regret Elizabeth's lost humanity, that he is withdrawing from the world. His involvement in the action has shown not how humanity and good counsel can be reconciled, but rather how it is impossible to satisfy the demands of conscience and the demands of the political moment simply by trying to please everyone" (*Schiller* 125-6).

of Maria, the text demonstrates the ensuing political instability and chaos when women dare to be present in the public sphere. At the same time, through the transgressive figure of Elisabeth, stability is restored. However, this is no feminist text. Stability comes at a heavy price – the price of sacrificing the libidinal woman, and of reinscribing patriarchy by asserting that this political woman – Elisabeth – is an exception, not the rule. Yet, however much Schiller wants to imply the violence and chaos inherent on the political stage with female actors – as proclaimed in his poem "Das Lied von der Glocke" – Elisabeth is no hyena. The play ends with the stage directions, "*sie bezwingt sich und steht mir ruhiger Fassung da*" (II.15). The English queen is calm and composed and looking into a future, which we can say from historical hindsight, proved to be a time of great success, peace, and happiness.

Chapter 2

Illegitimate Daughter – Illegitimate Woman: Goethe's *Die natürliche Tochter*

Is there a title by Goethe or by any other German author that calls attention so immediately to an illicit sex act and the bastard status of a child as his *Natürliche Tochter*? If we consider Goethe's other works, the majority of them are named after the protagonist: *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, *Faust*, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, *Wilhelm Meister*. But here in place of the proper name *Eugenie*, the title *Die Natürliche Tochter* offers only a nameless description of an illegitimate offspring. Most interpretations deal solely with the *natürlich* part of the title, as Goethe's piece is generally read for its political message, and not for the gender issues that likewise inform this complex text.

Why is this play about a natural daughter and not a natural son? One reason may be that Goethe based a large part of his drama on the memoirs of a French princess, Stéphanie Louise de Bourbon-Conti, who was the illegitimate daughter of Prince Louis-François de Bourbon and the Duchess of Mazarin. According to the memoirs, Stéphanie's own mother and half-brother abducted the girl to prevent her from being legitimated by King Louis XV. They first bring her to a convent, let her be declared dead, and finally force her to marry a lawyer before the outbreak of the French Revolution. Early versions of the play certainly suggest these memoirs influenced Goethe, since his female protagonist originally was named Stéphanie. However, if we consider the historical context, a case can be made that this text could have been about a natural son. Goethe began writing his tragedy in five acts in October 1801 shortly after recovering from a

deathly illness and finished it in March 1803.[72] Some critics assume that Goethe was preoccupied with the fate of his own natural son while writing Eugenie's story.[73] So, the possibility that this play could have been about a natural son is not entirely far-fetched.

But it is not. There is something specifically dangerous about having a natural daughter, something about the female gender that provokes an insidious intrigue at court. Eugenie poses a threat to male power through a simple act of recognition by the König. Yet she is more than a mere representative of a woman who must be contained. Eugenie is androgynous, a border figure who cannot be easily grasped and categorized. A daughter illicitly conceived out of wedlock, she grows up to be an 'illegitimate woman,' a woman who challenges notions of femininity and marital roles, a woman who refuses to be limited to the private sphere.

Eugenie appears as a figure of transgression from the start. Goethe's play begins in a forest where Eugenie's father, the Herzog, tells the König about the illegitimate daughter he had conceived with the Duchess. The Duchess has recently died, and her death allows the Herzog to reveal this secret, which is actually known as an "offenbar Geheimnis" at court (I.3.189).[74] Eugenie then first appears on stage as if dead from a dangerous fall from her horse during a reckless ride on a stag hunt. Within the first few scenes, we know already she is an illegitimate child and an unfeminine risk-taker. When she awakens, the König agrees to officially recognize the girl as his kin at a court celebration, but admonishes both father and daughter that the upcoming recognition ceremony must remain a secret. In the second Act, Eugenie receives a trunk full of her deceased mother's clothing and jewels, for which she has the key. But she has

[72] The play was first performed in Weimar in April 1803 and was published in the fall of the same year.
[73] Staiger, Schröder, and Peacock each focus on the biographical elements in Goethe's play specifically emphasizing Goethe's illness as an influential factor for the content.
[74] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. Sämtliche Werke. Frankfurter Ausgabe. 1. Sec., Vol. 6: Dramen 1791-1832. Ed. Dieter Borchmeyer and Peter Huber. Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

promised her father she would not open the trunk until the ceremony, in order to keep the König's secret. However, once she learns that her caretaker, the Hofmeisterin, already knows about the upcoming legitimation, Eugenie sees no harm in opening the trunk. There follows an elaborate scene in which she dresses herself as a princess and imagines the upcoming recognition ceremony. Of course, the audience knows all her hopes are in vain, since the act begins with a conversation between the Sekretär and his lover, the Hofmeisterin, in which the plan to kidnap and remove Eugenie from court is revealed.

In Act 3, where we would expect the climax to be the actual abduction of the girl, there is instead only a long, drawn-out lamentation by the Herzog. He had already learned of the supposed death of his daughter and in this act is now being confronted with the "eyewitness account" of the Weltgeistlicher, who has been hired by the Sekretär to confirm the false report of Eugenie's death. In the final two acts, which are almost indistinguishable from each other, we are now at the port, where Eugenie is to be put on a ship and sent to the islands, which are generally believed to represent certain death. Eugenie addresses several groups of people in a desperate attempt to find a way out of her situation. The Hofmeisterin, who doesn't want to leave the country, approaches a Gerichtsrat with the suggestion that he marry Eugenie. When Eugenie learns of this idea, she initially rejects it, seeking help from the Governeur, the Äbtissin, and finally the Mönch. From the Mönch she receives the advice to choose the option which will allow her the most freedom. In the end, she decides to stay hidden in her Vaterland so that she can rejoin the aristocracy once more after the imminent "storm" (of revolution) has passed. In order for this plan to work, she decides to marry the Gerichtsrat but dictates the terms of the marriage. The play ends with the two en route to the altar.

As my analysis will show, an allusion to the French Revolution in a play, which features a woman transgressing gender binaries, calls attention to the matter of women's emancipation. *Die natürliche Tochter* is a tragedy (*Trauerspiel*) frequently interpreted for its political message regarding the French Revolution due to Goethe's famous proclamation in his 1799 *Tages- und Jahresheften*: "In dem Plane bereite ich mir ein Gefäß, worin ich alles, was ich so manches Jahr über die französische Revolution und deren Folgen geschrieben und gedacht, mit geziemendem Ernst niederzulegen hoffte" (449).[75] The political reading of this text falls generally in one of two main categories. In the first, the play is seen to be a direct commentary on the French Revolution.[76] In the second category, the text is read as a general commentary on revolutionary forces and modernity, with the most damning conclusion made by Emrich, who suggests that Goethe painted a grim picture of modernity in which "die bestehende Welt trägt unvermeidlich ihren Untergang in sich; sie muß total zerstört werden, dann erst wird wieder eine neue, völlig andere Welt wiedererstehen" (52).[77] However, these interpretations do not make a connection with the contemporaneous issue of women's fight for equal rights.[78]

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[75] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. Goethes Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe in vierzehn Bänden. Ed. Erich Trunz. Hamburg: Wegener 1981. Hass, like most critics, reads Goethe's declaration as a commentary on the planned but never completed trilogy (221). See also Böschenstein ("Goethes *Natürliche Tochter*" 93), Brandmeyer (92-3), Wolff (40) and Würffel (115) for additional arguments regarding the incomplete trilogy. Some critics argue that there is nothing political in Goethe's text: see Schlaffer (3).

[76] See Brandmeyer (66), Abbé (10), Borchmeyer (*Höfische Gesellschaft* 327), and David (64). Borchmeyer sees an additional connection to the "Halsbandskandal" ("Höfische Gesellschaft" 326). For a comprehensive literature review up the mid 1990s, see Wagner's "Critical Approaches."

[77] For more approaches to general political commentary see Pott (221), Dassanowsky-Harris (220), Burgess (148), Buschmeier (26), Lamport ("Entfernten" 41), Perry (51), Keller-Loibl (383), Reiss (53), and Staiger (376).

[78] Other interpretive approaches include reading the text as a commentary on the bourgeoisie – See Borchmeyer ("Höfische Gesellschaft" 331), Uerlings (97), Keller-Loibl (374-5), and Vaget (211). In addition, some critics focus on specific themes or metaphors such as water (Wolff 5), *Entsagung* (Böckmann), *Stille* (Hass), *Sorge* (Moenkemeyer). Jenkins reads *Die natürliche Tochter* "as a kind of *Bildungsdrama*" (42). Both Boyle and Graham see Goethe's drama as a commentary on poetics. Boyle suggests that the text discusses "Goethe's role in the future of poetry" (782). Graham, on the other hand, reads Eugenie as "the embodiment of a formative drive fated, by some mysterious decree, to overshoot the mark and to step forth into the light of the public day before the time is ripe for such a self-revolution" (*Goethe* 258). Comparative readings include Ritzer's on *Die Memoiren der Stephanie von Bourbon Conti* (207), Würffel's on historian Soulavie (100), Vaget's on *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (222); Gerhard's on Goethe's other revolution dramas (295); Burckhardt's on Goethe's other pieces written in blank verse

In my interpretation of *Die natürliche Tochter*, I argue that the ambiguity of politics is revealed through a multitude of border figures – all defined in terms of the feminine. Through the use of the trope of the Amazon, Goethe ties the political of the French Revolution – freedom for all – to the attempt of the real Amazons of the French Revolution to achieve equal rights for women. By reading the intersection of borders, this chapter will demonstrate that there is a clear tension between political inertia and change. Through the attempt to contain the emancipating title figure and by extension contain the ambiguous border figures, there is an overt effort to halt political progress. Ultimately, my analysis will show that the attempt of containment is always undermined by the text itself, thereby proving that the emancipation of women is always inherently part of any pursuit of freedom.

In this chapter, I analyze five clusters of ambiguous border figures: heredity and androgyny; marriage and sexuality; knowledge; aesthetics; and space and time. Each will demonstrate an attempt to clarify borders and contain ambiguity, which will always turn back on itself. In the first section, I discuss Eugenie's status of illegitimate child as it challenges patriarchal rule and sows the seed of emancipation through her parental inheritance. In addition, I read Eugenie as a figure of transgression through her androgyny. In the second section, I demonstrate how the text calls accepted standards of marriage and notions of sexuality into question through the androgynous title figure. In the third section, ambiguity of knowledge can be seen as closely tied to the androgynous border figure, Eugenie, through a language of disorientation and confusion, of labyrinths and secrecy. The fourth section on aesthetics investigates the ways in which Eugenie is contained as image – as an image of death and a dream image – and shows how the text itself then inverts these images in order to empower Eugenie. In

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(66); Böschenstein's on *Iphigenie*, *Faust II*, *Wahlverwandtschaften*, *Pandora* ("Goethes *Natürliche Tochter*" 100-4), and Prandi's on *Egmont* (51).

the fifth and final section, I argue that the most ambiguous border figures of space and time attempt to contain the emancipating woman by placing her in a kind of time warp, thereby eliminating her direct relevance for the political realm. The overarching themes of containment can be found throughout the text through stasis, exile, the constrictions of the written word, the element of mystery to obscure knowledge, petrification through the *Bild*, and marriage. Ultimately, the progression of Eugenie, the illicitly conceived daughter, to Eugenie, the illegitimate woman, will show the real and unstoppable movement of women's emancipation as a product of the revolutionary time in which the text was written.

I. The Genesis of a Transgressive Figure

In this first section, my analysis traces the development of Eugenie's illegitimacy from her parental inheritance to her own bold decisions to take charge of her body and her sexuality. I will begin with a discussion of Eugenie qua daughter, and will consider her heritage and lineage as the illegitimate product of her parents. In analyzing Eugenie's developmental progress to illegitimate woman, my reading will then demonstrate the ways in which the transgressive figure of Eugenie challenges 19th-century notions of femininity and female sexuality.

A Child's Inheritance

That Eugenie's mother must die for the entire plot to be set into motion illustrates the significance of heredity and lineage as well as importance of the appearance (*Schein*) of female virtue. This is underscored by the König's initial reaction to the Herzog's news about the

existence of his natural daughter. In an ironic statement, he declares that Eugenie will be the "new star" at court, if she shares her parents' virtues:

> Vereint in sich die Nichte, die du mir,
> So ganz erwachsen, zuzuführen denkst,
> Des Vaters und der Mutter Tugenden:
> So muß der Hofe, das königliche Haus,
> Indem uns ein Gestirn entzogen wird,
> Den Aufgang eines neuen Sterns bewundern. (I.1.102-7)

However, as the drama reveals even small amounts of information regarding the Herzog and his former lover, it is clear that these "Tugenden" and Eugenie's rising star are called into question. We learn only three things regarding Eugenie's mother: She was well loved at court; she had an extramarital affair; and she was possibly an Amazon. Her affair and the fact that Eugenie was an "open secret" even before her death call into question the appearance of female virtue. At the same time, Eugenie as the "Amazonentochter" already shares the warrior characteristic of her mother. As the daughter of her mother, then, the text subtly indicates that Eugenie will likewise be a figure of transgression.

Her father's heritage also does not suggest great things for Eugenie. The Herzog is weak and ineffectual, as evidenced by his son's increasing power and his obedience to his lover's mandate to keep Eugenie's parentage a secret. In addition, he is not able to keep his daughter in check, and she quickly takes charge in their relationship.[79] The impotence of the father intimates a critique of patriarchy in Goethe's drama. This critique is further underscored by Eugenie's second "father," the feeble König, who fears all around him. Most critics note the challenge to patriarchy in the text and connect this with Goethe's understanding of the French Revolution, for which he blamed the aristocracy for inefficacy. I would like to go one step further and suggest

[79] Gustafson argues for a completely different father-daughter dynamic. For her, "familial instability is intricately conjoined in *Die natürliche Tochter* to the fear of societal collapse. The domestic tensions of the play reveal, above all, a paternal struggle to protect the prevailing social order through the expunction of a daughter's transgressive gender identifications" (148).

that, on a parallel level, the text also shows that weak fathers are the "cause" of woman warriors and female emancipation. Thus, as the daughter of an Amazon and an impotent father, Eugenie's illegitimacy extends beyond her conception out of wedlock to shape her status as a figure of transgression as an adult.

A Figure of Transgression

Displaying an abundance of masculine traits, Eugenie as a figure of androgyny challenges 19th-century notions of femininity.[80] First, she is repeatedly described with the adjective *ritterlich*. Her father praises her well-trained body: "So mangelt Übung ritterlicher Tugend / Dem wohl gebauten, festen Körper nicht" (I.3.123) and he urges her to practice some restraint: "Daß doch gemäßigter dein Trieb fortan / Der ritterlichen Übung sich erfreue" (I.6.594-6). She is often just "one of the guys" as she grows up surrounded by men and is clearly comfortable in their company, as is evident by the fact that she is the only woman participating in the hunt (I.1.1). Moreover, the description of Eugenie as reckless and disobedient is uncannily similar to the depiction of her brother. He is said to have a "rohes, wildes Wesen, / Verworrenheit, Verschwendung, starren Trutz" (I.1.56-7). In addition, Eugenie's own plans for power echo those of the greedy, power-hungry Weltgeistlicher.[81] Once she learns that the King plans to recognize her as his kin, Eugenie admits to her father that she wants to be involved in his political plans:

Nun hoff' ich, eingeweiht in deine Pläne,

[80] Some critics have also commented on Eugenie as androgynous. Both Graham and Perry compare Eugenie to Mignon. While Perry merely notes but does not interpret this connection (51), Graham explains that "Eugenie's form, too, is to hover between life and death, embalmed in her father's imagination, as her excited heart had hovered between masculine and feminine drives" (*Goethe* 276). Stammen calls her "das ungeschlechtlich doppelgeschlechtliche Wesen im präexistenten Zustand" (53) and Swales remarks that "Eugenie is part conventional girl, part woman and noble lady, but she is also part amazon and have strong androgynous traits" ("Goethe" 127).

[81] Reiss argues to the contrary declaring that Eugenie "is surely incapable of exercising power of any kind, and she is ignorant of political life" (61).

> Bekannt mit deinen Wünschen, mir das Recht
> Vollbürt'ger Kindschaft rühmlich zu erwerben. (I.6.496-8)

Eugenie believes she is now ready to be involved in her father's planned intrigues. She clearly wants to be active on the political stage in order to share the fame and power with the men in charge:

> Mit hoch erhabnen, hoch beglückten Männern
> Gewalt'ges Ansehn, würd'gen Einfluss teilen,
> Für edle Seelen reizender Gewinn! (I.6.502-4)

Eugenie's desire for fame and power read like a slightly milder version of the Weltgeistlicher's own demands for his participation in the girl's successful abduction:

> Von nun an fordr' ich, mit im Rat zu sitzen,
> Wo Schreckliches beschlossen wird, wo jeder,
> Auf seinen Sinn, auf seine Kräfte stolz,
> Zum unvermeidlich Ungeheuren stimmt. (III.1.1239-42)

In addition, she reverses roles with her father as she leads him both in word and action. After her father reveals her identity to the King and the monarch recognizes her as kin, it is Eugenie who takes the lead in the conversation with the King.[82] This role reversal is recognized by the Herzog, who voices his disappointment in his own weakness:

> [..] Vergib, wenn du in dieser Stunde
> Mich schwächer findest, als dem Manne ziemt.
> Wir tauschten sonderbar die Pflichten um:
> Ich soll dich leiten, und du leitest mich. (I.6.502-5)
> […]
> Wie du mich stärktest, geb' ich dir's zurück. (I.6.642)

Eugenie's response is not to restore him to power, but instead to persist in directing his steps:

> Wohl denn, mein Vater, tritt mit mir herauf
> In diese Regionen, wo mir eben
> Die neue, heitre Sonne sich erhebt! (I.6.509-11)

[82] Buschmeier argues that Eugenie also takes the position of the König by enacting her own legitimation ceremony (48).

As the androgynous Eugenie reverses roles with her father, she challenges patriarchal structures, generational order, and notions of femininity, developing from illegitimate daughter to illegitimate woman.

Through the trope of the Amazon as a figure of transgression, Eugenie further challenges the 19th-century concept of *Geschlechtscharaktere*. First introduced as an "Amazonentochter," Eugenie is linked both with the mythical figure of the Amazon as well as with the Amazons of the French Revolution. From the start, Eugenie appears to be the definition of an Amazon: a "starke, mutige, kämpferische und vom Mann unabhängige Frau[]" (Stephan, *Inszenierte* 113). Her heedlessness marks her among her fellow hunters:

> […] Sie allein besinnt
> Sich keinen Augenblick und nötiget
> Ihr Pferd von Klipp' zu Klippe grad' herein.
> Des Frevels Glück betrachten wir erstaunt;
> Denn ihr gelingt es eine Weile, doch
> Am untern stielen Abhang gehen dem Pferde
> Die letzten, schmalen Klippenstufen aus,
> Es stürzt herunter, sie mit ihm. (I.3.169-76)

By those around her, she is called a "wackre" (I.5.246) and "kühne Reiterin" (I.2.151) with "überkühner Mut" (I.6.589) who "besinnt / Sich keinen Augenblick" (I.3.168-9). Eugenie calls herself the "Verwegne" (I.4.239) and "Ungemeßne[]" (I.6.597). Her strength and status as warrior remind us of another (later) literary Amazon, Kleist's Penthesilea.

The world of mythology invoked by the figure of the Amazon in Eugenie is also invoked by another mythological border figure, the centaur. After Eugenie's fall, the Herzog attempts to rein in his daughter's "überkühner Mut" and likens her power to that of a centaur:

> […] Wie öfters hat mich schon
> Dein überkühner Mut, mit dem du dich,
> Als wie ans Pferd gewachsen, voll Gefühl
> Der doppelten, zentaurischen Gewalt,
> Durch Tal und Berg, durch Fluss und Graben schleuderst. (I.6.588-92)

The comparison of Eugenie to a centaur does more than make a stronger tie to the mythology of antiquity. It also draws yet another connection to the ambiguity surrounding her character. As Inge Stephan explains in *Inszenierte Weiblichkeit*:

> in dieser Mischung zwischen Mensch und Tier […] drückt sich ein Stück archaischer Unbestimmtheit aus, die noch alter ist als die Unbestimmtheit zwischen den Geschlechtern und die den androgynen Diskurs auf eine Ebene führt, die uns aus den *Metamorphosen* von Ovid vertraut ist, wo die Verwandlung von Mensch und Tier oder Pflanze zur grundlegenden Struktur des Textes gehört. (184-5)

The image of the centaur underscores the ambiguity inherent in the Amazon figure, Eugenie.

The figure of the Amazon also invokes the French Revolution and the issue of women's emancipation. During the French Revolution the women who fought for gender equality and freedom were known as Amazons. Many of these women were persecuted and killed for challenging gender roles and patriarchal structures (Stephan 123). The fact that Goethe explicitly wrote *Die natürliche Tochter* as a vessel for his thoughts on the French Revolution highlights the conscious connection between Eugenie's status as a figure of androgyny challenging gender polarity and the French Amazons fighting for gender equality.

Containing Ambiguity

At the same time that the text recognizes the relevance of gender equality, it also seeks to contain the transgressive elements and stabilize ambiguity. Eugenie as such a figure of transgression is contained through an explicit discourse of femininity. The moments in which femininity is defined are blatant as Eugenie explicitly details the difference between men and women. Because the scene takes place immediately following Eugenie's near fatal fall from a heedless horse ride, her description of femininity is called into question through the very mode of presentation: her reckless "masculine" behavior renders her description of gender roles suspect.

Early on in the play, while explaining to her father why she desires new attire for the upcoming legitimation ceremony, Eugenie delineates the difference between men and women. She states that while men will forget their external appearances in important moments, women will focus entirely on perfect clothing and jewelry in order to please others. She turns the abstract comment into something concrete, by admitting that she herself is guilty of this weakness:

> […] Wenn der Mann
> Sein Äußeres in solchem Fall vergisst,
> Nachlässig oft sich vor die Menge stellt,
> So wünscht ein Weib noch, jedem zu gefallen,
> Durch ausgesuchte Tracht, vollkommnen Schmuck
> Beneidenswert vor andern zu erscheinen.
> Das hab' ich oft gehört und oft bemerkt,
> Und nun empfind' ich im bedeutendsten
> Momente meines Lebens, daß auch ich
> Der mädchenhaften Schwachheit schuldig bin. (I.6.517-26)

Following this statement, it is no wonder that when presented with the test to ignore the newly arrived box of royal clothing and jewelry, Eugenie is unable to resist the temptation. Her femininity is repeatedly underscored in this long, drawn out, and elaborate scene in which she dresses herself in the rich clothing and jewelry, thereby jeopardizing her political position (II.5.1000-148). She even feels encouraged by the surrounding mirrors to break her promise to her father: "Und diese Spiegel! Fordern sie nicht gleich, / Das Mädchen und den Schmuck vereint zu schildern?" (II.5.1040-1). This moment of reflection does not become a moment of self-reflection. In a moment of narcissism, Eugenie is fully absorbed with herself. [83] She is eager to see herself as a legitimate princess and is incapable of recognizing the danger of her actions.

[83] The mirror also evokes a symbol of repetition and doubling, which finds its way into the text in various other ways as well. Eugenie has two fathers – both her biological father, the Herzog, and the König, whom she often addresses as "mein Vater, mein König" – and two mothers – her biological mother, the Fürstin, and the Hofmeisterin, her surrogate mother. Eugenie is the Amazonentochter which makes her both the daughter of an Amazon as well as having Amazon qualities herself. She is both the "natural" daughter and the "Wohlgeborene." Eugenie becomes double herself: First, she suggests to her grief-stricken father who fears her death: So laß mich immer, immer wieder kehren! (I.6.583). Second, when she opens the trunk of her mother's belongings claiming that the mirror demands to

The motif of a woman's irresistible love for jewelry and clothing is later reiterated by the Hofmeisterin, who equates the sharing of intimate secrets with girls who never of tire of showing each other their jewels:

> Wann soll wie sonst vertrauter Stunden Reihe
> Mit reichlichen Gesprächen uns erquicken?
> Wann öffnen wir, zufriednen Mädchen gleich,
> Die ihren Schmuck einander wiederholt
> Zu zeigen kaum ermüden, unsres Herzens
> Geheimste Fächer, uns bequem und herzlich
> Des wechselseit'gen Reichtums zu erfreuen? (II.3.930-6)

The repeated references to girls loving jewelry and clothing increasingly overdetermine what femininity is and reduce it to pure frivolity.[84] The attributes of this overdetermined femininity are then superimposed onto Eugenie. Thus, when toward the end of the play Eugenie declares that she wishes to be no longer "weibisch" – which is then immediately pejoratively described as being "weichlich" – it is clear that the play hopes to convince us of a very feminine Eugenie (V.5.2572-7). However, Eugenie rates these feminine attributes negatively, thereby calling into question the desirability of femininity for women.

Within this same scene of dresses and clothing, the containment of Eugenie in feminine trappings is undermined by that very clothing. At the height of this scene, Eugenie stands in front of a mirror – the same mirror that provoked her narcissistic contemplation – admiring herself in her full regalia. Instead of gushing over her own beauty and radiance, she reads male attributes into her own clothing. In response to the Hofmeisterin's concerns regarding Eugenie's premature celebration, the girl challenges her surrogate mother:

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see her joined with the royal jewels inside. She becomes what the mirror requires by echoing her mirror image instead of the mirror reflecting her image.

[84] The older woman suggests that they reveal the secret compartments of their hearts ("unsres Herzens / Geheimste Fächer"). This ties together the additional themes of mystery and of body parts functioning as containers, to which I will return later in the chapter.

> Nun sprich vom Tode nur! Sprich von Gefahr!
> Was zieret mehr den Mann, als wenn er sich
> Im Heldenschmuck zu seinem Könige,
> Sich unter seinesgleichen stellen kann?
> Was reizt das Auge mehr als jenes Kleid,
> Das kriegerische lange Reihen zeichnet?
> Und dieses Kleid und seine Farben, sind
> Sie nicht ein Sinnbild ewiger Gefahr?
> Die Schärpe deutet Krieg, womit sich, stolz
> Auf seine Kraft, ein edler Mann umgürtet. (II.5.1133-42)

Thus, Eugenie redefines her otherwise very feminine clothing as armor she wears for her King. Within the very scene in which Eugenie fulfills her femininity as she had previously defined it, she turns that idea of femininity on its head. With her warrior dress and sash of war Eugenie effectively cross-dresses with pretty dresses and jewels.[85] She rejects the implications of femininity suggested by the clothing and reinscribes her warrior nature into this moment.

II. Marriage and Sexuality

As an illegitimate woman, Eugenie redefines marital roles within the context of traditional and changing definitions of marriage.[86] Through this redefinition, she is able to undermine the attempt to contain her through marriage and redirection into the private sphere. In addition, this redefinition challenges 19th-century notions of female sexuality, which dictate a woman to be subservient to her husband and to be interested only in pleasing him.

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[85] See also Gustafson (160).

[86] Eugenie's marriage to the Gerichtsrat is generally not read this way. Most scholars consider the marriage an *Entsagungsehe* for both Eugenie and the Gerichtsrat. Both Bahr and Boyle interpret the Entsagungsehe positively as a possibility for unity between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie (Bahr [236], Boyle [778]). Swales disagrees with this viewpoint calling the final scene "the bleakest in the entire play" with no hope for redemption ("Goethe" 69). Wolff explicitly argues that there is nothing emancipatory to be seen in the way Eugenie places demands on her marriage (330).

From *Zweckehe* to *Liebesehe*

The time in which Goethe was writing saw a shift in the standard or expectation for marriage. Until the late 17th century, the *Zweckehe* was the norm and ideal for marriages. Men and women were joined together by their respective parents for social, class, and economic reasons (Hausen 54). Toward the end of the century there was a clear shift in the expectation of marriage. It became increasingly common, acceptable, and finally expected to marry for love. As historian Anne-Charlott Trepp explains, "die Liebesehe stand im Zentrum des neuen bürgerlichen Familienleitbildes, das in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrunderts entwickelt und langfristig die bestimmende Familienform der Moderne wurde" (17). The development of the *Liebesehe* eventually went so far as to make *Zweckehen*, arranged marriages, completely undesirable. Of course, as a multitude of love stories from Romeo and Juliet to Tristan and Isolde show, the desire to marry out of love has always existed. New for the time in which Goethe was writing was the changed expectation of and experimentation with marriage.[87]

Important for my argument here is not only the concept of the *Liebesehe* – "die freie, selbstbestimmte Wahl von Frau und Mann des Ehepartners aufgrund von Neigung und Anziehung" (Weichselbraun 24) – and its increasing popularity for the early 19th century, but also the attitude behind the *Liebesehe*. The main feature of the Liebesehe is choice, autonomy. In Goethe's text, this attitude poses a clear challenge to traditional notions of marriage and suggests an opening for women's emancipation. Eugenie's comments on her initial hopes for her marriage partner indicate a shift from a strict understanding of *Zweckehe*. As she explains to the Gerichtsrat why she had never considered marriage with him or anyone else as a solution to exile, she reveals that she is firmly embedded in the tradition of arranged marriages. In that tradition,

[87] The *Liebesehe* also figures in other works by Goethe, e.g. *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* and *Hermann und Dorothea*. Kost argues that in the latter text the *Liebesehe* is thematized and is shown as the ideal for a bourgeois marriage (285).

she would be provided with an aristocratic husband: “Von meines Vaters, meines Königs Hand / Mußt’ ich dereinst den Bräutigam erwarten” (IV.2.2107-8). Since her goal is to be a legitimate member of the aristocracy, Eugenie imagines autonomy even within the constraints of arranged marriage. Faced now with the option to marry and save herself, she initially argues against it – not because the Gerichtsrat was not chosen by her father, but because she cannot choose a man who has not yet proven himself to be worthy of her:

> Voreilig schwärmte nicht mein Blick umher,
> Und keine Neigung wuchs in meiner Brust.
> Nun soll ich denken, was ich nie gedacht,
> Und fühlen, was ich sittsam weg gewiesen;
> Soll mir den Gatten wünschen, eh’ ein Mann
> Sich liebenswert und meiner Wert gezeigt,
> Und jenes Glück, das Hymen uns verspricht,
> Zum Rettungsmittel meiner Not entweihen. (IV.2.2109-16)

Eugenie rejects the idea of using “jenes Glück, das Hymen uns verspricht” to save her life. Within just nine lines, Eugenie moves from a “no” to marriage because it is not arranged to a “no” because it is not for love.

That the marriage paradigm has completely shifted to an expectation of *Liebesehe* is confirmed by the Mönch’s response to Eugenie’s dilemma: marriage or exile. He first tells her that she needs to choose the option that will be the least limiting, recognizing the limitations for woman in marriage:

> Ich kann dir nur das Allgemeine raten.
> Bist du zur Wahl genötigt unter zwei
> Verhassten Übeln, fasse sie ins Auge
> Und wähle, was dir noch den meisten Raum
> Zu heil’gem Tun und wirken übrig lässt
> Was deinen Geist am wenigsten begrenzt,
> Am wenigsten die frommen Taten fesselt. (V.7.2728-34)

Eugenie counters: “die Ehe, merk’ ich, rätst du mir nicht an” (V.7.2735). A possible lack of freedom in marriage, however, is not the Mönch’s concern. Instead, he cannot sanction any

marriage that is not entered into out of love. The Mönch sees her marriage to the Gerichtsrat as a threat to her:

> […] wie sie dich bedroht.
> Wie kann der Priester segnen, wenn das Ja
> Der holden Braut nicht aus dem Herzen quillt. (V.7.2736-8)

The norm of the *Liebesehe* is also demonstrated – albeit ironically – in the relationship between the Hofmeisterin and the Sekretär. They are engaged to be married and the Sekretär coerces his lover into abducting her young charge with a vision of their marriage and future life together:

> Wenn ich des Glückes Füllhorn dir auf einmal
> Nach langem Hoffen vor die Füße schütte,
> Wenn sich die Morgenröte jenes Tags,
> Der unsern Bund auf ewig gründen soll,
> Am Horizonte feierlich erhebt,
> So scheinst du nun verlegen, widerwillig
> Den Antrag eines Bräutigams zu fliehn. (II, 1, V. 660-4)

By following the Sekretär's orders, the Hofmeisterin rejects her role as surrogate mother to Eugenie in order to become a wife. Of course, a love relationship in which coercion takes place calls that very love into question.

While not a *Liebesehe*, the extramarital relationship between the Herzog and the Fürstin, Eugenie's mother, also demonstrates the underlying choice for love of the *Liebesehe*. In fact, it more correctly reflects the experimentation with love and relationships that was practiced by the Romantics at the turn of the century. For Friedrich Schlegel understood marriage as "nicht das rechtliche, sondern das sittliche Verhältnis zwischen Frau und Mann [..], welches somit einer formalen Eheschließung nicht bedurfte" (Weichselbraun 24).

Autonomy and Choice

Underlying both relationships – the *Liebesehe* of the Hofmeisterin and Sekretär and the love relationship between the Herzog and the Fürstin – is choice. And choice is what finally drives Eugenie to accept the Gerichtsrat's proposal of marriage. In the end, she sees more freedom within what I would like to call a *Wahlehe* than in an exile to the islands. For Eugenie does not simply marry the man and become subordinate to him. Instead, from the start, she dictates all terms of the marriage and rejects the constriction of a traditional marriage:

> Der Gatte zieht sein Weib unwiderstehlich
> In seines Kreises abgeschlossne Bahn.
> Dorthin ist sie gebannt, sie kann sich nicht
> Aus eigner Kraft besondre Wege wählen;
> Aus niedrem Zustand führt er sie hervor,
> Aus höhern Sphären lockt er sie hernieder.
> Verschwundne ist die frühere Gestalt,
> Verloschen jede Spur vergangner Tage.
> Was sie gewann, wer will es ihr entreißen?
> Was sie verlor, wer gibt es ihr zurück? (IV.4.2295-2304)

She demands from her husband-to-be that their relationship be like that between siblings. She insists on living alone in the country and that he may only visit upon her request. Within this strange new world of marriage the woman has become the head of the household and emancipated. The irony of her emancipation is that she is, at least initially, confined to the bourgeois marriage in that country home. Her only 'promise' to him is empty as she charges her fiancé: "Erfülle deine Pflichten gegen mich; / daß ich die meinen kenne, sei gewiß" (V.9.2920-1). Not only are her duties entirely ambiguous, she also makes no promise to fulfill them whatever they may be.

At the same time Eugenie enters a *Wahlehe*, in which she has all of the choices and makes all of the demands, she does enter a kind of *Liebesehe* with her fatherland. Within her marriage to the Gerichtsrat, she chooses to save herself and keep herself as a pure "Talisman" for

her country, once the "Storm" and the "Umsturz" have subsided. Eugenie's marriage of sexual abstinence appears to echo the vows of a nun who considers herself the bride of Christ. Thus, this traditional Christian bride of Christ is displaced onto a new kind of "sacral virgin" who will save herself in order to save her fatherland (Ziolkowski 76).

The Vessel of Sexuality

Eugenie's choice of abstinence demonstrates how she takes charge of her sexuality as her mother had before her (by having an extramarital affair). The question of sexuality and woman's choice is raised through the use of the word "Gefäß," which appears at key moments in the play, as well as in Goethe's own description of his tragedy. In his 1799 *Tages- und Jahresheften*, he wrote: "In dem Plane bereite ich mir ein Gefäß, worin ich alles, was ich so manches Jahr über die französische Revolution und deren Folgen geschrieben und gedacht, mit geziemendem Ernst niederzulegen hoffte" (449).[88] Every interpretation of Goethe's *Die natürliche Tochter* includes a discussion of this quote primarily within a political context. Goethe's *Gefäß* is related to the political ambitions of the play and the presence of the *Gefäß* in the text links Eugenie, sexuality, and illegitimacy. These interconnected themes of the container, the *Gefäß*, enact a critique of gender roles, thereby undermining containment.[89]

The word *Gefäß* appears twice in Goethe's tragedy – in both instances, with regard to Eugenie. In the first, it is the word used for the box in which her mother's princess jewels and clothing are kept. Pretending ignorance to the Hofmeisterin upon arrival of the container,

[88] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. Goethes Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe in vierzehn Bänden. Ed. Erich Trunz. Hamburg: Wegener 1981.

[89] Several critics have also discussed Goethe's *Gefäß* outside of politics. Böschenstein argues that the real vessel for the French Revolution would have been found in the sequels to the *Natürliche Tochter* ("Goethe *Natürliche Tochter*" 93). In her interpretation of language in the text, Wagner explains that the vessel is defunct: "Instead of a 'Gefäß' in which meaning can be received and contained the drama is a sieve through which meaning consistently leaks out. […] Speech does not produce truth, subjective, intersubjective, or factual; instead, speech suppresses, distorts, manipulates, lies" ("Problem of Representation" 203).

Eugenie asks, “dieser prächt’ge Schrein! / Auf welchen Inhalt deutet solch Gefäß?” (II.5.1002-3). In the second instance, the Herzog uses the word in the course of his lamentation over Eugenie’s death:

> O sammle mir in köstliches Gefäß
> Der Asche, der Gebeine trüben Rest,
> Daß die vergebens ausgestreckten Arme
> Nur etwas fassen, daß ich dieser Brust,
> Die sehnsuchtsvoll sich in das Leere drängt,
> Den schmerzlichsten Besitz entgegendrücke. (III.4.1553-8)

Eugenie is to be physically reduced to ashes consigned to a costly vase. This *Gefäß* will then serve as a tangible replacement for the Herzog’s dead daughter, which the grieving father can in turn press against his breast.

The *Gefäß* contains a multitude of meanings which overlap and inform each other in complex ways. It is the woman as sexual vessel and as a jewel case, a figure of woman’s precious sexual parts and female sexuality. At the same time, the *Gefäß* is literally and figuratively the mother’s inheritance, as well as the container for Goethe’s thoughts on the revolution. In a sense Eugenie is impregnated with Goethe’s political commentary on this time.

From the start, before even the first words of the play are spoken, the focus is on “natürlich,” evoking both the illegitimacy of the title figure’s conception and birth, as well as the adjective for nature – the latter is then immediately introduced as the setting in which the first scene takes place.[90] The other “natürlich” is less obvious and, for that reason all the more revealing. Yet, the issue of Eugenie’s sexuality is never a non-issue in the text. In fact, the play ends with the focus reset on sex and sexuality as Eugenie demands from her future husband that they shall know each other only in the manner of siblings. She demands sexual abstinence from

[90] For Lange, Eugenie “is distinguished in the title with the designation of ‘natural daughter’ with its threefold meaning of illegitimate child, of a person raised according to Rousseauist principle far from courtly society, and of someone representing the purely human beyond any social status” (“Other” 269).

her husband, refusing the chance of a legitimate offspring with her bourgeois husband and rejecting her role as mother. With that, Eugenie rejects sexual subordination to her husband as well as motherhood – both of which are considered integral parts of womanhood in early 19th century. The marriage that is meant to contain Eugenie is undermined by her redefinition of its limitations. It is clear that in this marriage Eugenie is significantly emancipated: she is not subservient to her husband and she has complete control over her mind and body.

However, her emancipation is not complete. In the end, she has only two choices: exile or marriage. While she is able to make a choice and even define the terms of that choice, she is nevertheless still caught within certain boundaries, the goal of which is to make her powerless among the aristocracy. Her position is further problematized by the fact that she wishes to remain in her fatherland to reinstate the patriarchal structures after the "Umsturz." Yet even this wish requires a more nuanced understanding, since from the start she has desired power within that very structure that sends her into exile. Thus, the text ends with the hope – perhaps a justified hope – that her status as savior will lead to increased emancipation as she plans to fight for what she believes is rightfully hers.

III. Knowledge and Unenlightenment

Containment of Eugenie, of the emancipating woman, is containment of knowledge. Knowledge and self-knowledge are thematized throughout Goethe's *Natürliche Tochter* in the context of limits. Metaphorically, knowledge is limited through the labyrinth motif. Truth is also suppressed with secrecy, mystery, and intrigue, which abound in court life.[91] Yet, at the same time, the open nature of the public sphere (the *Öffentlichkeit*) forces the truth out into the open.

[91] See also Hass (244) and Böschenstein ("Antike und Moderne Tragödie" 207).

Intuition – internal knowledge – is tested and limited as the apparent foreshadowings remain unfulfilled or falsely understood. The text ends with the protagonist nameless and veiled – the incarnation of the limits of knowledge – in the private sphere with only a small hope of revelation. Even the reader is kept in the dark as important figures such as Eugenie's brother never appear and pertinent information regarding the intrigue is never revealed. Containing Eugenie through containing knowledge demonstrates how regressive and repressive this act is.

Lost in a Labyrinth

The limits of knowledge are represented metaphorically by the motif of the labyrinth as well as the repeated formulations of being led astray (*irre führen*). There are four explicit mentions of labyrinth in the text – three by the Herzog and one by the Hofmeisterin. In three of these four, Eugenie is the one trapped in the labyrinth. In the first, the Herzog is speaking to the König about his daughter during the hunt:

> […] Noch einmal hat
> Mein Auge sie gesehen, eh' ich sie
> Im Labyrinth der hast'gen Jagd verlor. (I.1.138-40)

In this case, the labyrinth is both literal and figurative: the hunt is in the thick woods and Eugenie becomes lost to the viewer through the trees, the horses, and other hunters. In the second instance, the labyrinth is to be a memorial to the resurrection of Eugenie, who remains amazingly unscathed after her dangerous fall from the horse, in the very location where the girl reawakens. This labyrinth is to be a hybrid of naturally growing plants and man-made constructions:

> Zum ew'gen Denkmal weih' ich diesen Ort.
> Hier soll ein Tempel aufstehn, der Genesung,
> Der glücklichsten, gewidmet. Rings umher
> Soll deine Hand ein Feenreich erschaffen.
> Den wilden Wald, das struppige Gebüsch
> Soll sanfter Gänge Labyrinth verknüpfen. (I.6.615-20)

In the third labyrinth, the "sanfter Gänge" of the memorial's labyrinth have become harsh and cruel as the Herzog laments his daughter's supposed death. Here, the labyrinth is made of thorns and covers the earth. The Herzog cries out to his daughter's spirit that she should lead his way out of the maze:

> […] Schwebe vor,
> Wohin ich wandle, zeige mir den Weg
> Durch dieser Erde Dornenlabyrinth! (III.4.1718-20)

In each instance, the literal labyrinth is found in nature and Eugenie is located at the center. The labyrinth poses a danger to the Herzog in the third labyrinth as he finds himself alone and only with his daughter's spirit.

Finally, the text itself functions as a labyrinth. Eugenie begins at the center of the maze and appears to work her way to the exit. From the depths of the thick forests, she emerges at the end of the play at the very edge of her country, at the port. At the same time, Eugenie is freeing herself from a metaphorical labyrinth as well. This fourth and final labyrinth is mentioned in the fourth act by the Hofmeisterin. She speaks to the Gerichtsrat in the hopes of convincing him to marry Eugenie and save her (and the Hofmeisterin) from exile. Here, she explains how it came to be that Eugenie is in her current predicament:

> Und so umschlang ein heimlich Labyrinth
> Verschmitzten wirkens doppelt ihr Geschick,
> So schwankte List um List im Gleichgewicht,
> Bis ungeduld'ge Leidenschaft zuletzt
> Den Augenblick entschiedenen Gewinns
> Beschleunigte. Da brach von beiden Seiten
> Die Schranke der Verstellung, drang Gewalt,
> Dem Staate selbst gefährlich, drohend los,
> Und nun, sogleich der Schuld'gen Schuld zu hemmen,
> Zu tilgen, trifft ein hoher Götterspruch
> Des Kampfs unschuld'gen Anlass, meinen Zögling,
> Und reißt, verbannend, mich mit ihm dahin. (IV.1.1782-93)

This labyrinth is no longer located in nature, but is completely man-made and made of men. In abstract terms, the Hofmeisterin depicts the court intrigue, which leads to Eugenie's exile. From the first act with the two natural and harmless labyrinths, the maze has become dangerous and sinister. Instead of being a place of play, enjoyment, and reverie, it suffocates and displaces. Yet, the labyrinth works in an inverse. The court intrigue propels Eugenie out of its inner circle to the port and the ships headed for the islands. The safety of the forest becomes barred to Eugenie. Being free of the maze means a loss of identity and significance. The attempt to construct a friendly labyrinth proves impossible and the constriction of court politics and the patriarchy overrule, suffocate, and demolish.

For Eugenie, the center of the labyrinth is the port and the wide-open view of the ocean. While she claims to have dreamt of travel to far-off places and knightly battle, faced now with the possibility to do so, she feels the crushing pressure of entrapment.

> So rief mich ritterlicher Trieb hinaus,
> Zu Ross und Wagen, mit Gefahr zu kämpfen.
> Oft sehnt' ich mich in ferne Weiten hin,
> Nach fremder Lande seltsam neuen Kreisen.
> Dorthin versprach der edle Vater mich,
> Ans Meer versprach er mich zu führen, hoffte
> Sich meines ersten Blicks ins Unbegrenzte
> Mit liebevollem Anteil zu erfreun--
> Da steh' ich nun und schaue weit hinaus,
> Und enger scheint mich's, enger zu umschließen.
> O Gott, wie schränkt sich Welt und Himmel ein,
> Wenn unser Herz in seinen Schranken banget! (IV.2.1958-69)

The lack of limits marked by the "Unbegrenzte" becomes a source of anxiety for Eugenie and ultimately a limit itself through the language of the labyrinth. Eugenie's sudden fear and her loss of desire for exploration are clearly directly connected to her loss of choice. Her current travel plans were not her decision and she has been misled. The entrapment of the labyrinth is magnified by the language of nets, which suggest that "die Befreiung nur als irriges Meinen, als

negierte Möglichkeit oder als Frage, auf die es keine bejahende Antwort geben kann, erscheint" (Stammen 235).

The disorientation of the labyrinth is heightened by the frequent occurrence of a vocabulary of confusion. From the start, the König feels misled during the hunt:

> Das flücht'ge Ziel, das Hunde, Ross und Mann,
> Auf seine Fährte bannend, nach sich reißt,
> Der edle Hirsch, hat, über Berg und Tal,
> So weit uns *irr' geführt*, daß ich mich selbst,
> Obgleich so landeskundig, hier nicht finde.
> Wo sind wir, Oheim? Herzog, sage mir,
> Zu welchen Hügeln schweiften wir heran? (I.1.1-7, *emphasis mine*)

His lack of orientation is so extreme that he no longer recognizes the otherwise familiar woods around him. Of course, this passage is also understood on a metaphorical level that he has lost himself in the "flücht'ge Ziel" of his search for power. The text repeatedly overlaps geographic or external disorientation with internal disorientation. The Herzog suggests that his daughter rides through the forests unable to find herself: "Wer weiß, welch ferne Gegend sie durchstreift, / Verdroßnen Muts, am Ziel sich nicht zu finden" (I.1.141-2). Internal and external disorientation collide again when Eugenie awakens from the fall off the horse, she "blickt verirrt umher" (I.4.216) and asks, "Was ist aus uns geworden?" (I.4.227). Eugenie's question points to the central theme of confusion and disorientation in the text.

The language of disorientation and confusion is also prevalent in the conversation on marriage between Eugenie and the Gerichtsrat. The Gerichtsrat does not immediately suggest marriage directly as an alternative to exile. He speaks of an alternative without naming it until Eugenie asks, "Welch Paradies in Rätseln stellst du dar?" (IV.2.2093). Even though the Gerichtsrat still does not clearly state marriage as the alternative, Eugenie slowly begins to guess, provoking a reaction of disorientation: "Was hilft mein Sinnen! Ich verwirre mich!" (IV.2.2097).

In this conversation, the confusion of *verwirren* turns to the mistake of *irren*. When Eugenie comments on the risk of making such an important decision so quickly ["Und Irrtum auch der Übereilung Sohn"], the Gerichtsrat quickly replies: "Ein Mann, der dich gesehen, irrt nicht mehr" (IV.2.2153-4).

"Ein offenbar Geheimnis"

Knowledge is shown limited through labyrinths and a language of disorientation and confusion. It is also contained through the active covering up of the truth. In the first two acts alone, the words *Geheimnis* and *heimlich* occur more than thirty times. After that, there is a significant drop-off of the vocabulary of mystery, with only three occurrences of each in the third and fourth acts and none in the final act. The sharp decrease in the theme of the *Geheimnis* is hardly due to any kind of revelation. In fact, the third act consists entirely of creating, sustaining, and making believable the lie that Eugenie is dead. In the final two acts, Eugenie is veiled and nameless, indicating that the language of secrecy is longer needed since Eugenie has become the secret incarnate.[92]

The progression toward Eugenie as the secret incarnate is made clear through three main instances of secrecy or revelation thereof (*Geheimnis*/*heimlich*). In each, the mystery is directly related to Eugenie. In the first instance, the Herzog keeps his daughter's identity secret; on the surface this preserves the status quo. He explains that "das Große wie das Niedre nötigt uns, / Geheimnisvoll zu handeln und zu wirken" (I.1.82-3). This allows for the Fürstin to die without the stain of having a bastard child on her reputation. As the Herzog plans to finally reveal

[92] Wagner looks at the nameless Eugenie through the problem of representation in Goethe's text: "[…] the problem of representation is posed at the level of language: the attempt to be given her right(ful) name within the system of social representation, the Name-of-the-Daughter, in the place of the (private) birth name, Eugenie, results in the loss of any name, in anonymity" ("Problem of Representation" 203).

Eugenie's identity, his "wonnevoll geheim verwahrte Schatz" (I.1.77), and openly claim her as his daughter, the mystery his planned declaration provokes is pervasive. The König remarks to the Herzog: "Du hofftest mir in ruh'gen Augenblicken / Verborgenes Verhältnis zu bekennen" (I.1.41-2).

When the Herzog begins his tale, he initially remains secretive. The König notes this paradox that the Herzog wishes to reveal his secret but remains secretive and reprimands him: "Sprich vom Geheimnis nicht geheimnisvoll" (I.1.73). Immediately after the Herzog reveals his secret to the König, Eugenie falls from her horse and the Graf comes to report the accident. As the Graf relays the information to the König, the two also discuss the Herzog's confidential conversation with the König. Here we learn from the Graf that the Herzog's secret was no secret, but instead that it had long been "ein offenbar Geheimnis" at court and throughout the city (I.3.189). The Graf comments that the Herzog is finally admitting to or confessing (*bekennen*) the existence of his daughter, Eugenie. By returning to the original conversation between the König and the Herzog, it becomes clear that the König had already revealed to the reader through the use of the word "*bekennen*" that he knew of the Herzog's secret.

In a court where there are no real secrets, it is then surprising that the König requires silence from the Herzog and Eugenie regarding the legitimation ceremony of the natural daughter:

> Doch bis dahin verlang' ich von euch beiden
> Verschwiegenheit. Was unter uns geschehn,
> Erfahre niemand. (I.5.405-7)

He assumes that his unofficial recognition of Eugenie as his kin in the forest occurred in secrecy (I.5.281-2). However, at the beginning of Act II, as the Sekretär plots with his fiancée the Hofmeisterin to kidnap Eugenie, he underlines again the fact that nothing about Eugenie has

remained a secret. As a child, she was perhaps “ein unbedeutend unbekanntes Kind” (II.1.735) and visited only in secret, but her father’s pride is what revealed her to the court (II.1.738-9). Even the plans to be reunited politically with the König, which the Herzog thinks are secret, are known. As the Sekretär remarks, the Herzog “[glaubt] ein Geheimnis zu verwahren,” but the group of intriguers “wissen’s wohl und sind gerüstet” (II.1.844-5).

Along with the König and Herzog, Eugenie also still believes that she can keep things completely hidden from others, despite experiences to the contrary. Even as she looks for a hiding place for the poem which reveals “das Geheimnis, / Das größte, das ich je gehegt” (II.4.985-6), she recognizes that her secrets are not safe:

> Hier ist nichts zum Verschließen! Und bei mir
> Ist’s nirgend sicher, diese Tasche kaum;
> Denn meine Leute sind nicht alle treu.
> Gar manches hat man schon mir, als ich schlief,
> Durchblättert und entwendet. (II.4.981-5)

She realizes the danger she is in and the lack of privacy and secrecy in her chambers, yet she still chooses to hide the poem in her “geheimer Wandschrank” in which she used to hide “verbotnes Zuckerwerk / Zu listigem Genuß” (II.4.994-5). Here we can find a strange parallel between important knowledge and quotidian items. Much like the girlish adornment of jewelry discussed in the first section of this chapter being equated with divulging secrets, here an important and revealing piece of writing is given the same status and perhaps even the same function as the forbidden candies which she kept hidden for her sly pleasure.

In the last major scene flooded with references to secrecy and mystery, once again a secret is revealed or is discovered to have never been secret. At the same time, a promise is broken which seemingly leads to Eugenie’s downfall. A trunk of royal clothing arrives for Eugenie, which she has promised to leave unopened until the day of her legitimation ceremony.

Eugenie learns from her caretaker that the older woman already knows the contents of the trunk and what they symbolize, because the "Geheimnisse der Großen sind belauscht" (II.5.1015). Because Eugenie understands her promise as not to reveal the secret (instead of not to open the trunk), she sees no harm in trying on the finery, since there is no secret left to keep with the Hofmeisterin:

> Doch was verbot er? Das Geheimnis nicht
> Unzeitig zu entdecken; doch dir ist
> Es schon entdeckt. Du kannst nicht mehr erfahren,
> Als du schon weißt […]
> Du liebst mich, bist verschwiegen, zuverlässig.
> Lass uns das Zimmer schließen! Das Geheime
> Lass uns sogleich vertraulich untersuchen. (II.5.1020-3; 30-3)

Throughout this scene it becomes clear that the word *Geheimnis* loses its meaning and substance – there is no secret. The numerous references to *Geheimnis* indicate that the first layer of secrecy is gone, since the existence of the *Geheimnis* is known. Then the *Geheimnis* is often reported to be revealed. The Graf speaks of an "offenbar Geheimnis" and the Hofmeisterin warns Eugenie "Geheimnisse der Großen sind belauscht" (II.5.1015). Eugenie herself comments that there is no safe place to hide her secrets. Yet, the pretention of the secret is upheld even at an extreme as Eugenie prepares to open the trunk. Both she and the Hofmeisterin know that the trunk contains the deceased Fürstin's clothing and jewelry, yet Eugenie suggests that they investigate "das Geheime" in the trunk (II.5.1031-3).

<u>False Prophesies</u>

Knowledge and confusion are also thematized in the prophetic structure of the text, in which events and signs appear as foreshadowings. This prophetic structure indicates that the future is knowable. However, these "prophecies" turn out to be false and remain unfulfilled or

misunderstood (Swales, "Goethe" 67).[93] The most significant foreshadowing is Eugenie's fall from the horse, which is predominantly read as prefiguring her later fall from aristocracy. It also prefigures her later fabricated deadly fall.[94] Multiple occurrences complicate the function of the foreshadowing and call the possibility of knowing something before the fact into question. The knowledge gleamed from this "prophecy" is even more questionable, since the text ends with Eugenie's plan to eventually regain her position in society.

Other foreshadowings also seem to announce events to occur later in the text; however, each remains unfulfilled. Eugenie first appears as a corpse on stage, setting up the expectation for her death. The König performs an unofficial recognition ceremony which is to be repeated at a later time in front of the court. Eugenie's sonnet carefully hidden away begs to be found. One can find counterparts to each of these *Vordeutungen*, but they prove to be inadequate. Like other foreshadowings in the text, the one of her death also remains frustrated as Eugenie does not physically die. However, she does suffer multiple 'deaths' even after her amazing recovery. First, she is reported dead to her father, who makes plans to memorialize his daughter (III.4.1580-3). Then she is sent into exile on a distant island, where, as the Gerichtsrat repeatedly intimates, she faces "gewissem Tod [..], der im Qualm / Erhitzter Dünste schleichend überfällt" (IV.1.1767-8). In the end, the Hofmeisterin finds a way out of the physical death for her charge (and most likely for herself), by suggesting a social and political death via marriage to a bourgeois man. The counterpart to the sonnet celebrating her legitimation is the König's decree that banishes Eugenie. The König's private recognition ceremony is not reenacted publicly, but again privately as Eugenie celebrates her own legitimation ceremony. As Swales succinctly states: "[...] the real

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[93] See also Böschenstein ("Antike und Moderne Tragödie" and "Goethes *Natürliche Tochter*"). He explains in the latter article that "weder mytisches noch politisches Gewicht besitzt, vielmehr vollendete Ohnmacht und Folgenlosigkeit der Person erweist" (94).

[94] See Böckmann for a detailed comparison to the fall from paradise (20).

secret of the text is that there are no secrets: time and again, we find references to assumed hidden spaces which, in reality, have been penetrated" ("Goethe" 77). Yet even the "penetrated" secrets reveal no true knowledge. Instead, truth is hidden. From illegitimate daughter to Amazonentochter to exile, Eugenie as the veiled nameless protagonist at the end of the text becomes the secret incarnate.

IV. The Limits of the Aesthetic in Image and Language

The aesthetic border figure works as a limit, and there are repeated efforts to contain Eugenie both visually and verbally. This *Grenzfigur* is intricately connected with Eugenie as both word and image. Visual containment of Eugenie is attempted by creating Eugenie as image (*Bild*):[95] an image of death and an image of impossibility, of static material that can be forever gazed upon and worshiped. Linguistically, Eugenie, the other characters, and the text itself are contained through circular speech patterns and repetitions. The circularity and repetition lead to a loss of meaning, adding a new twist to the theme of *Ent-sagen* in the play. In the end, the 'natural daughter' redefines the limits of image and word, making them limitless, and the *Grenzen* become instead thresholds, which can be crossed. Eugenie embraces the image of death as a vehicle for her rescue. In addition, she regains some control of her destiny as she takes charge of the concept of *Entsagen* by inverting and contorting its meaning and, ultimately, writes her own life.

Image of Death

[95] See also Boyle (779) , Brandmeyer (79), and Stammen (58).

The word image (*Bild*) is used with high frequency in the text, occurring thirty times. In addition '*bild*' as part of *bilden* or *Bildung* occurs an additional thirteen times, generally in relation to Eugenie's education and development. This indicates that "project Eugenie" is not a new one, but from birth she is being formed and molded to eventually become something static. The Hofmeisterin even calls Eugenie "mein selbst gebildet Werk" (II.1.697). Eugenie as *Bild* is the predominant use of the image motif in Goethe's text. There are two images of Eugenie: that of the dead girl and the other of the idealistic vision of her. In both cases, neither image type realistically reflects the real Eugenie.

Eugenie's first physical appearance on stage is as a corpse: She represents an image of death.[96] The stage directions indicate that Eugenie is "*auf zusammengeflochtenen Ästen, für tot hereingetragen*" (I.4). This image of a dead Eugenie can never really be erased. Even after Eugenie is miraculously restored from the fall, her death continues to be anticipated throughout the text.[97] Indeed, as Swales reminds us, it is a death which sets off the events of the play: "[…] -- the death of Eugenie's mother. Quite literally, let alone poetically, that death gives birth to the text which we know as *Die natürliche Tochter*" ("Goethe" 72).

Eugenie as the image of death is repeated and reimagined by her father and then later by the Weltgeistlicher. The Herzog declares that he will create a memorial *of* his daughter:

> Dort aber will ich meinen Schmerz verew'gen.
> Ein Denkmal der Genesung hab' ich dort
> In meines Traums Entzückungen gelobt--
> […]
> Das Denkmal nur, ein Denkmal will ich stiften,
> Von rauen Steinen ordnungslos getürmt,

[96] In *Over Her Dead Body*, Bronfen suggests that in the representation of the dead woman, "death is the limit of language, disrupting our sign system and image repertoire. Signifying nothing, it silently points to the indetermination of meaning" (54).

[97] Not least because the drama is a *Trauerspiel*. Jenkins argues that the term "tragedy" should only be read in terms of the planned trilogy (42). See also Burckhardt: "The very title justifies calling the play a 'tragedy.' If we keep our ears open for the resonance the words 'nature' and 'natural' had for the eighteenth century and especially for Goethe, we hear the tragic disharmony that vibrates in the phrase 'natural daughter'" (73-4).

> Dorthin zu wallen, stille zu verweilen,
> Bis ich vom Leben endlich selbst genese. (III.4.1569-71, 80-3)

Eugenie's "verhaßten Todes Bild" (I.6.585) is for her father "ein wahres, unauslöschlichs Bild" (I.6.575). The falsification of Eugenie as the image of death is demonstrated to an extreme in the Weltgeistlicher's fabricated description of her broken body. The Weltgeistlicher uses this image to convince the Herzog not only of his daughter's death but also of the necessity to quickly cremate the girl so that the father is spared the painful "real-life" image of his dead daughter. Thus, the "geliebte Bild" (III.1.1179) becomes "das zerstörte Bild! / Kein Fremder säh' es ohne Jammer an!" (III.4.1498-9). Because the Herzog is not able to adjust the "schön entworfne[] Bild" of his beloved daughter so quickly, the Weltgeistlicher continues with brutal detail to destroy the image of Eugenie, who is then merely "das morsche, schlotternde Gebein" (III.4.1529). The Herzog clings to the created image of his daughter, "du vielgeliebtes Bild, / Vollkommen, ewig jung und ewig gleich!" (IV.4.1715-6), and not even the elements should change her appearance:

> [..] Laß mit edlen Spezereien
> Das unschätzbare Bild zusammenhalten!
> Ja! Die Atomen alle, die sich einst
> Zur köstlichen Gestalt versammelten,
> Sie sollen nicht ins Element zurück. (III.4.1492-6)

> O! Wehe! Daß die Elemente nun,
> Von keinem Geist der Ordnung mehr beherrscht,
> Im leisen Kampf das Götterbild zerstören. (III.4.1533-5)

The final image the Herzog sees of his daughter, before he permanently leaves the stage, is telling: "So bist du teilhaft des Unendlichen, / Des Ewigen und bist auf ewig mein" (III.4.1724-5). The Herzog is able to console his loss, for he had already imagined his daughter as eternal and eternally his.

The image of death cannot contain Eugenie in the end. Through her redefinition of marriage, which she couches in terms of death, she demonstrates how the container can undermine the containment. She commands of the Gerichtsrat:

> Sobald ich mich die deine nenne, laß,
> Von irgend einem alten zuverläß'gen Knecht
> Begleitet, mich in Hoffnung einer künft'gen
> Beglückten Auferstehung mich begraben. (V.9.2911-4)

In the end, death is the way out for Eugenie. She will remain hidden in the countryside as if dead to become truly resurrected and restored after the political storm has passed. Yet the attempt at visual containment through an image of death is successful on some level, for Eugenie is gone and what remains is an image. However, since she is not really dead she does defy the fossilization on some level, and with her plan to eventually be restored among the aristocracy, it can be argued that Eugenie as image is unstable, even if those creating this image are unaware of the instability.

An Image – A Dream

The second image, which attempts to contain Eugenie through petrification, is the *Bild* that denotes a dream or something that is impossible or appears to be impossible. When Eugenie first encounters the König, after reawakening from the fall from the horse, she thinks she is still affected by a concussion and is seeing "ein Traumbild" (I.5.260). The *Bild* as dream is also later used to mark Eugenie's political aspirations (IV.1.1839-40). In addition, after the Gerichtsrat's initial marriage proposal to Eugenie is refused, he suggests to her that perhaps "was ihr im Augenblick verschmäht, / Euch bald ein sehnsuchtswertes, fernes Bild [erscheint]" (IV.3.2233-4).

As previously suggested, the attempts to make Eugenie a static image are not entirely successful in the end, which indicates that the two meanings of *Bild* are superficial and indeed

both indicate an apparent impossibility. Thus the repeated attempt to objectify woman as image as first represented in Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* proves unsuccessful. That the two meanings collapse and Eugenie as *Bild* is at the same time an impossible dream can be seen throughout the text. On multiple occasions, the Herzog draws a connection between the dream of Eugenie and then the image Eugenie. At the end of Act III, as the Herzog recites the final lines of his lament regarding his daughter's demise: dream, death, image, and life flow in and out of each other creating a highly unstable image of Eugenie:

> Lass eines dumpfen, dunklen Traumgeflechtes
> Verworrne Todesnetze mich zerreißen!
> Und bleibe mir, du vielgeliebtes Bild,
> Vollkommen, ewig jung und ewig gleich!
> Lass deiner klaren Augen reines Licht
> Mich immerfort umglänzen! Schwebe vor,
> Wohin ich wandle, zeige mir den Weg
> Durch dieser Erde Dornenlabyrinth!
> Du bist kein Traumbild, wie ich dich erblicke;
> Du warst, du bist. Die Gottheit hatte dich
> Vollendet einst gedacht und dargestellt.
> So bist du teilhaft des Unendlichen,
> Des Ewigen, und bist auf ewig mein. (III.4.1713-25)

Here Eugenie as image is part of the dream. Dream and image become intricately interconnected, so that the image is increasingly unstable and can be understood more and more as an impossibility.

The Herzog's unstable image of his daughter is repeated in other instances as well. After Eugenie's first fall from the horse and resurrection, he confuses image and dream. Even though he recognizes that the picture of death "nun ist's nicht mehr ein kranker Grillentraum" it remains for him "ein wahres, unauslöschlichs Bild" (I.6.573-4). Indeed, the Herzog's memory of the young Eugenie already places her outside of reality. Like a ghost, the child Eugenie hovers over

him when he awakens and, even as the girl frequently surprises him with little poems, she remains forever an ethereal image:

> Sie war die Seele dieses ganzen Hauses.
> Wie schwebte beim Erwachen sonst das Bild
> Des holden Kindes dringend mir entgegen!
> Hier fand ich oft ein Blatt von ihrer Hand,
> Ein geistreich, herzlich Blatt zum Morgengruß. (III.2.1289-93)

Eugenie as dream becomes significant for the Gerichtsrat as well. In the final two acts, the motif of Eugenie as image dwindles in frequency, but does not completely disappear. The Gouverneur, with whom Eugenie pleads for assistance, sees Eugenie as a "Friedensbild" (V.2.2432). Naturally, the Gerichtsrat sees Eugenie as an image as he instantly falls in love with the veiled woman, whose beauty he can only instinctively recognize. When he meets Eugenie, he believes to have found the image he had long been looking for. As he explains to Eugenie, once he had achieved what he wanted "Vermögen, Stand, Geschäft" he began to think about a wife:

> Da regte Phantasie mir manches Bild,
> Die Schätze der Erinnrung sichtend, auf,
> Und wohlgefällig schwebten sie vorüber.
> Zu keiner Wahl bewegte sich mein Herz. (IV.2.2161-5)

Here, he has reduced all women to dream images and is now happy to encounter an image to which his heart feels moved. Later, the Gerichtsrat petrifies his fantasy: Eugenie becomes the statue of a goddess he can worship:

> Wie du zum ersten Male mir erschienen,
> Erscheinst du bleibend mir, ein Gegenstand
> Der Neigung, der Verehrung. Deinetwillen
> Wünsch' ich zu leben, du gebietest mir.
> Und wenn der Priester sich sein Leben lang
> Der unsichtbaren Gottheit niederbeugt,
> Die im beglückten Augenblick vor ihm
> Als höchstes Musterbild vorüberging,
> So soll von deinem Dienste mich fortan,
> Wie du dich auch verhüllest, nichts zerstreun. (V.9.2938-47)

This declaration follows Eugenie's demand that he never visit her. Thus he creates the image of Eugenie in place of the live woman. Eugenie remains an image for those around her – whether they know she is dead or alive. In their minds, she is static and reachable. Yet, through this very assumption, the physical Eugenie has become invisible. She can become mobile behind the image. The containment is undermined, for the instability of Eugenie's dream image makes the petrification impossible. In addition, the major producers of her image – her father and the Weltgeistlicher – are absent from the stage. In their place is not the image, but the woman Eugenie.

The Limits of Language

The aesthetic *Grenzfigur* of language also works as both a limit and a border for Eugenie.[98] As a limit, the repetition of words and circular direction of speech – a kind of *ent-sagen*[99] – create stasis and wrap around Eugenie, the characters, and the action like a labyrinth. In addition, the power of the written word – language eternally fixed in one place – demonstrates an ultimate limit. At the same time, as a border, language crashes through these limits and indicates a way out. Eugenie, first presented as a poet, becomes the author of her life.

Language as a limit is subtly marked by the 'negative' or 'oppositional' prefixes such as *un-*, *ent-*, and *ver-* , which are repeated with extraordinary frequency. Particularly the *un-* prefix can be found stacked in phrases and sentences. The Herzog speaks of "*ungeteilten* / Und

[98] For an in-depth study of language through a Lacanian reading of this text, see Wagner's "*Die Natürliche Tochter* and the Problem of Representation."

[99] Swales reads the term *Ent-sagen* as a "as a dialectically charged process of *un-saying*, that is, a *Sagen* which both re-figures and critically dis-figures themes and motifs that are central to Goethe's oeuvre" ("Goethe" 62).

unbegrenzten Dank" when the König agrees to recognize Eugenie as his kin (I.5.283-4, *emphasis mine*)[100] and the pain of love upon learning of Eugenie's death:

> Der Schmerz um Liebe, wie die Liebe, bleibt
> *Unteilbar* und *unendlich*. Fühl' ich doch,
> Welch *ungeheures Unglück* den betrifft,
> Der seines Tags gewohntes Gut vermisst. (III.2.1274-7)

Eugenie speaks of her "frischer Sinn, die jugendliche Lust" which can be useful to her father and his political aspirations for they

> Verscheuchen jene Träume, die der Welt
> *Unüberwindlich ungeheure* Last
> Auf eine Menschenbrust zerknirschend wälzen. (I.6.490-2)

The Sekretär regards Eugenie as an "*unbedeutend unbekanntes* Kind" (II.1.734-5). The Weltgeistlicher demands to sit on the council, which decides "Zum *unvermeidlich Ungeheuren* stimmt" (III.1.1242). In the Sekretär's attempts to calm the Herzog and the latter's response the oppositional prefix not only occurs but is also repeated:

> Sekretär. Das *ungeheuer Unerwartete*
> Bedrängt dich fürchterlich, erhabner Mann.
>
> Herzog. Wohl *unerwartet* kam's, nicht *ungewarnt*.
> In meinen Armen ließ ein guter Geist
> Sie von den Toten wieder auferstehn
> Und zeigte mir gelind, vorübereilend,
> Ein Schreckliches, nun ewig Bleibendes.
> Da sollt' ich strafen die Verwegenheit,
> Dem Übermut mich scheltend widersetzen,
> Verbieten jene Raserei, die, sich
> *Unsterblich, unverwundbar* wähnend, blind,
> Wetteifern mit dem Vogel, sich durch Wald
> Und Fluss und Sträuche von dem Felsen stürzt. (III.2.1334-45)

Eugenie's choice of words in reaction to her options – exile to the islands or marriage – demonstrates her opposition: "Und nennst du Wahl? wenn *Unvermeidliches* / *Unmöglichem* sich gegenüberstellt? (IV.4.2275-6). In two final examples, the 'negative' prefix *zer-* is used in

[100] In the following quotes, all italics are my emphasis.

combination with *un-* and *ent-* when the Weltgeistlicher falsely recounts Eugenie's deadly fall from the horse:

> O lass mich schweigen, daß nicht meine Worte
> Auch die Erinnrung der Verlornen schänden!
> Laß mich verhehlen, wie sie durchs Gebüsch,
> Durch Felsen hergeschleift, *entstellt* und blutig,
> *Zerrissen* und *zerschmettert* und *zerbrochen*,
> *Unkenntlich*, mir im Arm zur Erde hing. (III.4.1503-8)

And there is a repetition of *ver-* when Eugenie speaks to the Mönch:

> Mein Vater! Laß den ach! Mir nun *versagten*,
> *Verkümmerten*, *verbotnen* Vaternamen
> Auf dich, den edlen Fremden, übertragen. (V.7.2682-4)

In this case, the negative, hopeless "*ver-*" adjectives are connected through alliteration to the name of the father (*Vater*, *Vatername*), which Eugenie connects equally by alliteration to the "Fremde[r]," her spiritual father the Mönch. By connecting the negativity and hopelessness of the "ver-" to both father figures, there is arguably a subtle critique of patriarchy.

The inaction in the play is further underscored by a repetition of words, and in some cases, the juxtaposition of a word and its opposite. Along with the repetition of the 'oppositional' prefixes, I contend that language remains on a circular track, always repeating itself and remaining static. The Herzog wants to look out into the water "in's *Unbegrenzte* mit *unbegrenzter* Liebe zu erfreun" (III.4.1621-2). The Sekretär greets the Weltgeistlicher, "*Tritt still* herein, in diese *Totenstille*!" (III.1.1149). The Herzog and Weltgeistlicher repeat the same word pattern, the latter speaker expanding on the first:

> Herzog. Ach so *willkommen*! *Unwillkommener* Bote.
> […]
> Weltgeistlicher. *Willkommen* scheint ein *unwillkommener* Bote,
> So lang' er schweigt und noch der Hoffnung Raum,
> Der Täuschung Raum in unserm Herzen gibt. (III.4.1431; 39-41)

> Weltgeistlicher. Die *Trauer* wird durch *Trauern* immer herber.
> Herzog. Durch *Trauern* wird die *Trauer* zum Genuss. (III.4.1559-60)

In her reaction to the Sekretär's evil plans for Eugenie, the Hofmeisterin's words demonstrate the web she is already caught in forces her to repetition and even to death:

> Mich stoßt ihr mit hinab. Ich soll mit ihr,
> Mit der *Verratnen* die *Verräterin*,
> Der *Toten* Schicksal vor dem *Tode* teilen. (II.1.800-2)

The most static of all language is the written word, as evidenced by the König's signed decree. The incredible power of this document repeatedly underscores the power of the written word. The Hofmeisterin presents this decree to any person willing to assist Eugenie in her plight. The contents of the decree are never revealed to the reader, rendering them more mysterious. Yet its powers cannot be denied, as each helper steps away from Eugenie in horror upon reading the document. Many critics have discussed the authenticity of the document, which would implicate the König in the kidnapping of Eugenie. For my reading of the text, its authenticity is irrelevant.[101] The static words, the signature – falsified or not – are what constrict the otherwise willing, helpful people. Their dynamic action is brought to a full stop and they must back away from this ultimate limit.[102]

Eugenie above all remains trapped in the repetition of the words and in the stasis of the helpers by the command of the König fixated on paper. The written word proves to be her final downfall. Yet, there is another aspect of the written word which provides some hope and demonstrates how the feminine voice is not entirely asphyxiated. In the second act, Eugenie also creates a written document. It is a sonnet expressing her joy about her upcoming legitimation ceremony.[103] At the end of the play, the reader is just as much waiting for Eugenie to die – and

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[101] See Dassanowsky-Harris for a discussion of the *letter de cachet* (222-7).
[102] See also Burckhardt (87), Stammen, and Wagner ("Problem of Representation" 202). Staiger and Bahr see the 'Blatt' as a symbol of modern politics. Writing allows the author to distance him/herself from his/her actions and consequences (Staiger [394-5], Bahr [235]).
[103] Both Burckhardt (79) and Wagner ("Problem of Representation"189) attribute great poetic power to the sonnet.

follow the format of the *Trauerspiel*– as s/he is to learn the fate of the poem. Just as Eugenie chooses her own method of death from which she plans to resurrect herself, the hidden sonnet suggests that the tools of oppression and patriarchy as exemplified in the König's decree can be counteracted in some way by the written word of a woman. Moreover, as an extension of the sonnet, Eugenie achieves some emancipation as the author of her own life.

V. Space and Time

Ambiguity as the mark of the *Grenzfigur* in *Die natürliche Tochter* is the most extreme in the temporal and geographic settings of the piece. In contrast to other border figures in this text, which are contained via limits, the very limitlessness of time and space seem to contain any sense of emancipation or female independence by placing them outside of history. Thus, political stasis is created in the text exactly by removing Eugenie not only from the world of politics but also from the physical and temporal world.

Outside of Time

The temporal border figure is highly instable in this text. The play does not occur in a specific period of history.[104] At the same time, throughout the text, the issue of time is thematized. There are implicit and explicit references to various time periods, which complicate any attempt to situate the text in history. In addition, time as speed – that is, velocity – is

[104] Burgess argues that only this play can be called "truly intercultural, in that it refuses to be interpreted by any narrow reference to time or place or specific events. […] but the play as we have it is no more 'about' the French Revolution than about any other specific example of social unrest or political upheaval" (146). Keller-Loibl remarks, "[…] werden im Drama weder die Revolution und ihre Folgen dargestellt, noch sind konkrete historische Antezedenzien in das Stück eingegangen" (373). In contrast, suggests that this text "refers to concrete history, namely to the French Revolution" ("Other" 274).

emphasized repeatedly. Whether in stage directions or dialogue, how fast or slow something happens is frequently mentioned. Most often, the velocity is quick and, combined with the otherwise indeterminate time, the plight and reaction of Eugenie seems to be propelled faster and faster outside a realm of time reference.

Various references to specific time periods – from the Middle Ages to Barock to Modernity – mingle with more implicit suggestions to create a confusion of historical time. As previously discussed, there are numerous references to knights and *ritterlich*, which hearken back to the Middle Ages. Other medieval elements include the description of Eugenie's room as "*im gotischen Stil*" (II.1)[105] and an emphasis on *Maß* – obtaining balance. As the Hofmeister reminds Eugenie: "Aus Mäßigkeit entspringt ein reines Glück" (II.5.1076).[106] In each instance, the medieval references are associated with the feminine as they are directly connected to Eugenie.

In addition to references to the Middle Ages, the drama is flavored with implicit Barock elements. Throughout the text there are various examples of the popular "Rede und Antwort" format used in Barock plays.[107] One such example can be found in the conversation between Eugenie and her father following the König's private promise to recognize the girl as his kin.

Eugenie. Er scheint nicht glücklich, ach! Und ist so gut.
Herzog. Die Güte selbst erregt oft Widerstand.
Eugenie. Wer ist so hart, sich ihm zu widersetzen?
Herzog. Der Heil des Ganzen von der Strenge hofft.
Eugenie. Des Königs Milde sollte Milde zeugen.
Herzog. Des Königs Milde zeugt Verwegenheit.
Eugenie. Wie edel hat ihn die Natur gebildet.
Herzog. Doch auf zu hohen Platz hinaufgestellt.
Eugenie. Und ihn mit so viel Tugend ausgestattet.
Herzog. Zur Häuslichkeit, zum Regimente nicht.

[105] See also Schulthies (326-7).
[106] Eugenie rejects this lesson by converting balance (Mäßigkeit) into mediocrity: "Wenn du ein mäßig Ziel dir vorgesteckt" (II.5.1077).
[107] See also Schulz (297).

Eugenie. Von altem Heldenstamme grünt er auf.
Herzog. Die Kraft entgeht vielleicht dem späten Zweige.
Eugenie. Die Schwäche zu vertreten, sind wir da.
Herzog. Sobald er unsre Stärke nicht verkennt. (I.6.429-42)

Beyond citing a popular Barock dialogue format, this style of "Rede und Antwort" does several other things simultaneously. It calls attention to itself as a stylized dialogue. There can be no question that this is a play and that we are not watching any kind of realistic representation of a conversation. In addition, as discussed in the previous section on language, the repetition of words and, here also, motifs, creates a circular movement in the dialogue. And finally, and somewhat paradoxically, the short lines cited one after the other without pause or breath increase the overall speed of the conversation.

An additional example begins to show a pattern of this Barock style of dialogue. Here, the Gerichtsrat speaks with Eugenie and slowly approaches the idea of marriage:

Eugenie. In leere Träume denkst du mich zu wiegen.
Gerichtsrat. Du bist gerettet, wenn du glauben kannst.
Eugenie. So zeige mir des Retters treues Bild.
Gerichtsrat. Ich zeig' ihn dir, er bietet seine Hand!
Eugenie. Du! Welch ein Leichtsinn überraschte dich?
Gerichtsrat. Entschiedne bleibt auf ewig mein Gefühl.
Eugenie. Der Augenblick, vermag er solche Wunder?
Gerichtsrat. Das Wunder ist des Augenblicks Geschöpf.
Eugenie. Und Irrtum auch der Übereilung Sohn.
Gerichtsrat. Ein Mann, der dich gesehen, irrt nicht mehr.
Eugenie. Erfahrung bleibt des Lebens Meisterin. (IV.2.2145-55)

Again, Eugenie is part of the dialogue of increased velocity. Once again, the element of time is directly connected to Eugenie. More specifically, this type of dialogue is clearly defined in terms of the feminine as is clear by looking at the other instances. They all take place in the fifth and final act and – with one exception –Eugenie is one of the interlocutors.[108]

[108] See also IV.2.2060-6, IV.3.2238-55, and V.7.2745-7. For the exception, the Hofmeisterin speaks with the Gerichtsrat, but they are talking about Eugenie (IV.1.1816-43).

The final references to history and time point towards a more modern era than the Middle Ages and Barock. In contrast to Eugenie's room "*im gotischen Stil*", the Herzog's room is "*prächtig, modern*" (III.1). The other reference to 'modernity' is more implicit and can be found first in the idea that Eugenie can be exiled to the islands. The Mönch tells Eugenie about his experiences working as a missionary on the islands and encourages her to do so as well:

> Ich tat's!--Als jungen Mann entführte schon
> Zu wilden Stämmen mich der Geist hinüber.
> Ins rohe Leben bracht' ich milde Sitte,
> Ich brachte Himmelshoffnung in den Tod.
> […]
> Du aber, jung, von allen Banden frei,
> Gestoßen in das Weite, dringe vor
> Und rette dich! Was du als Elend fühlst,
> Verwandelt sich in Wohltat! Eile fort! (V.7.2766-9, 78-81)

The practice of mission work on foreign soil was most popular during the era of colonialism, placing then this text within that time frame. In contrast to the previous time references, modernity is defined in terms of the masculine. This points at a containment of the woman outside the modern time frame.

The time references remain scant and repeatedly underscore the ambiguity of time prevalent in Goethe's play. Completely unambivalent is the velocity of the events. The words "eilig," "eilen" and "unaufhaltsam" pepper the text, driving the events forward and giving a sense of urgency to Eugenie's plight. Once inspired, Eugenie must quickly write out her sonnet of praise to the König: "Und nun geschwind zum Pergament, zum Griffel! / Ich hab' es ganz und *eilig* fass' ich's auf" (II.4.942-3, *emphasis mine*). She incorporates the same sense of urgency in the poem, ending with the following words: "Mir ist, als müsst' ich *unaufhaltsam eilen*, / Das Leben, das du gabst, für dich zu lassen" (II.4.959-60, *emphasis mine*).

Throughout the play, time is thematized. Events are anticipated ("Du nahest, großer Tag" [II.4.966], and "die Tage schreiten vor" [II.4.998-9]). Eugenie hurries to her trunk (II.5), the kidnapping should happen "mit rascher Eile" (III.1.1167), and, in the end, once the decision to marry has been made, Eugenie is ready to run to the altar:

> Ich zaudre nicht, ich eile, dir zu folgen!
> Hier meine Hand; wir gehen zum Altar. (V.9.2954-5)

Combined with the breathless "Rede und Antwort" dialogue, the language of speed races to the end of the text. There are only a few moments of real pause. In one, even as Eugenie hurries to find parchment and stylus to write down her poem, she then slows down: "*Sie rezitiert langsam und schreibt*" (II.4). Upon learning of his daughter's death, the Herzog not only slows down or feels time stand still, but instead he is outside of time. He exclaims, "Ich fühle keine Zeit; denn sie ist hin" (III.4.1592). Without Eugenie, there is no time.

Even as the velocity of language ramps up, at the same time, reading the text feels more akin to the futile running in quicksand than on an open road. This paradox is based in the fact that while the words evoke ever increasing speeds, they are just words. There is virtually no action. While some absence of action can be explained due to the difficulties in staging said action, such explanations are not entirely satisfactory for *Die Natürliche Tochter*. Action scenes such as the hunt and Eugenie's wild horse ride and fall are clearly scenes that cannot be staged well. Thus, the messenger report is employed to describe the action off-stage. The same cannot be said for the complete lacuna regarding Eugenie's kidnapping. In fact, for dramatic purposes, the actual kidnapping should have formed the third act. In the second act, the reader learns of the plans to kidnap the girl and in the fourth, we see Eugenie post abduction at the port to be sent into exile. Unlike the hunt scene, the action of the kidnapping is not even relayed via messenger

report. In fact, the reader never understands how a girl who so daringly rides her horse is led so meekly away from her home and her father.

In place of an action-packed Act III presenting the abduction of the girl, we have, instead, a completely static act, in which the long and drawn out lamentations of the Herzog over his daughter's death are painstakingly recorded. Of course, the fact that we know Eugenie is actually alive makes this act completely anti-climactic.[109] What is significant for my reading are the utter static nature of this Act as well as the complete lack of transition into and from this Act. By avoiding action and skipping from one conversation to the next unconnected conversation, the play enacts the containment of action. The reader is first stuck in the tedious sorrows of a father and then, in the final two acts, in Eugenie's repeated, desperate, and ultimately, unsuccessful attempts to find help. The stasis of the final acts is underscored by the fact that the location moves only slightly and Eugenie is rooted in one spot as each potential helper approaches her.[110]

Out of this World

Stuck in a time that is none, so too are Eugenie and the text as a whole fixed in a location that is limited and limitless at the same time.[111] There are no explicit indications of the location of the events of Goethe's *Natürliche Tochter*. Because of Goethe's own declarations about pouring his thoughts on the French Revolution into the text, it is tempting to locate the play in France. This temptation is certainly supported by the knowledge that the basic plot is based on the memoirs of the illegitimate French princess Stéphanie de Bourbon-Conti. However, there is

[109] See also Peacock ("Incompleteness" 128).
[110] See also Swales. She argues that in Acts IV and V "are governed by ritualistic, yet barren iterativity" ("Goethe" 67).
[111] See Hass (221), Wolff (40), Würffel (115).

no actual textual evidence to support such an assumption. We know this: the country has a port from which ships can sail to an island. Such scant information can hardly pinpoint the text in France, since many European countries have ports. Some critics suggest that the lack of definite time and location indicate that Goethe wanted to make more abstract observations on the topic of revolution. This interpretation is problematic, because there are implicit clues hinting at specific historical times and places. At the same time, Goethe did not use specific information. He changed names or reduced people to function, and he left locations unnamed. Instead of a strict abstraction of events, Goethe is covering facts. In this way, the events can be contained; and, most importantly, Eugenie, the emancipating woman, can be contained.

Eugenie also is contained by geographic features. The geographical *Grenzfigur* separates inside from outside, nature from man-made architecture, land from water, political institutions from the church, and even social classes.[112] The text begins outside in nature and progresses indoors to the rooms of Eugenie and then of the Herzog. In the final two acts, the events take place outside, once again, but this time in a man-made environment, in a natural environment made by men. In Act IV, we encounter Eugenie at a cross-section of borders, each overlapping each other. She is at the harbor "*zur einen Seite ein Palast, auf der andern eine Kirche, im Grund eine Reihe Bäume, durch die man nach dem Hafen hinab sieht*" (IV.1). Thus, she stands in the space between the political and the religious. At the same time, Eugenie is at the border of nature and can see outside of nature through a line, a limit, of trees. Through this porous limit of trees, she can see the harbor, the edge of her country, at the border to the ocean. In the final act, Eugenie moves beyond the intersection of borders and is at a single threshold. The palace, the church, the trees are all gone. She stands literally at the edge of her *Vaterland*.[113]

[112] For a different interpretation on space in Goethe's text, see Bänninger.
[113] Görner also argues that Eugenie has a *Grenz-Erfahrung* at this border of her homeland (106).

For Eugenie, standing on the edge returns her to nature, but an unfriendly, barren nature. As she contemplates her situation and impending exile, she states:

> So ist mir denn das schönste Königreich,
> Der Hafenplatz, von Tausenden belebt,
> Zur Wüste worden, und ich bin allein. (V.6.2606-8)

From start to finish, Eugenie remains forever a border figure. As an illegitimate child of a Herzog and Fürstin, she is at the threshold to aristocracy, without actually being a full member of that social class. In the same way, she intends for her marriage to a bourgeois man, which is should situate her clearly within the bourgeoisie, to remain unconsummated, thus leaving her on the edge of the middle class as well. Eugenie is then part of each social class, but belongs wholly to neither.

The sense of dislocation, of not belonging, of being lost is heightened all the more by the repeated motif of the *Ziel*. From the start of the text, the *Ziel* is closely linked with disorientation. In the opening lines, the König declares:

> Das flücht'ge Ziel, das Hunde, Ross und Mann,
> Auf seine Fährte bannend, nach sich reißt,
> Der edle Hirsch, hat über Berg und Tal
> So weit uns irr' geführt, daß ich mich selbst,
> Obgleich so landeskundig, hier nicht finde.
> Wo sind wir, Oheim? Herzog, sage mir,
> Zu welchen Hügeln schweiften wir heran? (I.1.1-7).

Having a goal makes one disoriented: The König knows the land he is hunting in, but chasing after the goal makes him lose his way.[114] The *Ziel* in this passage clearly works on two levels. On the level of the plot, the *Ziel* is the buck being hunted. At the same time, the *Ziel* is something else much less tangible. In the case of the König, it is retaining his power and regaining the loyalty of his subjects. For Eugenie, the *Ziel* is to become recognized as kin of the König and,

[114] Keller-Loibl also argues for a dual reading: "Der König hat längst die Orientierung verloren. Er findet sich in der Welt, insbesondere in der politischen nicht mehr zurecht (376).

therefore, to share power with the rulers. But this *Ziel*, itself, works in a twofold way. It is both a goal, and, simultaneously, a target, which makes Eugenie like the buck being chased by all. When Eugenie proudly puts on her mother's royal finery, hoping to become the *Ziel* of all eyes, the Hofmeisterin observes that Eugenie will be "Zum Ziele der Bewunderung nicht allein, / Zum Ziel des Neides und des Hasses mehr" (II.5.1091-2). The *Ziel* as goal carries various meanings (power, loyalty, good works), and turns the one pursuing the *Ziel* into the *Ziel* as target.

The target, *das Ziel*, is the emancipated Eugenie, an androgynous border figure who challenges notions of femininity, marriage, and sexuality. "As a 'sister' she acquires a personal freedom that goes beyond any class or hierarchical order" (Lange, "Other" 269). Like the repeated references to the natural storm of revolution throughout the text, the inevitability of change suggested by this illegitimate woman, this *natürliche Tochter*, in new definitions of femininity, marriage, and sexuality is framed as if it were merely "a force of nature." However, this is not a natural occurrence. I argue instead that the *natürlich* which defines Eugenie as illegitimate equally defines the natural or good progress of women. Women are meant to be emancipated and in Goethe's text, they stand at the threshold which functions simultaneously as a glass wall. At once independent of her father, who laments, "Und nun ist sie auf ewig mir entrückt" (III.4.1568), Eugenie is also temporarily displaced from the political stage. Plotting her return to the public sphere, Eugenie refuses to remove her "Heldenschmuck" and bow to expectations of femininity.

Chapter 3

Judith Contained – Judaism Contained: Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith*

Hebbel declared of his Judith: "es wird ihr klar, daß sie über die Gränzen hinaus gegangen ist, daß sie mindestens das Rechte aus unrechten Gründen gethan hat" (T1872).[115] Traditionally the "Rechte aus unrechten Gründen" is interpreted to mean that Judith did well to kill the enemy of her people, but that she is still considered a failure for doing so as an act of revenge.[116] However, this interpretation does not take the whole statement into consideration. For it does not relate what the transgression of "Gränzen" has to do with murdering to avenge a rape. I contend that the "unrechten Gründen" Hebbel charges of his Judith is the transgression of limits – a transgression of the limits placed on women based on the 19th-century conception of *Geschlechtscharaktere*. Judith crosses the border between female and male, between private and public. For that she must be punished. The text attempts to contain the emancipated border figure Judith, who dares to become politically engaged and seek personal (sexual) fulfillment. At the same time, the play attempts to contain the contemporaneous emancipation of the Jew. Ultimately, Hebbel's *Judith* undermines these containment strategies, thereby indicating that the emancipation movement of the Enlightenment means freedom for all: man *and* woman, Christian *and* Jew.

From the start, the containment of Judith is subtly suggested by introducing the title figure only in the second act. The first act focuses instead on Holofernes, who is the

[115] Hebbel, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Ed. Richard Maria Werner. 2. Abteilung. Tagebücher. Band II. Bern: Herbert Lang, 1970.
[116] See Bührig (45) and Wells ("Ethical"103).

mighty general of Nebudchanezzar. He besieges the small, Hebrew town of Bethulien by cutting off its water supply. He has sworn he will destroy this people, who refused to surrender to him. Judith appears in the second act where she recounts a sensual dream. She also relates the strange events of her wedding night: some strange power stopped her husband from consummating their marriage. Her husband dies six months later, leaving her untouched and believing that her beauty is a curse for men. She is interrupted by Ephraim, a weak man desperate for Judith's love, as he has come to warn her of the impending danger represented by Holofernes. Judith challenges Ephraim to dispose of the threat as a sign of his love. When he shrinks back from this challenge, Judith begins to hatch a plan of seduction and murder. In the third act, we find Judith in prayer, looking for a sign from God that her plan is His will. Once she receives confirmation, the scene shifts to the town square, where we encounter groups of weak men, desperate to give in to Holofernes instead of fight to save their families. They are happy at the distraction Daniel, a mute man who can suddenly speak again, represents and quickly follow his prophet call to stone his brother. After learning more about Holofernes, Judith instructs the townspeople to wait five more days before surrendering to the general. The fourth act is first dominated by several self-aggrandizing monologues delivered by Holofernes. With Judith's arrival, the seduction begins, and Holofernes considers himself the victor from the outset. At the start of the fifth act, we begin to see Holofernes' weakness: out of jealousy, he slays a man for attempting to approach Judith. He demands that Judith return from her five promised days in the desert early, because he is afraid another man may have her before he does. After more seductive conversation, Holofernes takes Judith into his sleeping quarters. A brief time later, Judith comes back from the tent, disheveled and

somewhat bewildered. She tells her maid in confused and violent words about her experience and then returns to the tent to decapitate the sleeping Holofernes. Judith and her maid return to Bethulien with the general's head and Judith is celebrated for her heroism. The men then joyfully attack the "headless" Assyrian army. In the end, Judith makes only a single request of the town elders and priests for herself: they are to kill her, if she discovers she is pregnant. Her final prayer is for God to make her barren.

The story of Judith has captured the imagination of clergy, poets, painters, sculptors, playwrights, and audiences since it was first written in the second century before the Common Era (E. Osterkamp 170).[117] Judith's tale was originally told as an encouragement to the Jewish people in the Maccabee Era in the Apocryphal text, *The Book of Judith.* A reversal of gender roles is already present there. During the Middle Ages, the Judith-material served as an example of the incarnation of Christian virtues in numerous plays (177). In the 10th century poem "Judith" in Old English, Judith appears as "an ambiguous figure" and there is "effort made by the poem to contain Judith's potential transgressions within a model of idealized, heroic Christian femininity" (Estes 330). During the Reformation, the story of Judith was used as moral propaganda to contain "the enemies of the faith" (Hein 63). With the dawn of Enlightenment, when dogma was exchanged for reason, a significant change came in the presentation of the Judith-material (E. Osterkamp 188). Instead of an embodiment of faith or virtue, the Judith-material now explored psychological aspects, including representations of gender and theodicy.

[117] For a treatment of the Judith-material from the Barock to Biedermeier, see E. Osterkamp, and from Hebbel to Brecht, see Hein. For a complete catalogue of the literary works based on the Apocryphal *Book of Judith* see Radavich. For an overview and analysis of visual representations of Judith, see Philpot, Salter, Wiltschnigg, Peters, and Vollmer.

Hebbel's first play, *Judith*, published in 1841,[118] clearly demonstrates this shift. For the first time in the treatment of the story of Judith, there is a "psychologische Problematik" (Hein 63), which allows for the 'modern' conceptions of "Geschlechtermetaphysik" and "Geschichtstheorie" (E. Osterkamp 188).[119] The scholarship on *Judith* falls within these two categories. In the first, an analysis of the play as a "Geschlechtertragödie" is primarily read through Freud.[120] There, Judith is a "'phallic woman' motivated by penis-envy, whose rebellion against the proper norms of her gender is appropriately punished" (Stocker 130).[121] The "gewaltige Vereinigung" between Judith and Holofernes is read as an "Inzestphantasie auf die Mutter" (Masanetz 104).[122]

In the second category, critics interpret Hebbel's drama as a "symbolische Geschichtsdrama" which reflects either the tension between the individual and the idea or between theodicy and nihilism. The basis for both analyses is generally a diary entry Hebbel wrote regarding the function of God in *Judith*:

> Die Gottheit selbst, wenn sie zur Erreichung großer Zwecke auf ein Individuum, unmittelbar einwirkt und sich dadurch einen willkürlichen Eingriff [...] ins Weltgetriebe erlaubt, kann ihr Werkzeug von der Zermalmung durch dasselbe Rad, das es einen Augenblick aufhielt oder lenkte, nicht schützen. (T 1011)[123]

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[118] Hebbel's *Judith* was first performed on stage in July 1840 "in a mutilated theatre version" (Purdie 57) – the sex and on-stage murder were sacrificed to censorship (Purdie 73). The play was then published in its original entirety in 1841.

[119] As Hein suggests, Hebbel's "*Judith* bedeutet […] zugleich Endpunkt und Anfang einer Entwicklung. Er gibt der Gestaltung des Stoffes mit seinen individuellen, religiösen, sozialen und politischen Implikationen eine andere, 'moderne' Richtung und begründet eine neue Rezeption des Judith-Stoffes, die über Nestroy, Kaiser, Giraudoux bis zu Brecht führt" (63).

[120] For other analyses on the "Geschlechtertragödie" see Fenner, Kleinschmidt, Peters, Wiltschnigg, Bührig, and Hein.

[121] See also Kreuzer (374) and Martínez (100).

[122] Other Freudian readings include Jacobus and Kahane, who both read the symbolic castration of Holofernes as a result of the defloration" (Jacobus [117], Kahane [181-2]). Freud talks about Judith as proof of "female frigidity/hysteria" (Stocker 179).

[123] Hebbel, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Ed. Richard Maria Werner. 2. Abteilung. Tagebücher. Band I. Several critics remark on this split. See also von Wiese (*Tragödie* 572) and Martínez (8).

The most popular understanding of this comment in *Judith* scholarship is to take Hebbel's words at face value and to read Judith as God's instrument who is crushed by His very commission.[124] For most critics, Judith is crushed because she recognizes that she killed Holofernes for selfish reasons – out of personal revenge after he rapes her – and not for the glory of God nor in order to protect her people (this is commonly referred to as the *Motivverschiebung*).[125] Other critics are troubled by the idea of a God who cannot stop His instrument from being crushed, particularly when that instrument is acting under His commission. Within this nihilist reading, the presence or even existence of God in the text is called into question (Musschoot 123). Benno von Wiese reads *Judith* as a "Tragödie des Nihilismus" (*Tragödie* 378) and Ziegler argues that one can see in Hebbel's drama "die gottferne Nichtigkeit des menschlichen Daseins" ("*Judith*" 117).[126]

Just as the text functions as a mirror of the times with regard to psychology, gender, and history, it also contributes to the ongoing discussion of emancipation of both women and Jews in the 19th century. While most critics recognize that there is a commentary on bourgeois gender roles in the play,[127] most ignore the implications of the

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[124] See also Durzak, Sengle, Meetz, Stolte ("*Judith*"), Walzel, Lütkehaus. For some, God is explicitly present in the text (Kraft 74). Garland reads the entire text as a direct response to Christianity: Judith anticipates Christ (124) and Holofernes represents a "violent reversal of Christ's acceptance of His personal sacrifice" (67). See also Reinhardt (*Apologie*).

[125] "That the Judith of the play is violated by Holofernes and that she kills him out of personal revenge, is according to Hebbel the 'foundation' of the work" (Gerlach, *Hebbel* 43). See also Bührig (42), Durzak (56), Fenner ("Unbedingtheitsspiel" 37), Fricke (324), Graham (18), Hein (72), Kreuzer (372), Lamport ("Practical Criticism" 202), Lütkehaus ("Judith" 92), Martínez (209), Meetz (22), Musschoot (124), E. Osterkamp (192), Reinhardt (*Apologie* 88), Sengle (206), Stolte ("*Judith*" 36), Tobiasz (32), Wagner (88), Wittkowski ("Das Tragische" 7). Only Wittowski argues that Judith "leidet unter der Tat, nicht unter deren Motiven" ("Das Tragische" 12). These two sub-categories also exist among the previously discussed scholarship on Judith as a "Geschlechtertragödie" albeit much less pronounced.

[126] See also Fricke (314), Flygt (27). and Kratsch (14). Wittkowski argues against Nihilism, but instead insists:"vielmehr trauert sie ihrem enttäuschten Glauben, ihren Illusionen nach" ("Das Tragische" 7).

[127] "Hebbel's text reflects the ideology of the sexes of his time by presenting a horrific example of what happens to women who want to leave their traditional space. […] The message of the text seems to be that a woman cannot move rationally on the male stage of world politics, because her female *nature* will betray

anti-Semitic rhetoric. In this chapter, I read across the various border figures – gender, sexuality, Judaism – all of which are defined in terms of the feminine. The text demonstrates a clear desire to stabilize these ambiguous border figures, which, by extension, attempts to halt the emancipating Jewess, Judith. However, the text itself subtly undermines these containment strategies, suggesting that political stasis is neither possible nor desirable. In the first section, I demonstrate how 19th century notions of masculinity and femininity are challenged in and through the figure of the androgynous title figure, Judith. In the second section, I explore the exploded boundary of female sexuality through Judith's desire to experience sexual intercourse. In particular, I challenge the status quo reading that Judith was raped as a containment strategy which attempts to remove agency from woman. In the final section, I investigate the border figure of the Jew in Hebbel's text by contrasting it with the Apocryphal text as well as Hebbel's general anti-Semitic treatment of the Jew in his other works. In each section, the containment strategies of the various border figures are exposed and revealed to be unsuccessful on the whole. Ultimately, I show that in and through Judith the border figures in Hebbel's drama cannot be limited nor contained, thereby suggesting that within an enlightened society neither women's emancipation and nor Jewish emancipation are processes that can be halted.

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her" (Zaragoza 107). By contrast, Gerlach vehemently declares that "the play certainly was not written in opposition to the emancipation movement" (*Hebbel* 41). See also Garland (133). Koller-Andorf goes one step further and sees Hebbel as a "Vorkämpfer für die Frauenemanzipation […]. Hebbel hat seine Frauen mit der Menschenwürde ausgestattet, die Grundrechte voraussetzt, zu einer Zeit, wo diese den "Frauenspersonen" verweigert wurden, noch keine Emanzipationsbewegung im Gange war – und auch nachher; ferner unabhängig von den Epochen, in welchen seine Dramen handeln. Die Integration der Frauenwürde in die Menschenwürde ist sicher Voraussetzung für Gleichberechtigung" (144).

I. Gender Roles at the Border

Hebbel's *Judith* challenges 19th century notions of masculinity and femininity through the female androgynous border figure Judith. On the one hand, there appears to be a clear pronouncement of gender roles, as is evident in Holofernes' comment to Judith: "Ich bin bestimmt, Wunden zu schlagen, du, Wunden zu heilen. Wär' ich in meinem Beruf lässig, so hättest du keinen Zeitvertreib" (53). Men are the ones with the occupation (causing injury) and the women are the ones meant to clean up after and heal men.[128] Despite this pronouncement, the women and men in the text are all questionable figures: a licentious widow, an overly proud general, soldiers unable to act without a leader, cowardly townsmen who take advantage of fear and confusion, mothers who contemplate eating their children. In the end, the text offers no ideal representation of either gender, suggesting that such ideals are clearly a societal construction. Without the constraints of societal pressure, the text leaves Judith in the end at a crossroad between fulfilling prescribed gender roles by becoming a mother or rejecting such gender roles. Judith's choice of death over motherhood indicates some level of emancipation. However, that she is willing to destroy her own life in addition to that of the fetus calls that emancipation into question.

In this section, I first discuss the definitions of masculinity and femininity as represented in the text. I demonstrate how each is called into question: the role of man is critiqued through hyperbole on the one hand, and complete inaction on the other. The role of woman is predominantly critiqued through the status of the mother. Finally, I show how Judith challenges notions of femininity through a variety of masculine traits. In the end, the attempts to contain Judith through 19th-century notions of femininity are

[128] Judith's method of healing the manly man Holofernes is ironic in light of this statement.

undermined through the representation of an androgynous Judith, who becomes the hero of her people.

When is a Man a Man?

Notions of masculinity are called into question in and through the figure of Judith. She is drawn to Holofernes from the start because he is a "man's man," yet, in the end, she must destroy him. For Judith, a real man should be a hero. When Mirza questions Judith for rejecting Ephraim, Judith retorts, "Jedes Weib hat ein Recht, von jedem Mann zu verlangen, daß er ein Held sei" (28). In fact, it is the very manliness of Holofernes which threatens Judith's internal resolve to kill him: "Gott meiner Väter, schütze mich vor mir selbst, daß ich nicht verehren muß, was ich verabscheue! Er ist ein Mann" (63). The idea that Holofernes represents the ideal man is supported in a later conversation between Holofernes' servant and Mirza. Judith's maid challenges the servant, "Warum bist du nicht ein Mann wie Holofernes?" (66). However, what makes Holofernes the ideal man – his heroic bravour, strength, and self-certainty – is exactly what allows him to be destroyed. He is so self-assured in his masculinity vis-à-vis the femininity of Judith that he refuses to believe that she can pose any real threat to him. Even when she explicitly states that she is there to kill him, he immediately counters that her very utterance in his presence makes it impossible: "Und es [das Weib] sagt mir das, um sich die Tat unmöglich zu machen! O Feigheit, die sich für Größe hält!" (66). His pride becomes then his greatest weakness, and, in the end, Judith kills "den ersten und den letzten Mann der Erde" (79).

At the polar opposite of such "übermasculinity" stand the men of Bethulien, whose weakness and cowardice are revealed through the figure of Judith. Ephraim, a man who claims to love Judith and who functions as a representative of the men of Bethulien, is challenged by Judith to kill the threat to her and their people. When Ephraim refuses, claiming that the task is impossible, Judith takes this instance of male cowardice as justification to accomplish the task herself: "Und ist deine Feigheit die deines ganzen Geschlechts, sehen alle Männer in der Gefahr nichts als die Warnung, sie zu vermeiden - dann hat ein Weib das Recht erlangt auf eine große Tat, dann - ha, ich hab' sie von dir gefordert, ich muß beweisen, daß sie möglich ist!" (24). Judith is disgusted with this man, who claims to love her so much that he would rather commit suicide than be rejected by her, yet, he refuses to face death at the hand of another in order to protect her: "Ich schlug an ihn wie an einen Kiesel, von dem ich nicht weiß, ob ich ihn behalten oder wegwerfen soll; hätt' er einen Funken gegeben - der Funke wäre in mein Herz hineingesprungen; jetzt tret' ich den schnöden Stein mit Füßen!" (28).

Instead of taking action, the men of Bethulien sit around the city square and attempt to find a scapegoat for their current situation. They are ashamed when they hear of Judith's bravery (25), yet nothing can drive them to actively protect their families and kinsmen. They congregate in the town center and blame first one person then another. Among the first group of men, Ammon is criticized for being a large man. There is a subtle implication of cannibalism as Ben suggests: "Man kommt so weit, daß man sich selbst wegen der paar Blutstropfen beneidet, die einem noch in den Adern sickern. Ich möchte mich anzapfen wie ein Faß" (30). The stage directions then read that Ben "*steckt den Finger in den Mund*" (30). He is ready to drink from the spigot of his body. Later we

hear of one man slaying his neighbor's goat, because he refused to share the goat's milk. The man argues that he "tat recht, denn die Ziege verleitete ihn zur Hartherzigkeit gegen seinen Nächsten" (33). Again and again, we find useless conversations among men who are dying of thirst and yet refuse to do anything about it. Instead they seek the welcome distraction of Daniel, a dumb man who is suddenly able to speak. They waste their energy on stoning Daniel's brother, Assad. Only Judith can come up with a plan other than capitulation or collective suicide: "Ihr Männer von Bethulien, wagt einen Ausfall! Die kleinen Brunnen liegen dicht an der Mauer; teilt euch in zwei Hälften; die eine muß den Rückzug und das Tor decken, während die andere in Masse anstürmt; es kann gar nicht fehlen, ihr bringt Wasser herein!" (41). Yet, no one is willing to sacrifice his life for another. They are all more willing to collectively die at their own hands or at the hands of the Assyrians, then to band together to save their community.

While the notion of masculinity is called into question, the text and Judith herself reinscribe a patriarchal structure. Judith suggests that a woman only has a right to act when the men have failed. Later, Judith appears to wait five days before killing Holofernes in order to give any man the opportunity to step up and take over the role of executioner.

Femininity and Motherhood

Nineteenth century notions of femininity are represented and then called into question in and through the figure of Judith. There are three main feminine characteristics pointed out in the text: beauty, lack of intelligence, and motherhood; all of which are meant to contain woman, but in the end the attempts of containment are undermined by

the text itself. Woman as represented in Judith cannot be contained. Judith's beauty as a mark of femininity is extraordinary. Mirza suggests that Judith use her mirror image to chase away bad dreams: "Du solltest lieber in solchen Augenblicken vor einen Spiegel treten. Vor dem Glanz deiner Jugend und Schönheit würden die Nachtgespenster scheu und geblendet entweichen" (19). For Ephraim, Judith's beauty only fades in her bravery (21). Manasses (17) and a man from Bethulien (41) call Judith an angel. Her beauty is nowhere more evident than in her encounter with Holofernes. When she is first brought to the Assyrian general, the soldier leading her exclaims to Holofernes "jeder Augenblick, daß du sie nicht siehst, ist ein verlorener. Wär' sie nicht so schön, ich hätte sie nicht zu dir geführt" (48). Holofernes, a man who has seen and been with many women, is impressed by her beauty. He admires her beauty, calls her "begehrenswert" (61), and remarks, "Wie sie glüht! Sie erinnert mich an eine Feuerkugel" (60) and "ist's einem nicht, solange man sie anschaut, als ob man ein köstlich Bad nähme?" (50). He is so possessed by her beauty that the thought of another man touching her sends him into a blind fury and, at the start of Act V, he strikes a man down (58).

In contrast to the beauty of Judith stands Mirza's lack of beauty. Holofernes' servant remarks to her, "Warum bist du nicht ein Weib wie Judith? Dann könnt' ich ebenso glücklich sein wie mein Herr! […] Wozu sind die häßlichen Weiber in der Welt?" (66) and moments later: "Verkriech dich in eine Ecke, ebräische Spinne, und sei still!" (67). Beauty as the hallmark of femininity is called into question in three ways. First, comments of beauty or lack thereof only appear in relation to unmarried women (Judith and Mirza). The other women in the text are all mothers and, thus, their looks are uninteresting. The text demonstrates that looks are only important until a woman

becomes a mother. Second, Judith, the most beautiful woman of all, does not fit the ideal of femininity, as will be discussed in greater detail in the following section. Finally, Judith uses her beauty as a weapon. She is able to convince the soldier to bring her to Holofernes purely by unveiling her face. Later, with Holofernes, she is able to use her beauty (and then charm) to seduce and trick the man who previously boasted that no one can ever really know him.

In the same way, the second main feminine characteristic – lack of intelligence – as a strategic containment of woman is turned back on itself as Judith uses this prejudice to her advantage. Like the Bethulien man, who exclaims, "Warum hören wir auf die!" (41) – reducing Judith from "sie" to a mere object "die" – when Judith criticizes her kinsmen for planning to drink the godly offerings, Holofernes repeatedly states his contempt of woman's intelligence. He compares a woman's inability to comprehend with an innocent child (60)[129] and later remarks that "man muß einem Weibe so etwas nicht begreiflich machen wollen" (66). Holofernes declares that he cannot keep her people as slaves, because the idea was hers: "Weib, ahnst du auch, daß du mir dies alles unmöglich machst, indem du mich dazu aufforderst? Wäre der Gedanke in mir selbst aufgestiegen, vielleicht hätt' ich ihn ausgeführt. Nun ist er dein und kann nimmer mein werden" (53).[130] The proliferation of prejudiced remarks demonstrates that Holofernes is above all appalled that it is the suggestion of a *woman*, which he detests.

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[129] "Wehe dir, wenn du mich verstündest! Der Leu blickt ein Kind, das ihn verwegen an der Mähne zupft, weil es ihn nicht kennt, mit Freundlichkeit an. Wollte das Kind, nachdem es groß und klug geworden, dasselbe versuchen, der Leu würde es zerreißen" (60).

[130] This comment can also be read in line with Holofernes' desire "ewig ein Geheimnis zu bleiben" (7) as can be seen from his angry outburst from Act I following his Hauptmann's audacity to have the camels sattled before his commander had ordered it: "Wer bist du, daß du wagst, mir meine Gedanken aus dem Kopfe zu stehlen? Ich will es nicht, dies zudringliche, zuvorkommende Wesen. Mein Wille ist die Eins und euer Tun die Zwei, nicht umgekehrt. Merk' dir das!" (6).

Holofernes' continual doubt of Judith as a threat is exactly what empowers her mission. He explicitly states that he "ließ die Schritte eines Weibes noch nie bewachen!" (54). When Judith's initial suggestion that Holofernes spare her people and make them his slaves does not work, because she suggested it, Judith switches tactics and commands Holofernes to kill her people. Her command does not have the hoped for effect – which again Holofernes exclaims that he can do no such thing since she suggested it – but instead he remarks: "Weib, es kommt mir vor, als ob du mit mir spieltest. Doch nein, ich beleidige mich selbst, indem ich dies für möglich halte" (54). As he comes close to the truth of her mission, he immediately rejects the thought, because a woman could never be powerful enough to trick Holofernes. Over and over in their conversation, Holofernes seems to recognize Judith's clever attempts to trick him, yet he continually refuses to accept that such a thing could be possible. When Judith remarks, "Herr, du müßtest mich verachten, wenn ich – […] Wenn ich dich lieben könnte," Holofernes responds, "Weib, du wagst viel. Vergib. Du wagst nichts" (60). Just as he later argues that Judith makes her plan to kill him impossible by explicitly stating her plan (66). This supposed lack of intelligence is immediately called into question with every remark Holofernes makes, because the audience knows that Judith is, in fact, tricking and seducing him. Her plan is made clear in the conversation between Judith and Mirza as they leave the Assyrian camp the first time:

Mirza	Verfluchte, so bist du gekommen, dein Volk zu verraten?
Judith	Sprich laut! Es ist gut, wenn alle hören, daß auch du an meine Worte glaubst!
Mirza	Sag' selbst, Judith, muß ich dir nicht fluchen?
Judith	Wohl mir! Wenn du nicht zweifelst, so kann Holofernes gewiß nicht zweifeln!
Mirza	Du weinst?

> Judith Freudentränen darüber, daß ich dich täuschte. Ich schaudere vor der Kraft der Lüge in meinem Munde. (55)

Any doubt of Judith's intelligence – or intention – are made obvious in this exchange. She is happy that she is able to deceive the one person who knows her best so that she can be sure that her clever and seductive remarks have the desired effect. She plays with the male assumption of a woman's lack of intelligence in order to achieve her goal of seduction and execution.

Motherhood is the final feminine characteristic of the text which challenges 19th century notions of femininity and gender roles. Mothers are everywhere in Hebbel's first drama: From Judith the "Mutter der Bedürftigen" (42) to her own mother rolling over in her grave at Judith's difficulty with accepting her mother-in-law as her new mother (16)[131] to her mother-in-law, whose dark and sneering looks on the morning after her wedding reveal her knowledge and displeasure with Judith for being unable to satisfy her son (17).[132] The town of Bethulien is full of mothers desperate for rain and some sign from God. They vacillate between hitting their own breasts in an attempt to bring forth milk as Moses' "Stab schlug an den Felsen, und ein kühler Quell sprang hervor" (77)[133] to contemplating their dying children as a last meal (78).[134] The text makes clear that women are nothing unless they are mothers. Within this understanding is an obvious

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[131] **"**Endlich kam ich in sein Haus, und seine alte Mutter trat mir mit einem feierlichen Gesicht entgegen. Es kostete mir Überwindung, sie Mutter zu nennen; ich glaubte, meine Mütter müsse das in ihrem Grabe fühlen und es müsse ihr weh tun" (16).

[132] "Seine Mutter blickte finster und spöttisch auf mich, ich merkte, daß sie gelauscht hatte; sie sagte kein Wort zu mir und trat flüsternd mit ihrem Sohn in eine Ecke. 'Pfui!' rief er auf einmal laut und zornig; 'Judith ist ein Engel!' setzte er hinzu und wollte mich küssen; ich weigerte ihm meinen Mund, er nickte sonderbar mit dem Kopf, es schien ihm recht zu sein" (17).

[133] "Verfluchte Brust, was bist du? Von innen drängt die glühendste Liebe; von außen pressen dich heiße, unschuldige Lippen, doch gibst du keinen Tropfen! Tu's! tu's! Saug' mir jede Ader aus und gib dem Wurm noch einmal zu trinken!" (77).

[134] "Unser Söhnlein lag im Verscheiden; sie, in ungeheurem Jammer, war zu Boden gestürzt. Auf einmal erhob sie sich und sagte, leise, leise: "Ist's denn ein Unglück, daß der Knabe stirbt?" Dann beugte sie sich zu ihm nieder und murmelte, wie unwillig: "Noch ist Leben in ihm!" Mir ward's gräßlich klar; sie sah in ihrem Kinde nur noch ein Stück Fleisch" (78).

attempt to contain woman within the private sphere. As with the previous elements of femininity, motherhood, too, turns back on itself, revealing a freeing quality for woman. Motherhood cannot absolutely contain.

Both women and men in the text understand motherhood as a necessity of real womanhood (i.e. femininity), as well as an attempt at containment. From the start, Judith sees herself as a nothing, because she has no children: "Ein Weib ist ein Nichts; nur durch den Mann kann sie etwas werden; sie kann Mutter durch ihn werden. Das Kind, das sie gebiert, ist der einzige Dank, den sie der Natur für ihr Dasein darbringen kann" (19). A woman sees her own containment in the fact that she is nothing without a man making her a mother. The veracity of her claim is supported by Mirza, who later attempts to stop her mistress from killing Holofernes, because "ein Weib soll Männer gebären; nimmermehr soll sie Männer töten!" (67). Thus, Judith is reminded again and again what constitutes a woman. That motherhood is seen as a primary function of containment can be read through Holofernes' reaction to Judith's threat. When Judith vehemently states that she is in his tent to kill him, he calmly replies: "Um mich vor dir zu schützen, brauch ich dir bloß ein Kind zu machen!" (66). Both man and woman understand the powerless situation of the woman: without a man and child, she is nothing. With a man and child, she is made completely subservient to the man.

The subordinate and pathetic role of the mother is emphasized in Act V as the people of Bethulien slowly succumb to their thirst. The thankless and oppressive function of motherhood stands out, when a mother cries out to unsympathetic priests: "kann eine Mutter sich so versündigen, daß ihr unschuldiges Kind verdursten muß?" (75). This mother is frightened and confused. She calls the priest out, demanding he explain how the

sins of the mother can be visited on the innocent children in this way. At the same time she reveals her (mis-)conception of the purpose of motherhood:

> Ich sage dir, Priester, eine Mutter kann sich nicht so versündigen! In ihrem Schoß mag der Herr, wenn er zürnt, ihr Kind noch ersticken; ist's geboren, so soll's leben. Darum gebären wir, daß wir unser Selbst doppelt haben, daß wir's im Kinde, wo es uns rein und heilig anlacht, lieben können, wenn wir's in uns hassen und verachten müssen. (76)

The priest is quick to remedy her misconception by constructing the sole purpose of motherhood as a chastisement and punishment: "Gott läßt dich gebären, damit er dich in deinem Fleisch und Blut züchtigen, dich noch übers Grab hinaus verfolgen kann!" (75). In other words, the function of motherhood is the containment of woman.

As willing as the text is to repeat the oppressive mantra of motherhood, the text turns back on itself, demonstrating the power of woman as mother. The "first and last man on earth" reveals the ultimate power that a mother holds over her child, particularly her son. He recounts his upbringing:

> Meine Mutter! Ich hätt' sie so wenig sehen mögen, als ich mein Grab sehen mag. Das freut mich am meisten, daß ich nicht weiß, woher ich kam! Jäger haben mich als einen derben Buben in der Löwenhöhle aufgelesen, eine Löwin hat mich gesäugt; darum ist's kein Wunder, daß ich den Löwen selbst einst in diesen meinen Armen zusammendrückte. (49)

He is proud of his animal origins, for his history hides his true progenitor. The thought threatens him that he once came from a woman and was completely powerless to her:

> Was ist denn auch eine Mutter für ihren Sohn? Der Spiegel seiner Ohnmacht von gestern und von morgen. Er kann sie nicht ansehen, ohne der Zeit zu gedenken, wo er ein erbärmlicher Wurm war, der die paar Tropfen Milch, die er schluckte, mit Schmätzen bezahlte. Und wenn er dies vergißt, so sieht er ein Gespenst in ihr, das ihm Alter und Tod vorgaukelt und ihm die eigene Gestalt, sein Fleisch und Blut, zuwider macht. (49-50)

A mother, then, is a constant reminder of modest beginnings, weakness, and dependence, as well as mortality. In addition, a reminder of the mother is to make Holofernes

"unmanned" which "means not simply to be impotent, childish, or dead; it means becoming a woman" (Jacobus 127). For Holofernes, there is surely no worse fate.

The text also demonstrates the power of the mother of an unborn child. Where it first appears as if the mother is irrevocably imprisoned in her own body through the fetus, Judith rejects the shackles. As she literally steps outside of the suffocating circle, which the priests and town elders have formed around her (80), she figuratively steps outside of societal expectations that a woman is nothing if she is not a mother as she prays for barrenness. She refuses to become the mother of her revenger and insists on death by the hands of the priests if she discovers she is pregnant. Most critics read Judith's decision as the final element of her personal tragedy or as a punishment for her guilt (Durzak 60).[135] Instead, I think the final lines of the play can and should be read as containing some hope: "Ich will dem Holofernes keinen Sohn gebären! Bete zu Gott, daß mein Schoß unfruchtbar sei. Vielleicht ist er mir gnädig!" (81). While she realizes that the biology of her body lies outside of her power, she can choose the next step. She can choose to abort Holofernes' child. However, the fact that this abortion is to be performed with her death, calls this freedom of choice into question. Judith clearly hopes to be barren at the end of the play and hopes for God's mercy. She stands at the edge of an existence and chooses a place outside of societal norms over the restrictions of motherhood.

The power of the mother is echoed in one final instance: through Mother Nature. When Ephraim first warns Judith of the danger Holofernes poses to the town of Bethulien, Judith challenges Ephraim to prove his love to her by killing the Assyrian general. Even as he doubts the possibility of such a venture, Judith argues: "Aber es gab eine Zeit, wo er nicht war; darum kann eine kommen, wo er nicht mehr sein wird!" (23). Because of

[135] See also Stocker 130, Fenner (*FH* 180).

this, she explains that the powers of the heavens and the earth would surely stand by his side in his battle with Holofernes:

> Denn du willst, was alles will; worüber die Gottheit brütet in ihrem ersten Zorn, und worüber die Natur, die vor der Riesengeburt ihres eigenen Schoßes zittert und die den zweiten Mann nicht erschaffen wird, oder nur darum, damit er den ersten vertilge, knirschend sinnt in qualvollem Traum! (23)

Here Mother Nature refuses to give birth to a second man like Holofernes in recognition of the horror she created in the first. Judith mirrors Mother Nature in her refusal to give birth to a second Holofernes and unleash another horror upon mankind. For both women, even as they may tremble at the power of a man like Holofernes, they both realize the power within woman to reject additional re-creations of such a threat. Motherhood becomes then a freeing quality, as a woman can choose to procreate or not. Naturally, this status of womanhood and motherhood is not entirely unproblematic as it is not completely "pro-choice." The alternatives are barrenness, which removes the power of woman to ever have children, and death, which frees the world of a second Holofernes, but also ends the woman's potential to do or be anything else.[136]

The Third Sex: Androgyny

Until now I have shown how the 19th century notions of masculinity and femininity are separately challenged in and through the title figure, Judith. In this section, I will look at Judith as an androgynous border figure, who simultaneously challenges notions of masculinity and femininity through her very position on the border of gender. Judith is more manly than most men in the text – she is not only the only one to come up with a plan to kill Holofernes as well as a shorter term plan to get water for her people,

[136] Some critics argue that Judith is autonomous at the end (Wittkowski, "Das Tragische" 19; Kreuzer 374). For most, "ihr potentieller Freitod ist aber kein Beweis für wirkliche Autonomie" (Wiese, *Tragödie* 579).

she is the only one brave enough to act on her plans. Beyond her overwhelming beauty, Judith is far outside 19th century standards and expectations of femininity. Her political activity on behalf of her threatened people and her sexual eagerness place her again and again in the public sphere of men. Yet, the figure of Judith cannot be read as that of a wholly emancipated woman, for she would have been just as happy to be married to her husband, Manasses, with a house full of children. Even as she contemplates the best strategy to defeat Holofernes, she hopes for a brave man to be revealed among her people, who will do the job for her. Judith as an androgynous border figure is revealed through an androgynous dream, repeated sword imagery, as well as a multitude of parallels drawn between Judith and Holofernes. In the end, Judith is a complex, androgynous figure, who searches for a balance of the masculine and feminine within herself.[137]

Judith as both man and woman is revealed immediately within the first lines of the second act. Judith recounts a dream to her maid, Mirza. Toward the end of her dream, she falls into a dark vaginal space, which contains a masculine element as well. The end of her dream sequence reads as follows:

> Mit einmal bemerkt' ich einen Abgrund zu meinen Füßen, wenige Schritte von mir, dunkel, unabsehlich, voll Rauch und Qualm. Und ich vermochte nicht zurückzugehen noch stillzustehen, ich taumelte vorwärts; "Gott! Gott!" rief ich in meiner Angst – "hie bin ich!" tönte es aus dem Abgrund herauf, freundlich, süß; ich sprang, weiche Arme fingen mich auf, ich glaubte, einem an der Brust zu ruhen, den ich nicht sah, und mir ward unsäglich wohl; aber ich war zu schwer, er konnte mich nicht halten, ich sank, sank, ich hört' ihn weinen, und wie glühende Tränen träufelte es auf meine Wange. (14-15)

[137] For Fourie, Judith is not androgynous, but, instead, she switches to a "mannlicher Rolle" (133). The Judith of the apocrypha is also considered to be androgynous (Moore 65).

As Judith falls into herself,[138] she calls out to God, whose gender is also questionable. The voice coming from below is "freundlich, süß," the latter adjective particularly indicating a feminine element in this masculine "Gott." A reading of the feminine is further encouraged through the description of the "weiche Arme" and then the "Brust" on which Judith rests. The masculine is reintroduced through the use of the pronoun "er" in "er konnte mich nicht halten" and then again through the "ihn" in "ich hört' ihn weinen." The masculine and feminine are combined in Judith as she discovers that his crying results in tears streaming down her own cheeks.[139] Thus, from the start, we are presented with a complex woman who reveals both the masculine and the feminine within herself.

Judith's androgyny is then externalized through several instances of her representation as phallus with repeated sword imagery. In the first, Ephraim threatens to kill himself, because Judith rejects his confessions of love for her. As he holds out his dagger, Judith sees herself reflected in it: "Es ist so blank, daß ich mein eigenes Bild darin erblicken kann" (21). Shortly thereafter, slippage in the text seems to make her the knife itself. Ephraim warns Judith she is only able to use the dagger as a mirror, because it is not covered with his blood. He claims that he has only refrained from suicide, because of the Assyrian threat – thereby alluding to his willingness to use the dagger to protect her. Here, then, the text takes a strange turn. As Judith calls out for Ephraim to hand over his dagger, "Gib her" the stage directions read "*Sie* sticht *nach seiner Hand, die er zurückzieht*" (21, *emphasis mine*). The verb used to describe her action is one

[138] My reading stretches the text a bit; however, it is not completely irreconcilable. First of all, the episode takes place in a dream, which means that physical laws do not necessarily need to be followed. Second, the text states that the "Abgrund" is at her feet "wenige Schritte von mir," which might imply that the dark space is separate from Judith. However, if the dark space is a vaginal space, as I argue, and she falls forward "vorwärts," we can understand her metaphorically falling head first into herself, her vaginal space.
[139] The idea of an androgynous God is also repeatedly suggested throughout the text through the seemingly interchangeable terms of the masculine "Gott" and the feminine "Gottheit."

associated with moving sharp objects. Judith immediately becomes disgusted with Ephraim's cowardly reaction and exclaims, "Pfui! Du wagst von Selbstmord zu reden und zitterst vor einem *Stich* in die Hand" (21, *emphasis mine*). Judith's hand becomes the dagger Ephraim refuses to hand over. Even as he hopes to retain his own, doubtful masculinity, Judith's body creates its own phallus and weapon.

In a second instance of Judith as phallus, Judith's entire body becomes a sword in a vision. As she girds herself for war with the general in her wedding attire, Judith calls out to Holofernes in her reflection in the mirror:

> Holofernes, dieses alles ist dein; ich habe keinen Teil mehr daran; ich hab' mich tief in mein Innerstes zusammengezogen. Nimm's, aber zittre, wenn du es hast; ich werde in einer Stunde, wo du's nicht denkst, aus mir herausfahren, wie ein Schwert aus der Scheide, und mich mit deinem Leben bezahlt machen! (26)

Judith declares that she will become the sword, which will kill the enemy of her people. Even more telling for Judith as an androgynous figure is the way in which masculine and feminine are once again simultaneously represented in her. She will be both the sword and the "Scheide" – a word, which means both sheath and vagina. Finally, Judith becomes this sword in Act V. During the sex act, Judith's thoughts grasp onto the sword hanging above the bed, which announces itself to her through its mirroring reflection (connecting it back to her reflection in the dagger). After Holofernes has preemptively pulled his figurative "Schwert" from her "Scheide," she literally grasps his sword, uniting her body with the "Schwert" from her vision, pulls it from the "Scheide," and cuts his head off. At that moment, his masculinity is simultaneously destroyed with his life, as androgynous Judith symbolically castrates "den ersten und den letzten Mann der Erde" (79).

The androgynous image of Judith first demonstrated in her dream and further supported by the recurrent sword imagery is finally solidified through repeated parallels drawn between Judith and Holofernes, the most masculine of men, in and through the text.[140] The text structurally aligns the protagonists through the order of the first two acts. From the first act, the text titled *Judith* does not introduce the title figure, but instead introduces Holofernes. While some critics have argued that the first two acts are interchangeable and thus denote the episodic nature of Hebbel's play,[141] the introduction of Holofernes is crucial for the parallel structure between the two. In Act I, Holofernes makes several comments, which prefigure Judith. In the first, he complains of his solitude and wishes for a true enemy: "Hätt' ich doch nur einen Feind, nur einen, der mir gegenüberzutreten wagte! Ich wollt' ihn küssen, ich wollte, wenn ich ihn nach heißem Kampf in den Staub geworfen hätte, mich auf ihn stürzen und mit ihm sterben!" (7). The text alludes to Judith, who does dare to confront him, through the verbs "küssen" and then "auf ihn stürzen" which prefigure their shared kisses during her seduction, and then their sexual intercourse. In the next comment, Judith and Holofernes are linked through their shared desire to be able to esteem someone. Holofernes states, "Ich achte ein Volk, das mir Widerstand leisten will" (12) and Judith will later declare to Ephraim, " O Gott, ich achte so gern, mir ist, als schnitt' ich in mein eignes Fleisch hinein, wenn ich jemanden verachten muß!" (22).

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[140] Jacobus' reading of the sword imagery in direct connection with Holofernes is more Freudian: "In order not to be a paralyzing threat, Judith must have phallic attributes, like the phallic woman fantasized by the boy as a defense against castration anxiety. Instead of being mutilated by a cut, woman has a sword in her hand; the mark of castration is replaced by the castrating instrument. […] What she sees is her image made whole in the desire of another, the fantasized phallic woman whom the boy invents to reassure himself at the moment of doubt" (119).

[141] Kraft argues that the order of the acts is generally irrelevant (58).

Outside of Act I, there are several other instances which present Judith and Holofernes as parallel figures. The two protagonists are brought together through a vocabulary of weaving and dreams. While Judith is first introduced in the text as weaving at a loom while recounting a dream (14), Holofernes equates his thoughts and dreams with the materials of the weaver that "ich aus meinem Kopf eine Spindel mache und den Traum- und Hirnknäuel darin Faden nach Faden abzwirne wie ein Bündel Flachs" (48). In the following Act V, Holofernes describes his favorite method of killing by literally using his enemy's own weapon: "In meinen Jugendtagen hab' ich wohl, wenn ich einem Feind begegnete, statt mein eignes Schwert zu ziehen, ihm das seinige aus der Hand gewunden und ihn damit niedergehauen" (59). He gives this explanation to his Hauptmann while waiting for Judith to return from the desert in order to explain how he plans to subdue Judith: "So will ich auch diese vernichten; sie soll vor mir vergehen durch ihr eignes Gefühl, durch die Treulosigkeit ihrer Sinne!" (59). In the end, Judith uses Holofernes' preferred method of killing by taking his own sword to do the deed (70).

In the final instance of the parallel drawn between Judith and Holofernes is a double reflection, for each speaks in the abstract of seeing or recognizing themselves in someone else. Then for each, that someone else becomes the other protagonist rendering the abstract literal. For this parallel, Judith speaks first. She explains to Mirza that every woman has a right to demand from every man that he be a hero: "Jedes Weib hat ein Recht, von jedem Mann zu verlangen, daß er ein Held sei. Ist dir nicht, wenn du einen siehst, als sähst du, was du sein möchtest, sein solltest?" (28). For Judith, a man must be a hero so that a woman can see herself as hero in him. The heroism of a man is then less about the man than about what the woman desires to become. On the one hand, Judith

presents the possibility of the woman becoming the equal of a man. On the other hand, by placing the man first and the woman as his mere reflection, a woman's possibilities are only ever existent through the man.

Holofernes' later comment as he looks at Judith is less philosophical, but also demonstrates the importance for the self through the reflection of the other. During Act IV, Holofernes, lost in his observation of Judith, says to his two Hauptleute:

> Ist's einem nicht, solange man sie anschaut, als ob man ein köstlich Bad nähme? Man wird das, was man sieht! Die reiche, große Welt ging in das bißchen ausgespannte Haut, worin wir stecken, nicht hinein; wir erhielten Augen, damit wir sie stückweise einschlucken könnten! (50)

In contrast to Judith's seemingly more personal remark, which asks the direct "du," Holofernes' comment remains distant through the use of "man" but then switches over to "wir." The text slips back and forth between the general and the specific. The "reiche, große Welt" is Judith, for he is admiring her body, yet it is couched in the general by making her specific beauty less emphatic. He then explains that "wir erhielten Augen" so that "wir sie stückweise einschlucken könnten!" Here the general and specific work at the same time, for it is both the general idea that we have ideas to take the "sie" – "die Welt" – in smaller bits, but also that he can behold and even swallow "sie" – Judith – in pieces. Holofernes will literally incorporate the female into himself.

Both Judith and Holofernes then need each other – or an equivalent counterpart – in order to properly see themselves. In other words, the text clearly postulates the importance of the simultaneity of both the masculine and the feminine. With this, the text, while attempting to contain the woman through 19th century notions of femininity on one level, is rejecting those notions in and through the figure of an androgynous Judith, who unites both the masculine and the feminine. Our heroine is, however, not completely the

exemplary emancipated woman, for she can never envision herself without a man. From her first attempts to prompt Ephraim to act to her own remarks on the importance of a heroic man for the construction of the female subject, Judith relies heavily on men. Finally, Judith places her hope in God that she is barren in order to save her own life. It is only in barrenness that Judith, then, can exist without dependence on a man. While she may need to rely on God to answer that prayer, beyond the answer is a space in which she can act independently.

II. Exploding Boundaries of Female Sexuality

With a play literally and figuratively climaxing in a sexual act, *Judith* is clearly about sex. Through his specific construction of the title figure Judith, Hebbel sets up a discussion of female sexuality. Hebbel makes two significant changes to the Biblical Judith: First, he takes a pious widow and turns her into a sexually dissatisfied virgin widow. Second, unlike the Biblical Judith, who is praised for her chastity and modesty for staying out of Holofernes' bed, the entire thrust of Hebbel's play leads to sexual intercourse between Holofernes and Judith. Why Hebbel makes these specific changes and how the acceptance of female sexuality is crucial for understanding this text will be discussed in this section. Hebbel's text demonstrates an attempt to contain female sexuality through the figure of Mirza as well as through a displacement of blame for male impotence onto the libidinous woman. Yet, these attempts to contain Judith's sexuality are undermined by the text itself through the specific construction of Judith as a virgin widow and her set task to seduce and kill Holofernes. Ultimately, the emancipation of woman through an acceptance of female sexuality is only partially fulfilled in and

through Judith. Repressive societal opinions represented by Mirza win out over Judith's truth about her motivation.

Sexuality on the Border

Judith, stands at two intersecting borders: As a virgin, she is at the threshold between maidenhood and womanhood. As a virgin widow, she is at the edge of society, being neither wife nor mother. The loss of her virginity points to the border transgression of her vagina, which itself is a border, for "Scheide" means both vagina as well as a borderline. The text situates woman on the border between chastity and sexual expression, underlining the first and denigrating the latter. What stands out in this text is Judith's desire to leave maidenhood behind her and enjoy her sexuality. From the frustrations of her wedding night to Judith's sensual dream to the plans to meet and defeat Holofernes and finally the long, drawn-out seduction of the general, the play clearly leads to the climax in the bedroom. Whether it actually leads to a climax for Judith, is part of this analysis and leads to a possible explanation for her behavior.

Although Judith is only fourteen when given in marriage to the older Manasses, her desire for sexual experience is explicit in her actions and is implicitly supported by her surroundings. To be sure, her feelings are ambivalent as she reports to her maid: "Mit jedem Schritt, den ich tat, ward mir beklommener; bald meint' ich, ich sollte aufhören zu leben, bald, ich sollte erst anfangen" (15). Even as she remembers the sensuality of the evening, she remembers, too, the various moments of shame at her increasing excitement. There is both excited expectation and trepidation for what is to be her final night of maidenhood. The evening conspires with her feelings of sexual excitement being "so

lockend, so verführerisch, man konnt' ihm nicht widerstehen" (15) – equally implying through the "ihn" that both the evening and her future husband are irresistible. In league with the seductive evening, a warm wind lifts her veil "als wollt' er sagen: nun ist's Zeit" – again the masculine element reiterates the sensuality of the moment. Her father leads her to the ceremony and speaks to her with serious words, but she is only focused on imagining her future husband, who will certainly look different from her father (16). Once she meets Manasses, she is burning with sexual awakening (Durzak 57)[142] – "als ob ich in Brand gesteckt würde, als ob es lichterloh aus mir herausflammte" (16) – and she throws herself around his neck. When the couple prepares for the consummation, Manasses wants to extinguish the candles, but Judith, no longer ashamed, does not want to miss visually what is about to transpire. Despite Judith's apparent eagerness – or, as I will later suggest, because of it – the planned consummation never takes place. As Manasses approaches the bed, he stops: "es war, als ob die schwarze Erde eine Hand ausgestreckt und ihn von unten damit gepackt hätte" (17). (This veiled allusion to impotence will be discussed later in greater detail). Even when she calls out to her husband, Manasses repeatedly chants "ich kann ja nicht" and can only pray (17). Thus, Judith's sexual anticipation ends in disappointment and even frustration.[143]

In the three years that pass between the death of Manasses and the events in the play, Judith's sexual desire never subsides as is evident in the sensual dream she recounts to her maid.[144] In the following, I will expand on my previous comments on the dream in

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[142] See also Tobiasz (26) and Wittkowski ("*Judith*" 174).

[143] Wells argues to the complete contrary: "The behaviour of her late husband and his whole attitude to her is narrated not so much because it suggests to us that she desires sexual fulfillment as because it suggests to her that there is something fundamentally amiss with her" ("Ethical" 99).

[144] In scholarship to date, the dream is generally interpreted in one of three categories (most of which only tangentially deal with her sexuality). First, the dream is interpreted as a sign of Judith's spirituality as she 'falls' into God, but, because of her human mistake, He cannot hold her (Fenner "Unbedingtheitsspiel" 35).

order to uncover Judith's sensuality and sexual frustration encoded therein. The first lines read:

> Ich ging und ging, und mir war's ganz eilig, und doch wußt' ich nicht, wohin mich's trieb. Zuweilen stand ich still und sann nach; dann war's mir, als ob ich eine große Sünde beginge. (14)

At the beginning of the dream, Judith is walking very fast without knowing where she is going. She stops and has the feeling that she has committed a sin. She was married as a young girl and on her wedding night she desires to move forward quickly, but at the same time, because of her inexperience, she does not know where she is going. The 'sin' she committed was allowing herself to be a sexual being, which she believes caused her husband's impotence. The dream continues:

> "fort, fort!" sagt' ich zu mir selbst und ging schneller wie zuvor. Plötzlich stand ich auf einem hohen Berg, mir schwindelte, dann ward ich stolz, die Sonne war mir so nah, ich nickte ihr zu und sah immer hinauf.

Suddenly, Judith is high on a mountain and she feels dizzy. Her location of being high up is reflected in her feeling of pride. After many years of self-degradation and humiliation, Judith allows herself to have sexual feelings again. The sun is close and is a source of warmth like the warm wind that aroused her on her wedding night. Judith nods to the sun in acknowledgement of acceptance of the warmth she is feeling.

See also Garland (79), Reinhardt (*Apologie* 73). Scholarship often accepts that the dream may represent repressed sexual feelings (Durzak 49) or may function as a substantiation of Hebbel's argument that God cannot keep the wheel from crushing his instrument. Ultimately, the interpretation of the 'God'-dream supports most critics' arguments that it is God in control of and working through Judith's life. The second category is that the voice Judith hears from the "Abgrund" is "Gott, der sich als Teufel geriert," which points to Holofernes (Arntzen 410) or Holofernes as the devil (Masanetz 105). The final category is that the dream is an analogy for the play. It is the drama itself that interprets the dream (Reinhardt, *Apologie* 71). The difficulty with this interpretation is that Reinhardt cannot find an analogy in the play for the second part of the dream, but instead needs to look towards the stage performance, which has no mention of the sexual encounter between Judith and Holofernes, but instead has a direct reference to the end of the dream sequence.

> Mit einmal bemerkt' ich einen Abgrund zu meinen Füßen, wenige Schritte von mir, dunkel, unabsehlich, voll Rauch und Qualm. Und ich vermochte nicht zurückzugehen noch stillzustehen.

She then notices that she is standing at an "Abgrund" – an abyss. She does not want to go back to where she had been before and she does not want to stand still. She wants to experience more. She wants to see what will happen next, just as she wanted the lights on the night of her wedding.

> Ich taumelte vorwärts; "Gott! Gott!" rief ich in meiner Angst – "hier bin ich!" tönte es aus dem Abgrund herauf, freundlich, süß; ich sprang, weiche Arme fingen mich auf, ich glaubte, einem an der Brust zu ruhen, den ich nicht sah, und mir ward unsäglich wohl.

She falls forward into the abyss, the dark, unknown vaginal space. She falls into herself, into a place she has never been before and cries out to God in her fear. From the bottom of the abyss, a voice - "freundlich, süß" - answers her. Soft arms catch her and she feels herself to be resting on a breast. It does not at all seem to be coincidence that all of these descriptions "freundlich, süß," "weiche Armen," and "Brust" can be attributed to the female body. It is here on this breast - Judith's own breast I suggest - that Judith feels "unsäglich wohl" (13). The voice she hears calling "hier bin ich" is her own, confronting herself, defining herself.[145] The dream concludes with:

> aber ich war zu schwer, er konnte mich nicht halten, ich sank, sank, ich hört' ihn weinen, und wie glühende Tränen träufelte es auf meine Wange.

Just as in her wedding night, the man was unable to provide her with any satisfaction, so too is Judith "let down" in her dream by the masculine element. In one way, the dream appears to both recall the frustration of her wedding night, but it is also a foreshadowing of her coming experience with Holofernes.

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[145] Alternatively, if we read the dream literally, then Judith falls into the soft arms of a feminine/female or at least androgynous God and the dream can be read as a sexual union with this God. The tears then Judith feels on her checks could figure as a divine ejaculation.

In fact, if we read the dream as Judith suggests, then the dream as a whole is not only about the past and present, but predominantly about the future. Judith explains what happens when we sleep:

> Wenn der Mensch im Schlaf liegt, aufgelöst, nicht mehr zusammengehalten durch das Bewußtsein seiner selbst, dann verdrängt ein Gefühl der Zukunft alle Gedanken und Bilder der Gegenwart, und die Dinge, die kommen sollen, gleiten als Schatten durch die Seele, vorbereitend, warnend, tröstend. Daher kommt's, daß uns so selten oder nie etwas wahrhaft überrascht, daß wir auf das Gute schon lange vorher so zuversichtlich hoffen und vor jedem Übel unwillkürlich zittern. (15)

Thus, her dream should be equally read as what can be expected for her experience with Holofernes. The problem with Judith's interpretation here is that it only allows for an understanding (and then expectation) of a positive outcome. Her own dreams ends with disappointment and sadness caused by a male element. The dream does not become a warning, and Judith is not at all prepared for the disappointment and anger with Holofernes after their sexual encounter.

Neither the disappointment of Judith's wedding night and six-month unconsummated marriage nor the disappointing ending of her sensual dream alter Judith's obvious desire for sexual experience. This desire leads her to first exclaim, "Ich möcht ihn sehen!" (20), when she hears that Holofernes is threatening her city. It leads to the creation and then implementation of her plan to seduce and kill the Assyrian general. This desire supports her seduction and explicitly shows itself in the moments she thinks there will finally be sexual intercourse. There are two such moments in the text. In the first, Judith's vehemently declares that she hates him and demands: "Nun tödte mich!" (61). Holofernes responds with: "Dich tödten? Morgen vielleicht; heute wollen wir erst miteinander zu Bett gehen" (62). Judith's reaction makes explicit her desire: "Wie ist mir

auf einmal so leicht! Nun darf ich's tun!" (62). Of course, the "es" is ambiguous. It could mean that she can finally experience sex or finally have the chance to kill him as she had planned, or both. She responds in a similar way in the second moment. This time Holofernes is dragging her into his tent. Judith's final words are "Ich muß - ich will - pfui über mich in Zeit und Ewigkeit, wenn ich nicht kann!" (66). Once again, the object of what "Ich muß - ich will […] wenn ich nicht kann" is not explicit and can refer individually or simultaneously to both sexual intercourse and murder.[146] The significance of these moments points to the undercurrent of desire running through Hebbel's play.[147] This undercurrent stands counter to 19th century expectations of femininity where a woman's sexual desire should never be explicit – not even in marriage. As Carole Pateman explains, "modesty and chasteness are the preeminent female virtues, but because women are also creatures of passion, they must use their natural skill of duplicity and dissemblance to maintain their modesty. In particular, *they must always say 'no' even when they desire to say 'yes'*" (154, emphasis in original). Thus, by embracing her sexuality Judith calls into question notions of femininity.

The Art of Seduction

For Judith, an acceptance of her sexuality does more than challenge notions of femininity; more importantly, it allows her to create and implement a plan, which leads to the death of her people's enemy. Hebbel's text clearly outlines this plan and its execution

[146] Tobiasz comments here: "ganz eindeutig freut sie sich auf ihre baldige 'Befleckung'" (30).
[147] Kreuzer reads the sexual motivation as purely in Judith's subconscious (372). Stolte also comments on a "verborgene erotische Motiv" which "entpuppt es sich als das zutiefst Motivierende" ("*Judith*" 35). I argue that her sexual desire is not hidden.

through seduction.[148] In fact, Judith's desire is closely linked to the plan from the start. When she first hears of the threat, she not only exclaims "Ich möcht' ihn sehen!" but she also sees herself as the potential savior of her people. In an attempt at flattery, Ephraim suggests that Holofernes would have come for Judith alone. In this moment, at first jokingly, Judith begins to recognize her potential: "Möcht' es so sein! Dann braucht' ich ja nur zu ihm hinauszugehen, und Stadt und Land wäre gerettet!" (20). From there, a plan forms in her mind as she imagines herself as the decoy-jewel in order to trap and eliminate Holofernes: "Rag der Riese mit seinem Haupt so hoch in die Wolken hinein, daß ihr ihn nicht erreichen könnt, ei, so werft ihm einen Edelstein vor die Füße; er wird sich bücken, um ihn aufzuheben, und dann überwältigt ihr ihn leicht" (20). The actual plan takes the idea of the jewel just one step further in which Judith is both the distraction and the executioner.

The implementation of Judith's plan covers two acts in the drama. I will focus on the moments of seduction which clearly indicate that a plan is in place. This is worth pointing out, because it demonstrates the way in which Judith acts rationally and consciously in order to achieve a specific goal. That the text should be read in this way is indicated by Judith herself, who rejoices over Mirza's "Entsetzen" and "Abscheu" over her behavior, because "Wenn du nicht zweifelst, so kann Holofernes gewiß nicht zweifeln! […] Ich schaudere vor der Kraft der Lüge in meinem Munde" (55). Thus, if we read Judith as solely following her baser feelings of sexual desire – as many critics such

[148] The scholarship is split on Judith's motivation for heading to the camp of the Assyrians. Some critics concede that Judith had some kind of plan to kill Holofernes (Kleinschmidt [34]; Ziegler, "*Judith*" [114]; Fenner, *FH* [180]). Tobiasz does not explicitly recognize Judith's plan to execute Holofernes, but does admit that "als [Judith] Bethulien verläßt, ist sie noch von der großen Heldenidee – die von Gott auserwählte Retterin ihres Volkes zu werden – beherrscht" (29). In contrast, some critics, such as Gerlach, completely reject that idea that Judith had any concrete plans to kill Holofernes (*Hebbel* 36). See also Kratsch (13), Wittkowski ("*Judith*" 167).

as Wittkowski suggest ("*Judith*" 171) – then we also fall prey to Judith's successful seduction. I read Judith as a woman with a plan, the details of which will be covered in the following.

The first step in Judith's plan is to dress for a successful seduction. Judith instructs her maid: "schmücke mich, wie zur Hochzeit […] Meine Schönheit ist jetzt meine Pflicht!" (29). From there, Judith immediately employs her beauty. She lifts her veil for the first soldier she sees. Having stunned him with her beauty, she demands that he take her to Holofernes, who too will be mesmerized by her beauty. Holofernes knows from the beginning that she has come to seduce him. He responds to her first request, "weil du ein Weib bist, weil du dich auf dich selbst verlässt, weil du weißt, daß Holofernes Augen hat, nicht wahr?" (50). Because he underestimates her intelligence as a woman, she is able to implement her plan. From her initial comments, Judith's strategy reveals itself. Even as she actively seduces him, she first attempts to persuade him politically and emotionally to let her people live.

Judith's seductive comments slowly climax in the first meeting in Act IV in order to leave Holofernes eager and waiting for her return from the desert. When Holofernes asks what sin is, Judith does not give him an answer, but instead, after a moment of thought, retorts with her own flirtation: "Ein Kind hat mich das einmal gefragt. Das Kind habe ich geküßt. Was ich *dir* antworten soll, weiß ich nicht" (51). Judith is seductively provoking him. After the initial bold flirtation, Judith's seduction during this first meeting is hidden throughout her comments. She tells him that she blushes to look at his face and does not spare on compliments of his heroism, nobility and stature. At one points she exclaims, "oh, ich möchte du sein! Nur einen Tag, nur eine Stunde!" (51), and later she

slavishly accedes, “Herr, du übertriffst mich an Weisheit ebenso weit, wie an Mut und Kraft” (52). Their meeting ends with Judith’s promise that she will deliver her people into his hands, if that is the will of God. She requests to be let out into the desert for five days in order to pray and receive God’s message. Holofernes asks that she first dine with him, but she refuses, stating that she would be sinning by eating with him. “Herr, ich darf noch nicht essen von deiner Speise, denn ich würde mich versündigen. Ich kam ja nicht zu dir, um von meinem Gott abzufallen, sondern um ihm recht zu dienen” (54). The word “noch” changes the meaning of “no” to “not yet,” meaning that she does plan to return to him and eat with him. At that time she will be prepared to sin.

Her trip to the desert is a clear part of her plan of seduction. Before leaving she intimates that she will be willing to sin upon her return. At the same time, she creates a rival for Holofernes, by mentioning the importance of God and prayer in her life. Holofernes is already intrigued by this powerful God and quickly recognizes Him as competition. He declares that he will drive this God from her heart: “in ihrem Herzen wohnt niemand als ihr Gott, und den will ich jetzt vertreiben! (59). In addition, her flirtations indicate that she desires him, which piques his desire, but in making him wait, Judith exercises control over him. She knows that her townspeople can survive five days and that is the maximum time she is allowing her subtle seduction to work.

The effectiveness of her plan becomes evident when Holofernes decides to bring her back into his camp a day earlier than they had agreed. Judith does not wait long to begin the final seduction. She immediately begins flattering Holofernes. When he asks her to sit and eat with him “denn du hast Gnade vor mir gefunden,” Judith replies, “Das will ich, Herr, ich will fröhlich sein, denn ich bin mein Lebelang nicht so geehrt worden!”

(59). At the same time, Judith presents herself as a weak woman. She hesitates at the sight of blood left from the soldier Holofernes had killed in a jealous rage. She continues to flatter him, even going so far as to suggest she might love him. I cite the entire passage to show the dramatic effect:

Judith	Herr, du müßtest mich verachten, wenn ich -
Holofernes	Nun?
Judith	Wenn ich dich lieben könnte.

This moment is clearly pure drama constructed by Judith for the sole benefit of Holofernes. First, she speaks in the subjunctive, which means that she is not – as some critics have argued – stating that she loves him.[149] Second, her hesitation is effective in drawing Holofernes in by alluding to emotion. Words are followed by kisses: First Holofernes demands a kiss. When he later requests a kiss, Judith kisses him. Judith repeatedly presents herself as weak and full of emotion. When Holofernes calls her an "armes Geschöpf," she responds with more drama. The text reads: "O du - (*Sich fassend*) Vergib. (*Sie weint*)" (61). Holofernes is drawn in by this scene, and reacts with, for him, a strange kind of compassion, proving Judith's methods successful.

With the arrival of Ephraim and his feeble attempt to kill Holofernes, Judith's plan of seduction is not only briefly halted, but also reintroduces her desire for a hero. From this moment until the actual murder, Judith struggles with her desire, but remains true to her mission. This can be clearly seen by repeated reminders to herself that her end resolve is murder. The moments of desire are then always countered with moments of clarity. After Judith watches the very manly Holofernes easily overpower the weak

[149] See Kreuzer (374), Martínez (210), Stolte ("*Judith*" 36), Wiese (*Tragödie* 387), Ziegler ("*Judith*" 112), Campbell (52).

Ephraim solely with words,[150] her first remark is seductive flattery immediately followed by her own thoughts of desire: "Du bist groß, und andere sind klein. (*Leise*) Gott meiner Väter, schütze mich vor mir selbst, daß ich nicht verehren muß, was ich verabscheue! Er ist ein Mann" (63). Even as Judith has these thoughts, she reminds herself of her mission: "Hör' auf, hör' auf! Ich muß ihn morden, wenn ich nicht vor ihm knien soll" (63). To be sure, there are moments when Judith appears to be completely lost in her desire for this powerful man and is incapable of proceeding with her plan. Thus, when Judith exclaims: "Meine Empfindungen und Gedanken fliegen durcheinander wie dürre Blätter. Mensch, entsetzlicher, du drängst dich zwischen mich und meinen Gott! Ich muß beten in diesem Augenblick und kann's nicht!" (65), both the reader and Holofernes think that Judith's strength and determination are gone. Holofernes is quite sure that his own plan for Judith is working ("sie soll vor mir vergehen durch ihr eignes Gefühl, durch die Treulosigkeit ihrer Sinne!" [59]). He commands Judith: "Stürz' hin und bete mich an!" (65). Yet, Judith surprises the reader and Holofernes with her resilience: "Ha, nun sehe ich wieder klar!" (65). Judith not only regains her own self-determination and ignores Holofernes' command, she also begins to show her true strength by challenging his rhetoric of power: "Du trotzest auf deine Kraft. Ahnst du denn gar nicht, daß sie sich verwandelt hat? daß sie dein Feind geworden ist? […] Du aber hast sie zum Futter deiner Leidenschaft gemacht, du bist der Reiter, den seine Rosse verzehren" (65).

[150] Durzak strongly criticizes Judith's passivity in this scene. He thinks that she should have accepted Ephraim's attempt as a valid effort in fulfilling her request. Furthermore, he argues that Ephraim's 'courage' is a clear sign that there are others, beside Judith, who are willing to face Holofemes, thereby revealing the falsehood of Judith's justification for what she is aiming to do. The passivity shows "wie sehr sie bereits Holofernes sinnlich verfallen ist" (57-8). I take issue with Durzak's harsh criticism of Judith. It seems clear that Judith goes to Holofernes with a two-fold mission: save her people and to have sex. In addition, she gave Ephraim a chance to prove that he is worthy of her. It is not surprising that Judith remains in contempt of Ephraim following his failed assassination attempt, for which he only found the courage four days after she left her town.

The pattern of an outburst of Judith's desire followed by her renewed resolve to kill Holofernes is repeated several times in this exchange. This pattern ultimately culminates in the actual act of desire and then murder of the general. Judith first remarks, "Ich weiß nicht, ob man dir was antworten kann. Wo der Sitz meiner Gedanken war, da ist jetzt Öde und Finsternis. Selbst mein Herz versteh ich nicht mehr" (65). She, again, comes back to her mission. This time, her statement of resolve isn't spoken in an aside, but instead she voices it as a challenge to Holofernes himself: "Lerne das Weib achten! Es steht vor dir, um dich zu ermorden! Und es sagt dir das!" (66). The final moment of desire mixed with mission is in the last lines spoken by Judith as she is led by Holofernes to his private tent: "Ich muß – ich will – pfui über mich in Zeit und Ewigkeit, wenn ich nicht kann!" (66). Judith's statement is ambiguous with only modal verbs to indicate what is about to happen. This ambiguity is clearly intentional and suggests multiple meanings are not only possible, but likely. Just as desire and mission have been interconnected throughout the entire dialogue, so, too, must we understand that Judith's desire for a sexual experience and her plan to kill Holofernes are simultaneously addressed in these words.

Does a Girl Have to Say "No"?

Up to this point, I have clearly laid out Judith's plan for the seduction and execution of Holofernes. When Judith enters Holofernes' private tent, it is abundantly clear that she wants to be there, she wants to have sexual intercourse, and that her final plan is kill Holofernes. I draw attention to what seem to me like basic, self-evident facts about Hebbel's play, because when she returns to her maid, Mirza, after the act, she uses language which seems to describe a rape. Judith speaks of wanting revenge for the "rohen

Griff in meine Menschheit" or of "die Vernichtung, die ich in seinen Armen empfand" (68). Indeed, starting with Hebbel, who announced that his Judith was raped and kills Holofernes only out of personal revenge, *all* literary scholarship to date follows and supports Hebbel's argument.[151] The difficulty with this line of argument is that it first ignores the careful implementation of Judith's plan of seduction. It also equally ignores Judith's underlying motivation for slaying Holofernes. Instead, scholarship focuses on "the base feelings" from which Judith acts or how she is (rightfully) crushed for not acting on behalf of her people (an argument I will return to later).

For now, I want to focus on the subject of rape. I contend that Judith was not raped. To my mind, there are two significant arguments against reading the sexual encounter as a rape. First, the entire play up to this point shows a woman with a plan to both act on her sexual desire and execute the enemy of her people. As previously shown in great detail, Judith obviously had a plan which connected both her desire and her goal to eliminate her people's enemy. She follows through with this plan. Up to her final line "Ich muß – ich will – pfui über mich in Zeit und Ewigkeit, wenn ich nicht kann!" (66), she clearly wants to have sexual intercourse with Holofernes.[152] This argument, of course,

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[151] See Campbell (54), Bührig (42), Fenner (*FH* 180), Fricke (324), Graham (18), Hein (72), Jacobus (117), Lamport ("Practical Criticism" 202), Lütkehaus ("Judith" 92), Martínez (203), Reinhardt ("Resignation" 46), Zaragoza (108). Even though all scholarship interprets the sexual intercourse between Judith and Holofemes to be a rape, some concede that Judith "ihm dennoch innerlich entgegen [kommt]" (Durzak 58) or would have, if she had been given the chance. Wittkowski argues in this vein: Holofernes "nimmt sich gewaltsam, was Judith seiner Liebe vielleicht geben würde und was im Grunde auch für ihn bestimmt ist" ("Das Tragische" 18). It is problematic that in scholarship and by Hebbel, Judith is critiqued for seeking revenge for her rape.

[152] "Sexual intercourse without a woman's consent constitutes the criminal offense of rape" (Pateman 150). There is a problem with the category of consent and women in the 19th century. As Pateman explains, "women exemplify the individuals who consent theorists have declared are incapable of consenting. Yet, simultaneously, women have been presented as always consenting, and their explicit nonconsent has been treated as irrelevant or has been reinterpreted as 'consent'" (150). Even if we cannot decide whether Judith consented legally (since women were not considered "free and equal individuals" with the capability of consenting in the 19th century), I outline a clear case of willingness and purpose through her plan of seduction.

still does not explain the violent language Judith uses to describe the encounter. Thus, the second argument involves reading this language of violence within the context of Judith's sexual inexperience. That means we must take into consideration the specific way in which Judith was constructed as a virgin widow by Hebbel and what bearing that must have on this drama.

As Kreuzer points out, Hebbel made Judith into a virgin widow, because only then does she have the psychological frame of mind to make her actions believable (101). Hebbel wanted his virgin to be "ein einfach-edeles Mädchen, das, nachdem Gott durch seinen schwachen Arm ein Wunder in's Leben gerufen, vor sich selbst, wie vor einem dunklen Geheimnis zurückschauderte" (Kreuzer 98-9). But what does this mean? A non-virgin widow or a virgin non-widow would have also been able to seduce a general. What is special about this combination? By emphasizing Judith's widowhood, it is more plausible and also justifiable that it is *she,* who is going to Holofernes. For a widow does not have to answer to any man – neither husband nor father – but only to God. As a virgin widow, she has the adequate amount of shame and desire that make her the ideal candidate to act on behalf of her people.

By constructing her as virgin, Hebbel makes Judith not only untouched, but also inexperienced. She has no idea what the sexual act is like, how the man will behave and what exactly will happen. For any virgin, the actual defloration is an act of violence as the hymen is generally ripped in the process. In a sense, a defloration is a kind of border crossing in both a physical and psychological sense (Jacobus 115). A threshold is crossed for the first time in the body of a female and, at the same time, with that crossing, the individual crosses the border from maidenhood into womanhood. Because of the pain

associated with the first time, it would seem that, to a virgin, the first time must always feel violent, even if she wanted to have sex. Even more so must the first time feel like a violation, if the partner is a hardened general, who is known for using women as objects that are meant to be consumed. Therefore, it can be argued that Judith's first time was not how she thought it would be. She is insulted that Holofernes rolls off to sleep immediately after the act: "Und er schläft ruhig, er ahnt nicht, daß der Mord sein eignes Schwert wider ihn zückt. Er schläft ruhig – ha, feiges Weib, was dich empören sollte, macht dich mitleidig? Dieser ruhige Schlaf nach einer solchen Stunde, ist er nicht der ärgste Frevel?" (70). Judith's anger and frustration here point again to the fact that she had been a virgin. If she had not been a virgin, then a man falling off to sleep after sexual intercourse would be neither surprising nor disturbing. In addition, Judith at one point explains to Mirza her expectations for this big moment:

> Für ein Mädchen gibt es keinen größeren Moment als den, wo es aufhört, eins zu sein, und jede Wallung des Bluts, die es vorher bekämpfte, jeder Seufzer, den es erstickte, erhöht den Wert des Opfers, das es in jenem Moment zu bringen hat. Es bringt sein Alles - ist es ein zu stolzes Verlangen, wenn es durch sein Alles Entzücken und Seligkeit einflößen will? (69)

It is clear that she does not suspect how painful the actual experience will be. Even after the fact she does not realize that her expectations could not have been fulfilled. Instead, she thinks that something went wrong:

> Nun denk' es dir in seiner ganzen nackten Entsetzlichkeit, nun mal' es dir aus bis zu dem Punkt, wo die Scham sich mit aufgehobenen Händen[153] zwischen dich und deine Vorstellungen wirft, und wo du eine Welt verfluchst, in der das Ungeheuerste möglich ist! […]Dich selbst in deiner tiefsten Erniedrigung - den Augenblick, wo du an Leib und Seel' ausgekeltert wirst, um an die Stelle des gemißbrauchten Weins zu treten und einen gemeinen Rausch mit einem noch gemeineren schließen zu helfen […]. (69)

[153] This image arguably recalls the hand that reached out on Judith's wedding night, rendering Manasses impotent.

By juxtaposing expectation with reality, the violence done to her fantasies is made explicit.[154]

There is even a suggestion that what drives Judith's anger and frustration is that she was not sexually satisfied. The interlude between Holofernes and Judith is incredibly short. The time is indicated by the conversation between Holofernes' servant and Mirza – a conversation that does not even fill one page in a book. If we look back to Judith's reaction to the last time she was left sexually dissatisfied and unfulfilled, then we see a clue to what helps motivate Judith to go through with the planned killing. On Judith's wedding night, her husband Manasses is unable to have sexual intercourse with her. In the six months of continued abstinence afterwards until his death, they live side by side with only "etwas Dunkles, Unbekanntes" between them (18). Judith's reaction to Manasses during these months is explicit: "Zuweilen ruhte sein Auge mit einem Ausdruck auf mir, der mich schaudern machte; ich hätte ihn in einem solchen Moment erwürgen können, aus Angst, aus Notwehr; sein Blick bohrte wie ein Giftpfeil in mich hinein" (18). Just as the "threat" Manasses poses remains intangible, so does Judith never materialize her inclinations to choke her husband. Holofernes' behavior makes Judith shudder, which provokes her need of self-defense. What is different in this situation is the element of corporeality. With Manasses, the threat is figuratively represented in the doubly phallic look of the "Giftpfeil" that "bohrte." This phallic threat is made literal, and thus corporeal, with Holofernes. The poisonous phallic male gaze suffocates Judith's soul (68) and Judith sees herself in her "tiefsten Erniedrigung […] an Leib und Seel'

[154] An additional aspect which supports the idea that Judith *did* actively participate in the sexual act is found in a hint as to their sexual positions. When Judith relates her experience to Mirza, she says, "so lächelte er, als er mich zu sich niederzog" (70). This comment "as he pulled me down to him" implies that Judith was on top, which is generally considered the more dominant position.

ausgekeltert" (69). Judith's figurative self-defense of strangling is then equally literally and physically translated: She decapitates Holofernes.

However, the decapitation of Holofernes should not be reduced to merely an act of vengeance for personal reason, as most critics argue.[155] Indeed, killing the general was part of Judith's original plan to save her people, as I previously demonstrated. While her hesitation to go through with this act of violence indicates that she is still a human and not a cold-blooded killer, it certainly does not suggest that her entire previous motivation is negated. Indeed, the previously shown pattern of Judith's expression of desire immediately followed by her reinstatement of her mission occurs again in her conversation with Mirza, before she deals the deadly blow. After leaving Holofernes' bed, Judith is dazed and unbalanced, which mirrors her uncertainty and hesitation. However, when Mirza suggests that Judith use her for physical support (67), Judith rejects her offer, demonstrating her renewed resolve: "Wie, ich wäre so schwach? Fort von mir! Ich kann stehen, oh, ich kann noch mehr als stehen, ich kann unendlich viel mehr!" (68). When Mirza suggests that the two now run away, Judith responds in anger: "Was? Bist du in seinem Solde? Daß er mich mit sich fortzerrte, daß er mich zu sich riß auf sein schändliches Lager, daß er meine Seele erstickte, alles dies duldest du?" (68). She emphasizes her plan again: "Mord sinne ich!" (68). The pattern repeats itself again, when unfamiliar sexual feelings come back to Judith: "ich bin ein Weib! Oh, ich sollte das jetzt nicht fühlen!" (68). This time, she asks her maid to help her regain her determination:

[155] See Bührig (42), Campbell (52), Durzak (56), Fenner ("Unbedingtheitsspiel" 37), Fricke (324), Gerlach (*Hebbel* 43), Graham (18), Hein (72), Kreuzer (372), Lamport ("Practical Criticism" 202), Lütkehaus ("Judith" 92), Martínez (209), Meetz (22), Musschoot (124), E. Osterkamp (192), Reinhardt (*Apologie* 88), Sengle (206), Stolte ("*Judith*" 36), Tobiasz (32), Wagner (88), Wittkowski ("Das Tragische" 7). Only Wittowski argues that Judith "leidet unter der Tat, nicht unter deren Motiven" (12).

> Höre mich und tu, warum ich dich bitte. Wenn meine Kraft mich verlassen, wenn ich ohnmächtig hinsinken sollte, dann bespritz' mich nicht mit Wasser. Das hilft nicht. Ruf mir ins Ohr: "Du bist eine Hure!" Dann spring' ich auf, vielleicht pack' ich dich und will dich würgen. Dann erschrick nicht, sondern ruf mir zu: "Holofernes hat dich zur Hure gemacht, und Holofernes lebt noch!" Oh, Mirza, dann werd' ich ein Held sein, ein Held wie Holofernes! (68)

In the end, Judith does not need Mirza's help, but finds the strength within herself to accomplish the deed (70).

My argument against reading a rape in this text is not meant to discount rape stories in general. Instead, by identifying the context within which Judith is speaking and recognizing that, in the end, she continued to act according to her plan restores an agency to her that has been long denied. Hebbel noted in his diaries that his play was meant to demonstrate why women should not be emancipated, arguing that what women do is a "Tun, das kein Handeln ist, das Wollen und Nicht-Können" (T1802). Reading a rape in the text not only denies Judith's sexuality, but also her agency. My reading restores both and thereby demonstrates that Hebbel's *Judith* undermines his own stated purpose. The containment of women conceived in and through this drama turns back on itself and reveals a woman who reaches some level of emancipation precisely through accepting her sexuality.

Guilt Talk

Throughout the text, there are numerous attempts to contain Judith's sexuality. The more subtle attempt can be read through the blame and the aftermath of her wedding night due to her husband's coded impotence. The main force behind the containment is represented by Judith's maid, Mirza, who is never without a comment of reprimand for Judith's behavior. Mirza is the insidious voice in the text which critiques Judith whenever

she challenges 19th century notions of proper femininity. In the end, these attempts of containment are not wholly successful. As previously discussed, Judith does reach a certain level of emancipation; however, the strategies of containment keep her from becoming wholly emancipated.

The first attempt to contain Judith's sexuality can be read through the impotence of her husband Manasses. On the night of their wedding, as the couple prepares to consummate their marriage, something stops Manasses from even approaching Judith in their bed. The passage reads:

> Manasses rief: "Ich sehe dich so deutlich wie am Tage", und kam auf mich zu. Auf einmal blieb er stehen; es war, als ob die schwarze Erde eine Hand ausgestreckt und ihn von unten damit gepackt hätte. Mir ward's unheimlich; "komm, komm!" rief ich und schämte mich gar nicht, daß ich's tat. "Ich kann ja nicht", antwortete er dumpf und bleiern; "ich kann nicht!" wiederholte er noch einmal und starrte schrecklich mit weit aufgerissenen Augen zu mir herüber; dann schwankte er zum Fenster und sagte wohl zehnmal hintereinander: "Ich kann nicht!" Er schien nicht mich, er schien etwas Fremdes, Entsetzliches zu sehen. (17)

For most critics, the hand of the "schwarze Erde" is clearly a supernatural sign and this scene is commonly interpreted as evidence that God stopped Judith from losing her virginity in order to be used later for Holofernes.[156] I read this scene, instead, as an obvious sign of impotence. As E. Osterkamp correctly suggests, Manasses is being held "von *unten* […] nämlich an den Genitalien" (190, *emphasis mine*).[157] The cause – and thus blame – of Manasses' impotence points toward Judith and the feminine.

First, Judith is implicated through her status as Manasses' visual target when the hand "appears." He can see her "so deutlich wie am Tage" and he becomes frozen in her gaze: "schrecklich mit weit aufgerissenen Augen" (17). Even as he moves away,

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[156] See Kraft (64), Reinhardt (*Apologie* 91, 128), Fenner (*FH* 35), Stolte ("*Judith*" 29), and Graham (15).
[157] See also Durzak, who reads wedding night as an "offentsichtliche Hinweis auf Impotenz, die Manasses zugleich kaschiert" (49-50).

Manasses continues to stare down at her. As Judith reports, Manasses only appears ("scheint") to be looking at her, but in fact looks at "etwas Fremdes, Entsetzliches." Second, Judith's sexual eagerness frames Manasses' gaze. She is eager for his kisses (16) and when he hesitates, she even calls out to him: "komm, komm!" A sexually demanding woman in the 19th century was regarded as "unnatural" (McLaren 96) or even as a "disease" (Mueller 89), and was considered "culpable for destroying a man's virility" (McLaren 108). By taking an active role in the bedroom, Judith inverts the order of masculinity and femininity. Cultural commentators of the time "asserted […] that the main cause of a man's impotence was the woman" (McLaren 103). Finally, as Martínez astutely suggests, the "schwarze Erde" is synonymous with the feminine element Mother Earth. "Sie ist der symbolische Uterus und das symbolische Grab. […] Manasses bleibt vor Judiths Bett stehen, um der Vereinigung mit einer symbiotischen Mutterinstanz zu entgehen" (193). The women figured as Judith and Mother Earth are placed as the culprits of Manasses' inability to perform.

Even in Manasses' death, Judith is not exonerated from blameless guilt, which had followed her since their wedding night. On his deathbed, Judith begs Manasses to reveal what happened on that night. He answers: "Ja, ja, ja, jetzt darf ich's dir sagen, du-" but his response is cut off by death (18). Whatever his answer may have been, the fact that he starts out with "du" hardly points toward any admission of guilt on his part. Thus, Judith's sexuality is contained by impotence during her marriage to Manasses, physically and mentally. However, the containment is only partially successful. Already during her marriage, Judith wants to lash out against her husband for his denial of her. The morning after the fateful wedding night, she refuses to kiss him (17) and she later has murderous

thoughts when he looks at her reproachfully (18). In the end, impotence appears to make Judith even more eager for sexual experience, as can be seen in both her sensual dream and in her readiness to confront Holofernes.

The second attempt of containment occurs through Mirza and functions almost entirely on a level of shame. Mirza tells Judith when she is ashamed of her or feels shame for her. As Judith describes her wedding night, Mirza's interjections work with this theme. When Judith expresses some shame for feeling so excited on her wedding night, Mirza eagerly agrees, "Ich schämte mich mit dir" (16). Later, after Judith has described her state of sexual excitement upon meeting her husband, Mirza adds to the memory, "Du preßtest dein Gesicht erst einige Augenblicke in deine Hände, dann sprangst du schnell auf und fielst ihm um den Hals. Ich erschrak ordentlich" (16). Her disapproving comments are noted by Judith, who refuses to give them merit. Mirza wants to direct Judith to behave within the confines of acceptable femininity. Thus, she attempts to bring Ephraim and Judith together. Mirza is frustrated when Judith won't talk to her about the young man, who is obviously enthralled with Judith (15). When Ephraim threatens suicide in order to pressure Judith into loving him, Mirza wholly encourages the endeavor. She appears caught up in the moment and asks, "Fühlst du's nicht, Judith?" (22). However, Judith rejects Mirza's attempts to rein her in and refuses to be contained.

Mirza's tactics of shame are only successful in the end. She initially encourages Judith to leave without killing the general. Her central focus is to keep Judith within acceptable standards of femininity. As she reminds the audience: "Ein Weib soll Männer gebären; nimmermehr soll sie Männer töten!" (67).[158] After Judith decapitates Holofernes

[158] Wells argues that "Mirza is thus made the spokesman of an ethical precept which she considers binding even in the Jews' present desperate situation" ("Ethical"100).

and declares herself a hero, Mirza first judges Judith with her "hostile silence" (Wells, "Ethical" 100).[159] Mirza is then eager to punish Judith for her indiscretion by suggesting that she brought this negative experience on herself.[160] She asks, "Eins muß ich dich fragen. Warum kamst du im Glanz deiner Schönheit in dies Heidenlager? Hättest du es nie betreten, du hättest nichts zu rächen gehabt!" (72). Judith's first answer is telling, and I believe, is one that should not be quickly ignored: "Warum ich kam? Das Elend meines Volks peitschte mich hierher, die dräuende Hungersnot, der Gedanke an jene Mutter, die sich ihren Puls aufriß, um ihr verschmachtendes Kind zu tränken. Oh, nun bin ich wieder mit mir ausgesöhnt. Dies alles hatt' ich über mich selbst vergessen!" (72).[161] Because of her final comment, Mirza can now argue semantics: "Du hattest es vergessen. Das also war's nicht, was dich trieb, als du deine Hand in Blut tauchtest!" (72). There are two separate things going on here. Mirza's first question was why Judith dressed in finery and came to Holofernes' camp. In her response, she then switches to something (not entirely) different by questioning Judith's motives for killing Holofernes. It can be entirely true that in the actual moment of killing (when Judith dips her hand in blood), she was thinking only of herself. However, behind that moment is the greater motivation: Judith went to Holofernes' camp in order to dispose of her people's enemy. Yet Mirza, concerned with Judith's multiple transgressions against proper behavior, is happy to elide the two moments and drive Judith into shame. In addition, she ultimately punishes Judith for the audacity to think about herself. Mirza is never the supportive, loyal servant.

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[159] For Musschoot, Mirza's question is an "innocent remark" (124).

[160] Ziegler's reading of Mirza places her questions in a more metaphysical realm. He suggests that Mirza is a "sehr moderne[s] Ausdruckssymbol für eine in den Entzweiung von Bewußtem und Unbewußtem begründete Selbstentfremdung des Menschen – für seine ausweglose Verstrickung in die nichtige Scheinwert rein subjektiver Illusionen und Ideologien" ("*Judith*" 115).

[161] Martínez reads Judith's answer much more critically: "Nachdem Judiths Versuch, die Tat als 'Heldenthat' zu deklarieren, an dem vielsagenden Schweigen Mirzas gescheitert ist, müssen die altbekannten scheinpatriotischen Ambitionen zur Rechtfertigung herhalten" (209).

Instead, she is the voice reminding Judith and the audience that Judith is not behaving properly.

This is the effective moment in the containment of Judith. Judith allows herself to be tricked by Mirza's argument of semantics and lets her overarching motivation be replaced with her momentary motivation. Thus, she is "vernichtet" and can now begin doubting herself:

> Nein - nein - du hast recht - das war's nicht - nichts trieb mich als der Gedanke an mich selbst. Oh, hier ist ein Wirbel! Mein Volk ist erlöst; doch wenn ein Stein den Holofernes zerschmettert hätte - es wäre dem Stein mehr Dank schuldig als jetzt mir! Dank? Wer will den? Aber jetzt muß ich meine Tat allein tragen, und sie zermalmt mich! (72)

Judith does not come to this "realization" on her own, but only through Mirza's containment strategies. Yet, even if this moment is taken by most critics to demonstrate the failure of Judith for acting out of personal revenge (Lütkehaus, "Judith" 92),[162] her words at the end indicate she cannot be entirely crushed. First, she commands Mirza to bring the head back with her as proof of her act. Back in Bethulien, she has evidently completely forgotten that she is worthless and undeserving of any praise. Judith admonishes her people, "Ihr seid mir Dank schuldig, Dank, den ihr mir nicht durch die Erstlinge eurer Herden und eurer Gärten abtragen könnt! Mich trieb's, die Tat zu tun; an euch ist's, sie zu rechtfertigen! Werdet heilig und rein, dann kann ich sie verantworten!" (79). Judith accomplishes her goals in the end: By entering the political stage, she is able to satisfy her sexual curiosity and, at the same time, eliminate the enemy of her people.

[162] See also Hein (67), Wiese (*Tragödie* 386), Sengle (206), Durzak (60), Stolte ("*Judith*" 36), Fenner (*FH* 180), Buhrig (45), and Reinhardt (*Apologie* 90). Jacobus argues that Judith kills Holofernes out of more than revenge for her rape, but because she cannot be him (71).

III. Jews on the Edge

Hebbel's play *Judith* reveals another border figure defined in terms of the feminine: the Jew. The border figure of the Jew is defined in terms of the feminine in Hebbel's text through both the title figure, Judith, whose name in Hebrew *yhwdyt* means "Jewess" (Moore 147) and is, therefore, often allegorically understood to be a stand-in for all Jews or all of Judea; and through the representation of the male Jew as effeminate.[163] As with the other *Grenzfiguren* in Hebbel's drama, there is an attempt to contain the Jew in and through the text. As we have seen with the previous border figures, the attempt to contain the border figure of the Jew is also, at least in part, undermined by the text itself. However, the underlying anti-Semitic rhetoric of the text seems to uphold the negative propaganda of the Jewish Question of Hebbel's contemporaries. In the end, because of this rhetoric, we can read an even more powerful attempt to contain the woman and women's emancipation through an elision of the incurable inherent "Jewish" qualities in women, which were used in the early 19th century to argue against Jewish emancipation.[164]

The Historical Context of *Judith*

Hebbel wrote this play during a significant time for the Jews in European history. After hundreds of years of prejudice and persecution, the Jews were slowly gaining first human rights and then, eventually, citizen rights throughout Europe. In his seminal work, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933*, Jacob Katz describes the

[163] The effeminate male Jew is a stock anti-Semitic stereotype. I will return to this image later.
[164] As early as the 10th century, the Judith-material was used to comment on the Jews. As Estes explains in her analysis of the Old English poem "Judith," the text "reflects the ambiguity in Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward Jews" (330) and the poem emphasizes the greed of the Jews (335).

situation in the German speaking areas. The Edict of 1812 "granted Jews almost full citizenship" except for state service in Austria, however these rights were rescinded at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. By 1824 in Frankfurt "except for the participation in the political conduct of the municipality, Jews regained all the prerogatives of a free citizen – free choice of residence, occupation, and acquisition of property." The 1820s and 1830s were a time marked by stagnation and some regression for the emancipation of the Jews. Specifically the Hep Hep riots of 1819 "may have retarded the process of political advancement and social integration," but did not reverse the steps made toward emancipation (147). The Jews received full citizen rights in the late 1860s for most of what was to become Germany and in 1871 with the effect of the establishment of the German nation (Lea 1).[165]

During the 19th century, hundreds of pamphlets and essays were published on the hotly debated topic of the so-called *Judenfrage* with varying degrees of polemic and anti-Semitic rhetoric. As Katz explains, writers encouraging total regression of emancipation legislation through a reintroduction of ghettos, badges, or Jew taxes "ran counter to the trend of the times" (148). Instead, the anti-Semitic rhetoric was meant to demonstrate the necessity of complete assimilation: "The desire to see Jews adapt to the norms of the dominant culture was sufficient reason to present the negative image of the Jew and suggest it be erased by means of assimilation" (Katz 203). In light of the obvious importance of the Jewish Question throughout the late 18th and most of the 19th century, literary works written during this time in which Jews play any sort of role gain additional significance. Whether or not any given author was privately anti-Semitic or philo-Semitic, writing about the Jew during this time contributed consciously or subconsciously to the

[165] See als Rürup.

general discussion of the *Judenfrage*. Thus, Hebbel's choice of source material about a Jewish heroine and her people must be read within this context.

Judith: A Significant Choice of Material

Hebbel famously wrote his *Judith* as a better *Jungfrau*: He wanted to demonstrate the weakness of Schiller's play, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, by writing a better version of it (Fricke 311).[166] Strangely, he ultimately did not choose to use the actual Christian Jeanne D'Arc source material, but instead decided to use the story of a Jewish heroine. As Gerlach points out, Hebbel clearly depicted his Judith as a Jewess: she reveals her knowledge of the Torah by rejecting her maid's advice to consult a diviner (*Hebbel* 78). In addition, she does not want to break kosher laws and she differentiates herself from other women by emphasizing that she is an "ebräisch Weib" (66).[167] The significance behind this particular choice of source material increases when we consider that Hebbel wrote several other plays in which Jews make an unfavorable appearance. In the following, I will briefly review these texts in order to trace their importance for better understanding the representation of the Jew in Hebbel's *Judith*. A final note to add is that despite the literary critic Werner's early assessment in 1904 that Hebbel's texts should be read in light of Hebbel's interest in the *Judenfrage*,[168] to date, the issue of the representation of the Jew and anti-Semitism in Hebbel's works has been largely ignored.

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[166] See also Kreuzer (367), Lamport ("Practical Criticism" 209), Kraft (58), Ziegler ("*Judith*" 101), Campbell (48), Fowler (43), (Meetz 19).

[167] Graham describes Judith as the "Schwindelnde Gipfelpunkt des Judentums" (13).

[168] "Die Judenfrage beschäftigte den Dichter schon sehr früh, er gewann aber erst allmählich eine klare Stellung zu ihr; während er in München und noch später manchmal einen gewissen Judenhaß äußert, der ihn freilich nicht hindert, die grauenvolle Judenepisode der Genoveva zu gestalten, der ihn aber bei der Zeichnung des Benjamin im Diamanten leitet, neigt er seit seinem Verkehre mit feingebildeten Juden, wie Bamberg in Paris, spatter Emil Kuh, Julius Glaser und Sigmund Engländer in Wien einer freundlicheren Auffassung zu und sprach sie sogar in einem besonderen Aufsatz aus. Das verleiht auch seinem Operntexte Bedeutung" (Werner LX).

At most, any commentary is relegated to an occasional footnote.[169] The texts I will briefly discuss are *Der Diamant* (1847), *Genoveva* (1843), and *Ein Steinwurf oder Opfer um Opfer* (1858).

In the comedy, *Der Diamant*, begun in 1838 and submitted for a writing competition in Berlin in 1841,[170] a Jewish man, Benjamin, tricks a Christian farmer, Jacob, who misjudges the value of the precious gem, into selling him the diamond for a pittance. Before the farmer can change his mind, Benjamin swallows the diamond, thereby literally taking the diamond into his bodily possession. The diamond belongs to the local dynastic family and the king announces a reward for the return of the diamond. Thus, Benjamin becomes a hunted man, whose value is quickly reduced to the stone inside his body. The prison guard, who 'frees' Benjamin in order to kill the Jew in secret summarizes: "Ist der Kerl nicht selbst Schuld daran, daß man in ihm nicht mehr einen Menschen sieht, in dem eine Seele sitzt, sondern nur noch einen ledernen Sack, in dem ein gestohl'ner Diamant steckt" (378).[171] In the end, Benjamin passes off an ordinary rock as the diamond to the prison guard, who in turn gives it to the Count hoping for the reward. However, the Count learns in the meantime that Jacob was the original owner of the stone and thus, only the honest farmer receives the reward. In the course of the play, the fact that the stone, which has now brought the farmer a large monetary reward, is a fake, is never discovered. The Jew, Benjamin, exits the stage after revealing his plan to bring the real diamond to the king, once his body finally releases it. The play's happy end focuses entirely on the royal family and the upcoming wedding of the king's daughter.

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[169] There is a greater focus on anti-Semitism in Nestroy's *Judith und Holofernes*. See Walla.
[170] After the play did not receive the hoped for reward, Hebbel rewrote the play adding a lengthy prologue and published it in 1847 (Hecht 209).
[171] Hebbel, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Historisch kritische Ausgabe. Erster Band: Dramen I (1841-1847). Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1901. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

The portrayal of the Jew, Benjamin, is largely negative.[172] Even as his quick wit and intelligence are revealed, they are always part of a scheme to save his life and retain the diamond. Throughout the play, Benjamin is referred to as "Hund" by the other characters – from the 'honest' farmer, Jacob, to the quick-witted doctor, Dr. Pfeffer, and the inept judge, Kilian. While the insult seems largely attached to Benjamin's crime of stealing the diamond, depicting the Jew as a dog is a common anti-Semitic stereotype. The 'honest' farmer also compares Benjamin to other animals and all within the context of how he puts each to death: "Drei Füchse hab' ich schon damit erlegt, der Jude soll der vierte sein! […] Kennst du Hämmel, die Steine einstecken? Zeig' sie mir! Ich würge sie, wie ich den Juden würge" (329). Other anti-Semitic stereotypes are revealed in the text: The Jew is depicted by the other characters as a habitual liar, greedy, and untrustworthy. Each stereotype is then underlined by the actual behavior of the Jew, who lies, cheats, and is constantly concerned with the value of the diamond.

The anti-Semitic rhetoric expressed by the other characters is also reinforced by Benjamin's own negative assessment of his people. He does not initially plan to steal the diamond, but wants to purchase it – even as he hopes to trick the farmer into believing the jewel is almost worthless. He juxtaposes his own principles and honesty with that of his people, who would not hesitate to steal: "Hätt' ich gestohlen, gewuchert, betrogen, wie andere, so könnt' ich nun einen Handel machen, der mich auf Zeitlebens mit Reichtum überschütten würde. Aber man wollte besser sein, als Vater und Großvater […]" (327).[173] Benjamin only thinks of theft when the farmer names a price that is well above what the

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[172] Charlene Lea argues to the contrary. She explains that *Der Diamant* "lacks the political and anti-Semitic overtones of Grabbe's play *Aschenbrödel*" (106) and that "[…] Hebbel allows his Jew to emerge ultimately as one of the most sympathetic characters in the play" (111).

[173] Hebbel, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Ed. Richard Maria Werner. Vol. 1. Dramen I. Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1901. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

Jew has in his possession. While contemplating where he could obtain the necessary cash for the purchase, he reveals that the "Stück Silber" he had offered the farmer, is not his, but that he found it in his brother's pants. He later attempts to redefine his actions as "scheinbare[r] Diebstahl" in order to protect the farmer from other Jews, "den ärgsten Gauner" (347). Another example of anti-Semitic rhetoric occurs in the association of the diamond and feces. As Lütkehaus argues: "die analökonomische Bildlichkeit des Stücks nimmt die aus der analytischen Sozialpsychologie bekannte Vorstellung des Anti-Semitismus, daß 'Geld stinkt,' vor allem aber 'die Juden stinken,' paradox wörtlich: Die christlichen Kleinbürger versuchen, 'den Juden' zum Stinken zu bringen, um ihn vom Geld zu befreien" ("*Diamant*" 98).[174]

The anti-Semitic rhetoric evident in the comments of the Christian figures and reinforced by both the actions of the Jew and his own derogatory remarks of his people, is further underscored by a *Verjudung* of the Christian characters. They become just as selfish and greedy as Benjamin and are even willing to resort to murder in order to obtain the jewel.[175] That the Christian figures are not so far from the Jew can be seen in the choice of name for the character that is considered the most honest and Christian, Jacob. The connection with the Judaic patriarch and his ultimately murderous tendencies, codes even the most Christian figure with "Jewish" characteristics. The fear of the effect of the Jew on Christian society was a common one during the 19th century (Helfer, "*Judenbuche*" 247). Hebbel's text demonstrates the danger of the Jew both through his

[174] See also Robertson: "[…] when Benjamin suffers from stomach pains, we see the materialistic Jew being punished for his greed by the materiality of the wealth concealed in his intestines; and the threats to eviscerate him sound like retribution for the Jew's alleged cruelty as ritual slaughterer or as ritual murderer" (209-10).

[175] "Die gesellschaftliche Emanzipation des Juden wäre folglich gleichbleibend mit der Emanzipation der judaisierten Gesellschaft vom universallen Judentum" (Lütkehaus 100).

avarice and lack of conscience toward his fellow man, but also through *Verjudung*. Ultimately, the text loses interest in the problem of the Jew. In the end, focus shifts to the royal family. Yet, even within this circle, Jacob is there and repeatedly asks after his reward.

Anti-Semitic rhetoric can be found in Hebbel's *Genoveva* as well. Shortly after Hebbel begins writing *Der Diamant* in 1838, he becomes interested in the story of Genoveva through his encounter with the *Sturm und Dränger*. Already in 1839, Hebbel sketches out his plan for a dramatization of the Genoveva material (Werner XXXI). Published in 1843, *Genoveva* is a five-act tragedy in blank verse, which tells the story of Genoveva, who is left in the care of Golo, her husband Siegfried's trusted knight, while Siegfried joins the crusade. Golo falls in love with Genoveva and, when rejected by her, falsely accuses her of an adulterous relationship with another knight, Drago, who is then executed. Genoveva gives birth to Siegfried's son, Schmerzenreich, while in prison. Golo's plan to have her assassinated in the secrecy of the forest fails, when her assassin is attacked by a local madman. Siegfried eventually returns and is convinced of the perpetuated falsehood that his wife had another man's son. Finally overcome with guilt, Golo takes leave of Siegfried and has a co-conspirator blind him and leave him to die in the forest. Only in the Epilogue does Siegfried learn the truth and is reunited with his wife and son.

On the surface, Hebbel's lengthy play *Genoveva* seems to have very little to do with the border figure of the Jew and the *Judenfrage*. In fact, the only appearance by a Jew is near the start of the drama and is very brief. After Siegfried has left to join the crusade, Genoveva goes to the chapel to pray. Golo, who fell in love with Genoveva

while watching her tearful goodbye to her beloved husband, waits outside the chapel and ponders how to make this loyal woman his own. It is here that the short scene with the Jew takes place. The Jew remains unnamed and is referred to as merely "*ein alter Jude*" (II.5).[176] He explodes into Golo's space of contemplation followed by an angry mob. He is to be punished for drinking from a fountain, from which the "grindigsten der Hunde" also drink (862-3). However, in the few lines of this scene, it becomes apparent that he is to be the scapegoat for a multitude of sins thought to be perpetrated by the Jews throughout history. From the start, the common negative associations with Jews are revealed from poisoning wells to deicide. The angry mob quickly decides to reenact the crucifixion of Christ on the Jew as retribution. He is to be denied drinking water the way Christ was:

> Reiß dir den Leib auf, wenn Du durstig bist,
> Du Hund, und saug' die eigne Galle aus!
> Habt Ihr doch Galle unserm Herrn zum Hohn
> Gereicht, als er vor Durst am Kreuz verging. (841-4)

Balthasar suggests that they hang the Jew opposite "ein steinern Bild, der Heiland mit der Dornenkron'" in order to please the Lord:

> […] lächeln muß das Schmerzensbild,
> Wenn wir, ihm gegenüber, an die Wand
> Den Juden nageln, und verdreifacht ihm
> Die Marter anthun, die der Herr erlitt! (849-52)

The crowd taunts the Jew, remarking on the "devil's fire" in his eyes (897-8), and threatens to shave his beard. Ultimately, the crowd takes no action outside of these taunts and threats. Instead, Golo steps in to save the Jew. He sees in the old man a fellow sufferer and sinner: "Jedem Sünder fühl' ich mich verwandt!" (854). However, the Jew

[176] Hebbel, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Ed. Richard Maria Werner. Vol. 1. Dramen I. Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1901. All subsequent quotes are from this edition. Since this episode place in Act II, Scene 5, only the line numbers are noted.

refuses Golo's help, "Noch keinem deines Volks / Ward dank ich schuldig, würd's auch Dir nicht gern!" (855-6). In the end, the Jew's words of anger and frustration at the unjust treatment turn to curses which anger Golo to the point that he slays the man he initially wanted to save.

As with *Der Diamant*, the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the Christian characters is underscored by the Jew's own actions and words. He refuses Golo's help and sees himself as a martyr of his people. The Jew sees his death perpetrated from injustice as a reward he does not want to be denied, and threatens to spit at Golo until the knight rescinds his command that the Jew be left in peace:

> […] Ich spei' nach Dir,
> Damit Du's widerrufst! Wenn auch mein Leib
> Dem Schlage zittert, der von fern ihm droht,
> Wenn sich mein Auge furchtsam schließt, mein Fuß
> Zur Flucht sich hebt, so lechzt doch meine Brust
> Nach Schimpf und Schmach und unverdienter Qual.
> Sie sind mein Schatz, mein einz'ger, letzter Schatz,
> Sind meines Volkes Schatz, wodurch es einst
> Zurück erkauft, was es an Rom verlor:
> Die heil'ge Stadt, das hochgelobte Land. (871-9)

The Jew ties his destiny with that of his people and sees it as a step toward reclaiming Jerusalem. Through the Jew, there is a subtle critique directed at the Christian crusaders. Yet, at the same time, even the initial injustice done to the Jew, which is rationalized through the past sin of deicide, is further justified through the Jew's own curses.

As Werner argues in his introduction to the play in the historical critical edition of Hebbel's *Sämtliche Werke*, "diese Scene darf nicht als eine Episode zur bloßen Zeitcharakteristik angesehen werden, ihr Zusammenhang mit dem Ganzen ist viel tiefer, weil der Jude die Idee des stellvertretenden Leidens auf seine Weise versinnbildlicht und den Hauptpersonen zum Contrast dient" (XXXIX-XL). I would also go further than

merely arguing that the anti-Semitism of this scene reflects Hebbel's contemporary world of the mid-19th century. Instead, the text implies that Golo wishes to eliminate the "Jewishness" in himself. The clue for this can be taken from Werner's comment on the relationship between Golo and the Jew:

> Da tritt ihm der verfolgte Jude entgegen; in dem Sünder fühlt er einen Wesensverwandten, den er schützen möchte, in der gepeinigten Creatur, die sich plötzlich nach einem Leben voll still getragener Qual im Augenblick des Todes zur Größe des Hasses aufbäumt und in furchtbaren Flüchen ihren lang unterdrückten Gefühlen Luft macht, ahnt er etwas Verderbendbringendes und haut mit dem Schwert nach dem Juden. (XXXIX)

I contend that the suffering Jew is more than a mere "Wesensverwandte" for Golo, but a mirror of himself. By killing the Jew, he attempts to kill what is "Jewish" in himself. Instead, with the death of the external Jew, he appears to release the internal "Jewishness." His greed for Genoveva and his treacherous plot against her consumes the remainder of the text. In the end, Golo's "Jewishness" is marked by his decision to be blinded, which points the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew's blindness for not recognizing Jesus Christ as the Messiah, as well as his decision to wander out of guilt for the remainder of his life, which echoes the legend of the wandering Jew (Felsenstein 35).

The final text with anti-Semitic rhetoric I will briefly discuss is a libretto Hebbel wrote in 1858 as a paid commission by the composer Anton Rubinstein called *Ein Steinwurf oder Opfer um Opfer*. The composer requested the main theme of the libretto: a love triangle between Rabbi Loew, a famous rabbi, Talmudist, and philosopher of 16th-century Prague, and two Christian women, Princess Libussa and Anna. Rubinstein was disappointed with the results and never set the text to music.[177] In this libretto, a

[177] In a letter, Rubenstein notes: "At last I have the opera text from Hebbel. I am unfortunate with opera texts. Here are eight hundred gulden thrown away […] an immature product without knowledge of stage, no characterization, and silly verses" (qtd in Campbell 212). For his part, Hebbel felt restricted in his

Christian man, Wolf, disguised as a Jew throws a stone at the king during his coronation procession in order to incite anger toward the Jews. The ultimate goal of the "Steinwurf" is to encourage an attack on the ghetto and provoke the expulsion of the Jews from Prague. Since no Jew owns up to the crime, the king decides that all Jews are to leave Prague by the next day. The crowd takes this opportunity to plunder the Jewish ghetto, taking whatever gold, jewels, and other treasures they can find. Rabbi Loew, who falls in love with Princess Libussa as he watches her during the procession, approaches the Princess in order to plead on behalf of the Jews. The Princess, however, demands a confession and will consider asking the king to rescind his order, if Rabbi Loew shares his secret magic for making gold and a drink for eternal youth with her. The Rabbi cannot produce these things, for he is no magician despite the rumors surrounding him; thus, the Princess has him arrested for approaching her. Upon his arrest, Rabbi Loew confesses to a crime he did not commit – throwing the stone at the King – in order to save his people. At the same time, he welcomes death as a relief from the pain of rejection caused by the Princess.

In the end, Rabbi Loew is saved by Anna, a Christian woman who is in love with the Jew. Having seen her brother disguised as a Jew on the day of the King's coronation, Anna realizes that he is most likely the guilty party. Since she lacks evidence against her brother, she is ready to sacrifice herself for Rabbi Loew and confesses to the treasonous crime. When the King suspects she is lying and presses her to swear by the cross around her neck, Anna can only proclaim that Rabbi Loew did not do it. Slowly the crowd realizes who the guilty party is and it is revealed that Wolf perpetrated the crime. The

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creativity and ability "in working by a prescribed plan, and in order not to encroach upone the sphere of the music" (Campbell 212).

plays ends without recrimination, because the King in his wisdom recognizes that the "Steinwurf" was not meant for him, but for the Jews. Therefore he has nothing to punish and all are set free.

From start to finish, Hebbel's libretto is filled with anti-Semitic rhetoric and stereotypes.[178] Common Jewish stereotypes from the Middle Ages such as the myths of blood libel for Passover and poisoning the wells are rehashed. The myths surrounding Rabbi Loew as a practitioner of black magic are reawakened – the Princess Libussa makes her mercy dependent on the Rabbi's willingness to share his dark secrets and even the Rabbi's fellow Jewish companion, Joel, asks the scholar to call upon the dark arts and bring the golem to life in order to save the Jews. The anti-Jewish polemic of the text would seem to call not only the characters in the play to arms, but the audience as well:

König. Und der Jude soll verderben,
Der so tückisch uns bedroht!

Wolf. Nieder die Juden,
Fort aus dem Land!
Plündert die Buben,
Steckt sie in Brand!

Soldaten *und*
Bürger *zusammen* Packt sie, würgt sie, schlagt sie nieder,
Brecht in ihren Ghetto ein! (I.173-80)[179]
[…]

König. Mag, wer will, der Thäter sein:
Alle Juden steh'n mir ein!

Alle. Alle Juden steh'n uns ein!
Warum soll's nur Einer sein? (I.209-12)

[178] Heinz Stolte argues that there is no anti-Semitic rhetoric in this text. He contends that Hebbel instead shows "eine Welt, die in Mord- und Raubgier, in Intoleranz und Rassenhaß aus den Fugen greaten ist" and that this world "bedarf solcher hohen Beispiele opferbereiter Humanität, um von Zeit zu Zeit wieder ins Rechte und Reine gebracht zu warden, daß die Erde bewohnbar, die Menschen menschlich, die Gedanken vernünftig bleiben" ("*Steinwurf*" 33).

[179] Hebbel, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe. Ed. Richard Maria Werner. 1. Abteilung. Dramen III. Berlin: B.Behr's Verlag, 1904. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.

In the end, the crowd is disappointed that a Jew confesses, because now they will only be rid of one and not all Jews:

> Mich ärgert's, daß er sich genannt,
> Es ist ein Fluch für Volk und Land,
> Jetzt werden wir den Einen bloß,
> Sonst würden wir sie Alle los. (III.565-8)

Finally, the King's decision to leave Wolf unpunished demonstrates the underlying hatred of the Jews even at the highest level. For the King does not deem it necessary to punish a fellow Christian, even when that man threw the stone at the monarch, because he understands that the stone that hit him was meant for the Jews. Therefore, by leaving the attack on the Jews unpunished, he indicates not only his acquiescence with the persecution of the Jews, but also supports and approves of such actions.

Once again, the actions and words of the Jews support the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the play. It is the Jew Joel who reminds the audience of the "Jewish" practices of killing Christians for the Passover feast and poisoning wells.

> Nun aber folg' den Deinen,
> Es könnte sonst so scheinen,
> Als hielten wir Dich hier,
> Um Dich am Passah-Feste
> Zu schlachten für die Gäste
> Als beste Tafel-Bier (II.331-6)
> […]
> (*gegen das Publicum*)
> Hat ein Bübchen sich verlaufen,
> Welches ging, um Obst zu kaufen,
> Nun, so fing's der Jude ein
> Für die blut'ge Osterpein.
> Wenn noch vor der Morgenröthe
> Eine melancholische Kröte
> Sich in einen Brunnen stürzt,
> Hat der Jud' den Trunk gewürzt.
> Denn er ist der Prügelknabe,
> Den man zu besond'rer Labe

Statt des bösen Dämons schlägt,
Welcher all' die Tücken hegt. (III.524-35)

Even though, in his presentation, he laments that the Jews are only the scapegoat for otherwise uncriminal occurrences, he draws the audience's attention to deep-seated fears and age-old accusations. It is also Joel who demands that Rabbi Loew engage with the dark arts in order to save his people. By presenting a Jew who believes these talents of the Rabbi, the text insinuates that the rumors must be true.

Only the figure of Rabbi Loew stands against the anti-Semitic stereotypes presented in the play. He repeatedly refutes the idea that he is a magician and, in a Christ-like act, he is willing to sacrifice his life in order to save his people. He also refuses to let Anna die on his behalf, despite the fact that he, himself, is innocent. Rabbi Loew recognizes her desire to save him is driven by love for him. Because he does not reciprocate that love, he will not allow the woman to take his place.

Each of the three texts outlined above contains a predominantly negative representation of the Jew and anti-Semitic rhetoric, which reflects the anti-Jewish propaganda of Hebbel's contemporaries. It is useful to consider Hebbel's choice of source material for his *Judith* within this context. Instead of using the story of Jeanne D'Arc to create a better *Jungfrau* than Schiller, Hebbel chose this Biblical text. With this choice, the issues of women's emancipation and Jewish emancipation become closely intertwined.[180]

[180] Hebbel considered himself to be pro-Jewish which is reflected in the scholarship of his texts. Most interpretations ignore the anti-Semitic rhetoric in his works or interpret it merely as a sign of Hebbel's time. One critic, Irving Massey, in reference to the treatment of the Jew in *Der Diamant*, recognizes that Hebbel was not "without his traces of prejudice" (86).

The Biblical Judith vs. *Judith*: Anti-Semitism Revealed

The use of anti-Semitic rhetoric is a strategy to contain the Jew. The anti-Semitic rhetoric of Hebbel's previously discussed texts stands out compared to Hebbel's *Judith*, in part, because the Jews of the other texts are clearly the Other, the foreign element of the respective text. In *Judith,* the figure of the Jew is not particularly conspicuous, because the majority of the characters are Jews. The Other in *Judith*, the element to be conquered and/or contained, is the polytheist Assyrian. How then should we read the figure of the Jew in Hebbel's *Judith*? While the general unfavorable representation of the Jews of Bethulien already reveals some anti-Semitic stereotyping, a more forceful revelation becomes evident in a comparison between Hebbel's tragedy and his source, the apocryphal *Book of Judith*.

The *Book of Judith* is part of the Apocrypha, "the 15 books or parts of books from the pre-Christian period that the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Eastern churches accept, wholly or partially, as canonical Scripture but Protestants and Jews do not" (Moore ix). In the Biblical tale, there is less emphasis on Holofernes and no indication that he desires to be a god or replace Nebuchadnezzar. The Holofernes of the Bible is also less misogynistic: he and his men even compliment Judith on her beauty *and* brains (11:20-23). The more significant changes have to do with the representation of the people of Bethulien. The men, women, and children all gather in the marketplace to protest against the town's high magistrate, Uzziah,[181] and his decision to wait for God's help instead of surrendering to the Assyrians (7:23). Judith calls the town magistrates to her home and chastises them for the deal they had made with the people. She argues that one should not

[181] Uzziah means "Yah(u)-is-my-strength" (Moore 167). Biblical commentators have noted the irony in the meaning of Uzziah's name. This man is afraid to take action and is ready to surrender to the besieging army (Moore 81).

put God to the test (8:1-30). Judith decides what needs to be done about this threat and how she should deal with it. Her prayer to God is not for affirmation or approval, but for His strength to lie (8:32-9). Since Judith leaves town with her unnamed maid under the cover of night, there is no comparable scene at the town square: there is no Samuel to confess the sin of taking his brother's life and there is no mute Daniel to become a prophet and call for the stoning of his brother. Judith's tactic with Holofernes is also different. She leaves camp nightly to pray and purify herself (12:5-9). After several days, Holofernes requests her presence in his tent for dinner and there she continues to eat the kosher food prepared by her maid. In the end, Holofernes, who eagerly anticipates satisfying his desire with Judith, drinks too much and falls asleep. All alone with Holofernes, Judith prays and then decapitates the man. She and her maid return triumphant to Bethulien with the general's head and everyone praises God for delivering them from the enemy. There, Judith also plans an effective attack against the Assyrians. The book ends with Judith's long song of praise to God. The text also emphasizes the fact that Judith had relations with no other man than her husband, Manasses (16:22).[182]

Hebbel was very explicit about his thoughts on the Biblical Judith. He disagreed with her ability to kill a man and then not be crushed by a guilty conscience. He wanted to be sure that *his* Judith is ruined from guilt.

> Die Judith der Bibel kann ich nicht brauchen. Dort ist Judith eine Wittwe, die den Holofernes durch List und Schlauheit in's Netz lockt; sie freut sich, als sie seinen Kopf im Sack hat, und singt und jubelt vor und mit ganz Israel drei Monate lang. Das ist gemein; eine solche Natur ist ihres Erfolgs gar nicht würdig. Thaten der Art dürfen der Begeisterung, die sich später durch sich selbst gestraft fühlt, gelingen, aber nicht der Verschlagenheit, die in ihrem Glück ihr Verdienst sieht. Meine Judith wird durch ihre That paralysiert; sie erstarrt vor der Möglichkeit, einen Sohn des Holofernes zu gebären; es wird ihr klar, daß sie über die Gränzen

[182] The Biblical text reads: "But you must not inquire into the affair" (8:34). The word "affair" could be a pun. In Greek it means "doing, transaction, business," "retribution" and "sexual intercourse" (Moore 81).

> hinaus gegangen ist, daß sie mindestens das Rechte aus unrechten Gründen gethan hat. (T1872)

The earlier parts of this chapter have discussed this containment strategy within the context of women's emancipation, but here I would like to point to the significance for Jewish emancipation. In the Biblical tale, Judith's triumph is seen as a confirmation of God's chosen people. The *Book of Judith* was to be an inspiration to her readers "in the face of any present or future threat to the Jewish religion or state, Jews should follow Judith's example of courage, Pharisaic piety, ardent nationalism, and confidence in God" (Moore 62). Hebbel's transformation of Judith into a selfish heroine who is ultimately crushed by her actions, calls into question the Jews as God's chosen people. This is reinforced by Judith's call for them to be holy and to justify her actions, as well as by her distaste for the Bethuliens' "Schlachtermut" after the Assyrians have discovered headless Holofernes' body. In the end, Hebbel portrays a people not worth saving and a heroine not worth celebrating. A text meant to encourage the Jews to trust in God and stand up for themselves is morphed into a tale of self-loathing.

Hebbel's drama is also a text that calls the very presence of God in the lives of the Bethulien Jews into question, thereby challenging the notion of the Jews as God's chosen people.[183] Throughout the play there is much talk about God, but ultimately, God seems to be "unerreichbar und unerkennbar" (Fricke 326).[184] God is used as a justification for

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[183] Whether or not God exists in this text, and, if so, to what extent, is part of the greater debate regarding this text. Wittkowski declares that "Das Werk eine resignierende Absage an den christlichen Idealismus" ("Das Tragische" 7). Kreuzer argues along similar lines that "die Tragödie des Menschen [wird] zugleich zur Anklage gegen Gott" (374). Gerlach's interpretation stands in complete contrast, which is based on reading *Judith* solely through Hebbel's own words. In an attack on Fenner's article, Gerlach states that since Hebbel repeatedly mentions God in connection with Judith then that must mean God exists in the play. He explains further that if Hebbel had wanted to represent anything but a 'normal' God, "dann wäre das besonders herauszuarbeiten gewesen" ("Ausgang" 118).

[184] See also Durzak, who argues, "Gottes Zeichen ist also nicht klar erkennbar, sondern hat eine widersprüchliche Wirkung" (54).

events and desires. Manasses' inaction on the wedding night reveals itself to be a coding of impotence (Durzak 49),[185] not the presence of God. Judith's "call" from God to save her people divinely justifies her plan (Fenner "Unbedingtheitsspiel" 34).[186] The existence of God in the text is also called into question in the town scene of Act III. There, an old man confesses to murdering his brother as a young man in order to have his brother's wife, yet the man has remained unpunished by God. This stands in contrast to the priests who tell the people they are starving of thirst as a punishment from God.[187] This juxtaposition of sin and punishment suggests that God is not behind any of these events, but instead, humans choose to interpret the events in this way. Daniel's role as "prophet" is to be seen in the same way.[188] God first releases Daniel's tongue only to incite the masses to stone his brother. A few moments later Daniel calls out to his brother and reaches out for his hand, but he doesn't realize that his words have led the others to kill his brother. If, as some have argued, Daniel is to be considered an instrument of God in this scene, then it certainly is a questionable God.

The portrayal of the Hebrews at the town square reveals other anti-Semitic stereotypes such as effeminate men, blood libel, and madness. Throughout Hebbel's drama, the men of Bethulien are depicted as weak and indecisive. In the end, they are glad Judith is willing to go out and do what they are afraid to do. The anti-Semitic

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[185] See also Fenner ("Unbedingtheitsspiel" 35). In contrast, most critics read the events of the wedding night as a clear sign from God (Graham [15], Reinhardt, *Apologie* [128]).

[186] See also Martínez (200) and Ziegler (*Mensch* 21). Both also interpret the 'call from God' to be "Autosuggestion" (Martínez 197). In his reading, Wiese allows for some doubt in the role God may or may not have played in Judith's call (*Tragödie* 384). In contrast to these readings, several critics argue that God clearly called Judith to action and that the "Tat [ging] von Gott aus" (Wittkowski, "*Judith*" 179). See also Gerlach (*Hebbel* 40), Reinhardt (*Apologie* 92), and Kraft (70).

[187] One of the mother's challenges the priests' interpretation of God's vengeance:"Dann sitzt dein Gott nirgends als auf deinen Lippen!" (77).

[188] Many critics have argued that Daniel is to be seen in parallel with Judith (Kraft 67). Yet, while many of those same critics call Judith's godly "commission" into question, they all read Daniel as acting as a clear agent of God (Reinhardt, *Apologie* 126). By contrast, Wells questions the voice of God speaking through Daniel ("Ethical" 99).

stereotype of the Jewish man renders him effeminate and impotent for he was considered to menstruate like women (Felsenstein 35).[189] Unlike the Biblical men of Bethulien, who are ready and able to fight (5:15-17), in Hebbel's text, the Jewish people are described as "verächtlich, wenn es auszieht mit Spießen und Schwertern" (12). There is no character development for these ineffectual men, which leaves the subtle suggestion that there is no possibility for improvement among the Jews. This was a popular idea in the 19th century propaganda against Jewish emancipation, which argued that assimilation would not be able to drive out the inherently bad moral disposition of the Jews (Katz 150). At the end of *Judith*, the Hebrews are saved, but Judith's challenge to the men – "Werdet heilig und rein, dann kann ich sie verantworten!" (79) – insinuates that they were, perhaps, not worth saving. Indeed, Judith's words are immediately followed by the cries of discovery coming from the Assyrian camp, which signals the Bethulien men to launch their attack on the 'defenseless' Assyrians.[190] In the very moment she challenges them to be holy, the men are portrayed as eager to kill off and plunder those who are vulnerable.

The anti-Semitic stereotypes of blood libel and cannibalism are also subtly suggested in the text.[191] The first instance occurs during the opening of Act III at the town square. A group of men are discussing their plight and one man, Ben, states he is so thirsty that he wants to drink his own blood: "Man kommt so weit, daß man sich selbst wegen der paar Blutstropfen beneidet, die einem noch in den Adern sickern. Ich möchte mich anzapfen wie ein Faß" (29). Another man, Hosea, complains about Ammon's large

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[189] "[…] the imputation that menstruation by both men and women and hemorrhoidal bleeding was normal among Jews, and was to be considered 'a very literal interpretation of the concept of guilt and corporate responsibility supposedly advanced in Matthew 27:25: 'His blood be on us and on our children'" (Venetia Newall qtd in Felsenstein 35).

[190] It is not entirely clear how the massive army of the Assyrians is defenseless, but it has been suggested in scholarship. See Ziegler ("*Judith*" 112)

[191] See also Scheit for a brief commentary on the "Kannibalen-Motiv" (49).

body, which contains more "Viktualien" inside than it can carry externally. Ammon defends his size by insisting that he "zehr[t] vom Eigenen. Das geht keinen was an" (29). But Hosea rejects this notion for "in Kriegszeiten ist alles allgemein. Man sollte dich und deinesgleichen dahin stellen, wo die meisten Pfeile fallen" (29). Although none of the men directly allude to cannibalism, there is a menacing undertone of their conversation, which suggests that when "all's fair in war," a man can become an alternate food source. The second instance occurs toward the end of the play, when the mothers are pleading with the priests and God to save them. A pair of fathers are lamenting the sad state of affairs in their homes, when one confesses that he thinks his wife may eat their child:

> Um sie nicht totschlagen zu müssen, bin ich aus dem Hause geflogen. Lüg' nicht! Ich rannte fort, weil mich's schauderte vor der unmenschlichen Speise, nach der sie lüstern schien, und weil ich mich doch fürchtete, daß ich mitessen könnte. Unser Söhnlein lag im Verscheiden; sie, in ungeheurem Jammer, war zu Boden gestürzt. Auf einmal erhob sie sich und sagte, leise, leise: "Ist's denn ein Unglück, daß der Knabe stirbt?" Dann beugte sie sich zu ihm nieder und murmelte, wie unwillig: "Noch ist Leben in ihm!" Mir ward's gräßlich klar; sie sah in ihrem Kinde nur noch ein Stück Fleisch. (77-8)

In addition to the direct accusation of cannibalism here, there is also the subtle reminder of Eve seducing her husband to commit a sin. However, even as the man critiques his wife's behavior, he also does nothing to save his son or even help his wife. As previously mentioned in Hebbel's *Ein Steinwurf*, the stereotype of the blood libel was a common accusation towards Jews during the Middle Ages. The belief that Jews sacrificed and ate Christian children during the Passover feast was still in force in the 19th century.

The final anti-Semitic stereotype that stands out in the description of the Jews is that of madness. The implicit madness depicted in Daniel is explicitly thematized throughout Hebbel's drama. From the start, the Hebrew people are described as insane: "dies ist ein Volk von Wahnsinnigen" (11-12). For Judith, her wedding night only makes

sense if either she or Manasses is insane: "muß ich nicht selbst wahnsinnig werden, wenn ich aufhöre, Manasses für wahnsinnig zu halten?" (18). After Judith slays Holofernes, Mirza believes that she is becoming insane (73) and Judith, herself, wishes to lose her sanity after Mirza slyly encourages her to feel guilt and condemnation for her actions.[192] As Sander Gilman has shown in *Difference and Pathology*, madness was a common anti-Semitic stereotype throughout the 19th century. Numerous more or less scientific studies revealed that the frequency of mental illness occurring among the Jewish population was almost double that among the Christian population (153).[193] This evidence was used to further support actions against Jewish emancipation. In fact, Gilman explains that the Jews' claim for equality was then seen as a sign of madness (153).[194]

The changes Hebbel made to the Biblical Judith leave us with a people not really worth saving and, perhaps, a heroine not particularly worth celebrating. Through the anti-Semitic stereotypes, Hebbel gives us a Hebrew people of questionable morals, who worship not necessarily an unseen God, but perhaps not even God at all. The anti-Semitic rhetoric can be read as an attempt to contain the border figure of the Jew. However, through the border figure of Judith, the Jewess who saves her people, the text ultimately shows that the Jew cannot be contained. Despite the overwhelmingly negative depiction of the Jews of Bethulien, they *are* the victors in the end. As a people, they feel, once again, confirmed by God as His chosen people. Hebbel could have worked with the overtly Christian material of Jeanne D'Arc, but he, instead, chose the text about Jews and

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[192] "Ich bettle ja bloß um den Wahnsinn, aber es dämmert nur hin und wieder ein wenig in mir, finster wird's nicht" (73-4).
[193] For example, Gilman quotes a census from the early 19th century, which concluded "psychopathologies were 'twice as frequent among the Jewish population as among the German population" (153).
[194] Gilman also explains that the high occurrence of madness among Jews was explained as a result of inbreeding and – as some would maliciously argue – incest. The suggestion of incest is also hinted at in Hebbel's text by the various references to brothers and sisters.

then altered that story to show the worst of the Jews. Yet the story he chose – no matter the changes – shows a tale of survivors and of a female heroine. There are other stories in Jewish history (such as the hundreds of years the Jews were slaves in Egypt, to which Achior refers in *Judith*), which have a less immediate triumphant end. Even as Hebbel tampers with the height of glory and victory, the Jews of his drama cannot be contained.

A story of a Jewish woman, whom Hebbel and most critics consider a moral failure, draws a neat parallel in *Judith* between women's emancipation and Jewish emancipation. Some of the same stereotypes used to contain the Jews are used in the 19th century to keep women in their place. As Gilman explains the pseudo-scientific studies of the 19th century, "Jews, like women, possessed a basic biological predisposition to specific forms of mental illness" (162). The supposed inherent weakness of Jews is the same weakness in women, which condemns them to the private sphere – their own personal ghetto. Yet throughout the text, the androgynous border figure Judith cannot be contained – neither in her Jewishness nor in her femininity.

Chapter 4

Ambiguity Unbound – Adalbert Stifter's *Brigitta*

Adalbert Stifter's *Brigitta* is about a woman on the edge. As a female androgynous border figure she stands between a multitude of dichotomies, belonging wholly to none. Brigitte's androgyny is significant for other borders defined in terms of the feminine in Stifter's text – geographic, political, and aesthetic borders, to name a few recurrent *Grenzfiguren*. As with the previously discussed texts in this study, so too is there an attempt to contain and thereby stabilize the ambiguous border figures in *Brigitta*. However, although the most extreme border transgressions are to be found in this text, the attempts of containment are paradoxically less forceful than would otherwise be assumed and are easily undermined. Instead, this already emancipated woman is uncontained and uncontainable: Brigitta's ambiguity remains unbound. The text culminates with an androgynous vision which places woman at the forefront of progress and reform in Hungary.[195]

Brigitta is narrated by an unnamed man, who is invited by an older man he meets in Italy simply known as the Major to visit his estate in the Hungarian steppe, where the Major has reportedly found the aim in his life. After months of aimless wandering through the Hungarian steppe, the narrator arrives at the Major's estate, Uwar. Several months into his visit with the Major, during which he becomes intimately acquainted with the business of the Major's estate and is even permitted to manage a portion of it, the

[195] Wildbolz suggests that the while the text "läuft auf dem Grenzstreifen von Wirklichkeit und Utopie," Stifter does not offer any concrete information regarding this possible reality (49).

Major decides to introduce his visitor to his neighbor Brigitta, a woman he says he esteems more highly than any other person. Before the two head off to Marosheli, Brigitta's estate, the narrator breaks his until then seamless narrative to interject the story of Brigitta's childhood, the background of which he argues is necessary in order to understand the remainder of the story. It is here we learn of Brigitta's desolate childhood, as she is rejected from birth for her dark, ugly, boyish looks by all members of her family. She grows up isolated and builds herself an inner world with its own language. Brigitta demonstrates androgynous traits from an early age. She plays with rocks, enjoys physical labor, and has the strength of a man. At the traditional age of courtship, her two incredibly beautiful sisters are introduced to society, while Brigitta remains an outsider – now by choice. At one of the many social gatherings which make up the world of her bourgeois family, Brigitta meets Stephan Murai, the most handsome of all men, who is instantly intrigued by Brigitta. To the shock and amazement of her family and the rest of society, the beautiful Stephan pursues the ugly Brigitta. The two marry quickly, set up household in the city, and have a boy, Gustav. However, Stephan is restless and dissatisfied, and eventually moves out into the country with his wife and child. It is there that he meets the polar opposite of Brigitta, the wild and gorgeous Gabriele. The two have a brief affair – depicted as merely a horse chase and a quick embrace – but their indiscretion is soon discovered by Brigitta, who requests a divorce. Stephan leaves never to be heard from again. Brigitta takes her son to her deceased father's estate and transforms its barren landscape into a lush and productive agricultural enterprise. There, she dresses like a man and rides horses. She creates a federation with likeminded estate owners to implement the agricultural reforms she has initiated. At this point, the story

dovetails into the narrator's current account. Shortly after his initial encounter with Brigitta, her son Gustav is attacked by wolves and the narrator watches the Major save the boy. While watching Brigitta over the sick bed of her son, the narrator hears the Major declare in tears, "Ich habe kein Kind" (472).[196] Brigitta overhears these words, utters his name, "Stephan" – which causes the character until then known as the Major to become collapsed with Stephan, her young feckless husband from the tale of her childhood. The two are reconciled and the novella concludes with the narrator's reassuring words of the power of forgiveness and marital love. On his way home to Germany, the narrator passes the grave of Gabriele, who had died 12 years previously at the height of her beauty.

The novella does not begin with this storyline, but with some theoretical musings on the nature of beauty (which are repeated at the start of third chapter describing Brigitta's childhood). This aesthetic theory, which suggests the importance of recognizing internal beauty and emphasizes the overwhelming symbolism of the eye and sight in the text, has been the source and focus of much scholarship on *Brigitta* to date.[197] In fact, most interpretations of *Brigitta* read the text through Stifter's *sanftes Gesetz* as formulated in his *Vorrede zu Bunte Steine*.[198] The basis for such an interpretation is a comment made by Brigitta during her reconciliation with Stephan. She apologizes for being too proud and then suggests that he was not responsible for what happened with Gabriele since "es ist ein sanftes Gesetz der Schönheit, das uns ziehet" (473). For most

[196] Stifter, Adalbert. Adalbert Stifter: Werke und Briefe. Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Ed. Alfred Doppler, Wolfgang Frühwald. Vol. 1,2. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: W. Kohlhammer, 1979. All subsequent quotes are from this edition.
[197] For extensive analyses on the eye, see also Mautner, Tunner, Rogan, and Zimmermann.
[198] See Wodtke (22), Haußmann (47). Although Mautner begins with a critique of analyzing Brigitta through the *sanfte Gesetz* (89), in the end, he incorporates the *Vorrede* into his reading of Stifter's novella.

critics, this *sanfte Gesetz der Schönheit* seemingly echoes – or better yet – pre-states Stifter's later *sanfte Gesetz* of the *Vorrede* (Hahn 159). In my opinion, reading *Brigitta* primarily or even exclusively through Stifter's *sanfte Gesetz* is problematic. First, analyzing the concept of the *sanfte Gesetz* is not easy, as the following longer quote from the *Vorrede* demonstrates:

> Wir wollen das sanfte Gesetz zu erblicken suchen, wodurch das menschliche Geschlecht geleitet wird. Es gibt Kräfte, die nach dem Bestehen des Einzelnen zielen. Sie nehmen alles und verwenden es, was zum Bestehen und zum Entwickeln desselben notwendig ist. Sie sichern den Bestand des Einen und dadurch den aller. Wenn aber jemand jedes Ding unbedingt an sich reißt, was sein Wesen braucht, wenn er die Bedingungen des Daseins eines anderen zerstört, so ergrimmt etwas Höheres in uns, wir helfen dem Schwachen und Unterdrückten, wir stellen den Stand wieder her, daß er ein Mensch neben dem andern bestehe und seine menschliche Bahn gehen könne, und wenn wir das getan haben, so fühlen wir uns befriedigt, wir fühlen uns noch viel höher und inniger, als wir uns als Einzelne fühlen, wir fühlen uns als ganze Menschheit. Es gibt daher Kräfte, die nach dem Bestehen der gesamten Menschheit hinwirken, die durch die Einzelkräfte nicht beschränkt werden dürfen, ja im Gegenteile beschränkend auf sie selber einwirken. Es ist das Gesetz dieser Kräfte, das Gesetz der Gerechtigkeit, das Gesetz der Sitte, das Gesetz, das will, daß jeder geachtet, geehrt, ungefährdet neben dem anderen bestehe, daß er seine höhere menschliche Laufbahn gehen könne, sich Liebe und Bewunderung seiner Mitmenschen erwerbe, daß er als Kleinod gehütet werde, wie jeder Mensch ein Kleinod für alle andern Menschen ist. (12-13)[199]

What is the *sanfte Gesetz*? Is it the inner power to take care of oneself in moderation and therefore guarantee the existence of all? Or, is it the urge to help others in need who have suffered from the greedy behavior of some? Or, is it the moral sense to respect each other? The answer to this question is even more complicated when looking at the lines following the above-quoted section:

> Dieses Gesetz liegt überall, wo Menschen neben Menschen wohnen, und es zeigt sich, wenn Menschen gegen Menschen wirken. Es liegt in der Liebe der Ehegatten zu einander, in der Liebe der Eltern zu den Kindern, der Kinder zu den

[199] Stifter, Adalbert. Adalbert Stifter: Werke und Briefe. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Ed. Alfred Doppler, Wolfgang Frühwald. Vol. 2,2. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: W. Kohlhammer, 1982. All subsequent quotes of the *Vorrede* are from this edition.

> Eltern, in der Liebe der Geschwister, der Freunde zueinander, in der süßen Neigung beider Geschlechter, in der Arbeitsamkeit, wodurch wir erhalten werden, in der Tätigkeit, wodurch man für seinen Kreis, für die Ferne, für die Menschheit wirkt, und endlich in der Ordnung und Gestalt, womit ganze Gesellschaften und Staaten ihr Dasein umgeben und zum Abschlusse bringen. (13)

It would seem then that Stifter's *sanfte Gesetz* is something about behaving in a moral and often selfless way in order to become an indistinguishable part of a greater community.

Now, how then can we understand the *sanfte Gesetz der Schönheit* within the context of *Brigitta*? After all, the gentle law Brigitta talks about is an explanation of why her husband fell for the undeniable beauty of Gabriele. She refers to an external beauty which draws or pulls the viewer, thereby removing any responsibility for the viewer's actions. The *sanfte Gesetz* of the *Vorrede*, on the other hand, leads or directs us, which implies somewhat less force or violence, and it works within a concept of supporting the greater good. Herein lies my problem with analyzing *Brigitta* through the *Vorrede*: mapping the selfish behavior in an act of betrayal onto a behavioral model meant to create a moral community subverts any kind of understanding that those most ethically pure can see inner beauty.

Taking a cue from Brigitta's self-loathing and her comment on the "sanfte Gesetz der Schönheit," most critics focus on the failure of Stephan and Brigitta's marriage as well as their later reconciliation. Overwhelmingly, the blame is placed on Brigitta for their failed marriage.[200] She is largely faulted for not being able to forgive Stephan his

[200] Brigitta is accused of not being able to love properly (Owen 106, Feise 173), she is too proud (Zimmermann [431], Hunter-Lougheed [371], Dedekind [27], Haußmann [45]) and too wrapped up in her own world (Hahn 155), she is too difficult (Steffen 104) and her demand for the highest love is excessive (Petrikovits [103], Haußmann [44-5]).

infidelity.[201] For Haußmann, Brigitta is not only the guilty party, but, as he explains, Stifter takes great pains to let Stephan appear innocent. Some critics recognize that the blame cannot lie entirely with Brigitta.[202] By contrast, Holub argues that the dissolution of the couple's marriage and Gabriele's death function as a warning against uncontrolled passion.[203] What the *sanfte Gesetz*, the *sanfte Gesetz der Schönheit*, and these various critical commentaries have in common is the element of containment. The *sanfte Gesetz* of the *Vorrede* contains the individual within the general. The *sanfte Gesetz der Schönheit* and the related scholarship contains (or attempts to contain) Brigitta by placing the blame of her failed marriage on her pride.

My interpretation of *Brigitta* focuses on these and other strategies of containment, which attempt to stabilize the transgressive border figures in the novella. For each containment strategy, I demonstrate how the text turns back on itself and undermines the attempt of containment. In the first section, I discuss the ways in which the androgynous figure of Brigitta, as well as the homoerotic tension between Stephan and the narrator, challenge 19th-century notions of sexual characteristics.[204] The ambiguous border figure

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[201] As Dedekind notes, Brigitta's heart breaks "an der geringsten Untreue des Mannes" (27). While there is no explicit proof that Stephan had a sexual, extramarital affair with Gabriele, an emotional betrayal should not be considered insignificant. In addition, as the similar scenes are notoriously missing from texts like Kleist's *Die Marquise von O…*, Fontane's *Effi Briest* and *Schach von Wuthenow*, absence does not necessarily mean that nothing physical happened.

[202] Stephan is also faulted for his "Maßlosigkeit" (Schwerte), he is too young to marry (Steffen), and he did not focus enough on Brigitta but, instead, was only worried about societal recognition (Petrikovits).

[203] On the other hand, passion is also seen to be the driving force which brings Stephan and Brigitta together in the end (M. and E. Swales 104). For other critics, the main message of the text lies completely outside of the complex of beauty/love/marriage. Other readings include political – the text shows two individuals who are "powerless [..] in the face of forces or a fate they can neither control nor comprehend" (Block 19) – or that it is a kind of mini-Bildungsroman about the narrator (Boehringer 80).

[204] While some critics make vague or generalizing statements about the gender issues in the text, there is only one study to date that deals with it exclusively. It can be found in Claude Owen's article "Zur Erotik in Stifters *Brigitta*," in which he discusses the many instances of homoerotic tension between the narrator and the Major. Wildbolz also contends that the "Gleichartigkeit und umfassende Ebenbürtigkeit der Frau" is thematized in *Brigitta* (49). While Feise argues that it is the recognition of Brigitta as equal which allows for the reconciliation (177), there is a broad consensus that the couple's rapprochement was only possible

of aesthetics is the focus of the second section, which calls into question the overwhelmingly obvious sight/eye symbolism in the text. A close reading of *Brigitta* reveals that the sense of sight and the interconnected privileging of intuitive knowledge are, in fact, supplanted by the oral/audio. This reading not only frees the women from the male-imposed silence, but also frees the men from their self-imposed silence. In addition, by asking the questions the narrator tells us not to ask, the text stages a feminist aesthetic theory *ex negativo*. The third section on the multi-dimensional borders of time and space demonstrates that the strategy of containment works with ambiguity, instead of against it. The temporal and spacial ambiguity locates Stephan and Brigitta outside of any past, present, or future, thereby removing them from the political sphere. The containment strategy fails and the protagonists make a quantum leap squarely into the historical political situation of Hungary in the early 19th century. In the fourth and final section, I read the political in Brigitta through the – for Hungary – pertinent issues of ethnic and system ambiguity. The weak containment strategy is easily undermined, suggesting that the political ambiguities are no longer perceived as a threat. Instead, the text ends with an androgynous vision which combines measured reform (Brigitta) and the revolutionary (Stephan) as a hope and a future for the Hungarian people. The fact that an emancipated woman boldy steps onto the public stage and plays such a visible role in this vision of Hungary explodes the notion of a relative gender stability in the 19th century and suggests the important role women have to play in the emancipation of Hungary.

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once Stephan had become less womanly and Brigitta slightly more so (Haußmann [44], Owen [104], Hahn [150]).

I. Gender Roles and Sexuality at the Border

The figure of Brigitta calls 19th-century gender definitions into question. Her indeterminate gender straddles the border between masculine and feminine. This both demonstrates and refutes the concept of *Geschlechtscharaktere*. At the same time, Brigitta's ambiguous gender functions as a condition of possibility for the homoerotic desire between Stephan and the narrator. The text repeatedly attempts to contain these deviant elements: Brigitta is contained through the male gaze, which makes her increasingly more feminine. The homoerotic desire of the two men is contained through a conscious reinforcement of heterosexual relationships at the end of the text. However, the attempts to contain these various deviant elements are ultimately undermined by the text itself, suggesting that what is considered 'ideal' or 'normal' is neither possible nor desirable.

The Manly Woman

Brigitta's androgyny is indicated by depictions of her masculine characteristics. In addition, because she is decidedly ugly, she further challenges 19th-century notions of femininity. Throughout Stifter's novella, there is an attempt to contain Brigitta's androgyny particularly by emphasizing what is beautiful (read: feminine) about her. In the end, these attempts are undermined by the narrator's own descriptions and by the text. From early childhood on, Brigitta is decidedly boyish.[205] She plays with stones, hits her sisters, and "verdrehte [..] oft die großen wilden Augen, wie Knaben tun, die innerlich bereits dunkle Taten spielen" (447). When she is older, she is not soft and pretty like her

[205] Only Wesenauer argues against this notion declaring that Brigitta needs the picture of the brother's sacrifice in order to recognize the *männlichen Geist* in herself. "Vielleicht wäre Brigitta zu 'weiblich' gewesen (damals in ihrer Jugend), so daß sie 'männlich' werden mußte; denn die Umstände sind nicht immer so, daß man sein sogenanntes 'wahres Selbst' wählen kann" (65).

sisters. Instead “sie ritt gut und kühn, wie ein Mann” and “in ihrem Körper war fast Manneskraft” as she enjoys intensive “knechtliche Arbeit [..] bis ihr die Tropfen auf der Stirne standen” (448). In addition to direct comments regarding Brigitta’s masculinity, her unfeminine behavior and looks are often observed in contrast to her sisters. While her sisters demanded pretty clothes and multiple alterations, Brigitta “lag oft mit dem schönsten Kleide auf dem Rasen” (448). While her sisters were trained in proper behavior and etiquette, busying themselves endlessly with parties and invitations, Brigitta was wholly ignored: she was not even reprimanded for poor behavior (447) nor was her opinion ever consulted in the organization of the various parties “als verstünde sie die Sache nicht” (449). Through such neglect, Brigitta is denied any kind of “female” education, which leaves her without feminine characteristics.

As an adult, Brigitta also demonstrates various masculine characteristics. She is the one who demands a divorce when she discovers her husband’s alleged infidelity despite his desperate pleading. On her own, Brigitta takes up the very unfeminine practice of running her own estate.[206] She also reverts to her maiden name, Marosheli, discarding her married name for independence and anonymity. At her estate, Brigitta puts on men’s clothing, rides horses like a man, and creates a fertile landscape from the “öde Steinfeld” (461). In addition, she creates a union of like-minded estate owners who copy her methods – including Stephan, when he moves to the Hungarian *puzta* 15 years later (443).

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[206] The most prominent counter example to this idea of the unfeminine worker is that of the literary figure of Therese from Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*, upon whom Brigitta was partially based (Dittmann *AS* 51). The historical basis for Brigitta is Frau von Friedland, who was originally Charlotte von Lestwitz (1803-1754) and married to Adrian Heinrich von Borcke in 1771. She had a daughter, and separated from her husband after he caused their marriage to be unhappy. She returned to her father’s household and after his death took over the management of his estates. This was “natürlicher Weise weit und breit verschrien” (Petrikovits 98-9). See also Zimmermann (427).

In addition to the many masculine qualities Brigitta possess, she is also ugly.[207] This is a decidedly unfeminine characteristic according to 19th-century notions of femininity. The first description of infant Brigitta indicates her lack of beauty. The narrator leads into the description with a discussion of beauty and ends with:

> Selbst das Herz der Mutter wendet sich von dem Kinde ab, wenn sie nicht mehr, ob auch nur einen einzigen Schimmer dieses Strahles an ihm zu entdecken vermag. So war es mit dem Kinde Brigitta geschehen. Als es geboren ward, zeigte es sich nicht als der schöne Engel, als der das Kind gewöhnlich erscheint. (446)

Unlike her beautiful sisters, Brigitta has a "nicht angenehme[s] verdüsterte[s] Gesichtchen, gleichsam als hätte es ein Dämon angehaucht" (446). When Brigitta is older and is being pursued by Stephan, she warns him that she demands a higher love than the pretty girls because, "Ich weiß, daß ich häßlich bin" (454). A picture of Brigitta in her early twenties reveals that "wie auch der Maler die Sache verschleiert haben mochte, es war nicht das Bild eines schönen sondern eines häßlichen Mädchen" (440).[208] The neighbor, Gömör, also confirms Brigitta's lack of beauty in his tale to the narrator about the strange friendship between the Major and "der häßlichen und bereits auch alternden Brigitta" (444).

Throughout Stifter's novella, there are repeated attempts to contain the androgynous border figure of Brigitta. The main strategy of containment is – perhaps paradoxically – to paint this ugly woman beautiful. The beautification of Brigitta occurs

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[207] On the opposite spectrum are critical interpretations which reject any notion that Brigitta can even be considered ugly. Dittmann argues that neither the narrator nor the *Icherzähler* give the reader the impression that Brigitta is ugly. Instead, this comes solely from "zweiter Hand" like from Gömör, from the picture, or "aus dem allgemeinen Gerede, das er referiert" ("*Brigitta*" 28). Zimmermann agrees with Dittmann and posits further that "es gibt kaum einen Anhaltspunkt dafür, daß Brigitta tatsächlich häßlich ist: sie wird vielmehr als häßlich bezeichnet, empfunden, oder sie selbst nennt sich in der Verzweifelung häßlich" (418). Although Zimmermann does concede that the descriptions of Brigitta do stand in stark contrast "zum Bild außergewöhnlicher Schönheit, wie etwa in der Beschreibung des Majors oder Gustavs" (418-9).

[208] In the *Urfassung*, the picture reveals "ein junges häßliches Mädchen, aber mit einem wilden starken Auge" (231).

under the male gaze. The boyishness of her childhood seems to fade in the company of Stephan Murai. References to her mannishness as well as to her ugly appearance disappear and, instead, emphasis is placed on her sole beautiful feature, her large, dark eyes. Under the desiring male gaze, Brigitta seems to become more and more womanly. She goes to more social events (451), she begins to look at herself in the mirror (451-2), she wears more than her usual plain black dress at parties (452), and she lets Stephan approach her (452). The desiring male gaze provokes her first emotional outbreak – for it is after the first evening when Stephan speaks to her in private that she breaks down in tears in front of her mirror (452). Yet, this scene is much more complex. Stephan does look at her, but she does not break down until she looks at herself in the mirror. Thus, Stephan's desiring male gaze and her own androgynous gaze are collapsed in this reflective image. Brigitta displays even more feminine behavior through her short courtship and wedding preparations: she emanates "ein warmes Dasein," "ihr Umgang war reizend" (455), and Stephan calls her an "Engel des Lichtes" (454). Her femininity then seemingly culminates in the birth of her son, for she has fulfilled the main purpose of every woman: motherhood (457).

The containment strategy is reinforced with the arrival of the narrator. After years of tending her estate on her own, Brigitta appears to revert to a more feminine state. As before, the desiring male gaze makes her more womanly. The narrator focuses again and again on her beautiful eyes, white teeth, and even "einen Hauch von Schönheit" over her features which appears whenever she is in the Major's presence (467). The description of the narrator's dream in which Brigitta's eyes bewitch him makes her have the same effect

as a normally beautiful heroine would have on others (Howe 427).[209] In addition, the narrator repeatedly emphasizes Gustav's beauty so that his mother may appear more beautiful. In the narrator's efforts to redefine and reconstruct beauty there appears to be a desperate attempt to clarify gender categories and boundaries. At the end, although Brigitta is not wholly reconciled to a complete ideal of femininity, she appears to be more feminine. She once again wears women's clothing and she seeks forgiveness for the manly fault of pride.[210] In addition, one of the final images of her is in a Madonna pose with Gustav on his sickbed; the image of motherhood is emphasized even more in Stephan's exclamation, "O Brigitta, Mutter meines Kindes" (473). And finally, she is silenced. Even as she tries to apologize, Stephan cuts her off with a hand over her mouth (473).

Many critics have played into this containment strategy by also reading Brigitta as beautiful. Mauter suggests, "Hier ist es noch die Schönheit, die aus der Form kommt, nicht aus dem Gehalt" (100). Schwerte concludes that, in the end, Brigitta is not even that ugly since Stifter gives her "so viele [] kleinen schönen Einzelzügen" (34). In his study of flowers in Stifter's works, Stillmark ignores the references to ugliness in *Brigitta* and focuses on the connection between flower and beauty. He infers that because the flower symbolizes Brigitta is unnamed, it means that "beauty is presented as a mysteriously illusive, indefinable quality and so, appropriately, the flower is left nameless" (78). Wiese suggests that Brigitta is not ugly at all; she is merely mistakenly seen as ugly:

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[209] Howe deftly points out in "Faces and Fortunes: Ugly Heroines," that for both ugliness and beauty: they must be described in the abstract, be non-specific so that they do not apply to a certain age, understanding of beauty, or a particular taste. The most effective way to depict beauty is not to describe the figure in detail, but the effect her beauty or ugliness has on others (427).

[210] The fact that the text points out that Brigitta dresses in women's clothing for the Major's visit (instead of her normal, male clothing) suggests that she is cross-dressing in women's clothing: "Da sie den Major erwartet hatte, war sie in Frauenkleidern und hatte ihre Geschäfte bei Seite gesetzt, weil sie den Tag für uns widmete" (464).

> Es geht hier nicht um eine Häßlichkeit, die absonderlicherweise für schön gehalten, sondern es geht um eine Schönheit, die absonderlicherweise von den meisten Menschen für häßlich gehalten wird. Der Mangel liegt bei den anderen, nicht bei Brigitta. (*Novelle* 207)

Again and again Brigitta's ugliness must be explained away. This reverses the apparent didactic lesson of Stifter's text that one must judge the inner beauty of an individual.

In the end, the text's veiled attempts to contain Brigitta with beauty and make her seem more feminine are ripped to shreds. First, the deaths of the 'ideal' women in this text call into question the notion of acceptable femininity. In addition, in a comparison with the *Urfassung*, it is clear that Stifter meant to heighten Brigitta's gender ambiguity. Finally, the narrator's first unadulterated, unprejudiced description of Brigitta rejects any 'feminine' trappings with which he later tries to cover her up. The first example of the way in which Stifter's novella undermines the containment of the androgynous woman is through the fate of the 'ideal' women. These women, Gabriele and Brigitta's sisters, die at a young age, at the "Gipfel ihrer Schönheit" (475). Their deaths call accepted gender norms into question. As with the other texts in this study, the death of the 'ideal' woman tends to demonstrate the impossibility of such an 'ideal' and, instead, indicates that an androgynous woman like Brigitta not only represents a more realistic representation of woman, but also the more desirable one.

The containment strategy is also undermined by the changes Stifter made to his *Studienfassung* that heighten the gender ambiguity of the *Urfassung*. For example, in the *Urfassung*, there is more emphasis on Brigitta as the weaker sex. The narrator relates his first visit to Marosheli and comments on Stephan and Brigitta's interaction with each other. In this earlier version, he remarks the seriousness with which the two discuss both their agricultural work as well as political developments. He then notes that Brigitta "ging

wie ein Mann in die Sache ein, und wo sie kein Urteil hatte, war sie wieder ein Weib, und bat mit naiver Unwissenheit den Major um Berichtigung" (*UF* 247).[211] In the *Studienfassung* there is notably more equality between the two, and the gender specific remarks are replaced with an emphasis on mutual respect: "Ich sah bei dieser Gelegenheit, mit welch tiefem Ernste sie die Dinge behandelten, und welche Aufmerksamkeit der Major auf ihre Meinungen legte. Wo sie in etwas unsicher war, gestand sie ihre Unwissenheit und bat den Major um Berichtigung" (463). Gone are the gender specific comments about Brigitta. However, there is not complete gender equality, for she still defers to his wisdom.

Finally, the containment strategy to create beauty (read: femininity) in Brigitta is revealed as a construct by the narrator's initial unprejudiced depiction of her. The narrator first encounters an unnamed woman, who we later know is Brigitta, in a field surrounded by a group of people. There, Brigitta's gender indeterminacy can be seen most clearly. When the narrator first sees her, he identifies her as a "Gestalt" and notes that people are gathered around her "wie um einen Herren" (418). As he approaches the group, he identifies her as a "Reiter" (masculine form), but then sees that the rider "war nichts anderes, als ein Weib" wearing pants and sitting on a horse like a man (418). Even as he recognizes her gender to be female, the use of the gender neutral word "das Weib" versus the gender specific word "die Frau" intimates Brigitta's continued gender ambiguity. Thus, any subsequent depictions of Brigitta and her beautiful, dark eyes or beautiful, white teeth should be understood as the narrator's attempt to reconcile the androgynous border figure Brigitta. This can be seen within this same episode. As the

[211] Stifter, Adalbert. Adalbert Stifter: Werke Und Briefe. Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Ed. Alfred Doppler, Wolfgang Frühwald. Vol. 1,2. Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: W. Kohlhammer, 1979. All quotes from the *Urfassung* are from this edition and are noted *UF*.

narrator prepares to depart from Brigitta, he notes in her smile "eine Reihe sehr schöner Zähne" (420). Already, he is attempting to construct Brigitta as beautiful in order to contain her within 19th century notions of femininity.

The Womanly Man and Deviant Sexuality

Brigitta's ambiguous gender functions as a condition of possibility for the homoerotic desire between Stephan and the narrator. Under the desiring male gaze of Stephan, the narrator becomes more feminine[212] and the homoerotic tension between the two is revealed. As with the border figure of gender, there is an attempt to contain the border figure of sexuality by resolving the homoerotic undertones in heterosexual relationships for both men by the end of the text. However, this attempt of containment is undermined at least in the case of Stephan, who reenters a sexual relationship with the androgynous Brigitta.

In the sphere of the masculine Stephan, the narrator becomes feminized. Upon arrival at the Major's estate, there is a visible shift in the narrator, who moves from a confident young traveler in the first chapter of the novella to an incompetent and naïve visitor in the second. In the first chapter, the narrator travels alone throughout the Hungarian *puzta* for several months on his way to visit the Major at his estate, Uwar. He describes his aimless wandering over hundreds of streams and rivers and nights spent with the shepherds and their dogs as a means to become acquainted with the features of the land (416-7). He is able to get by without any help and is completely self-reliant. Upon arrival at Uwar, the narrator undergoes a startling change. This change is

[212] Hahn argues that Stephan displays feminine attributes since men were attracted to him (150). MacLeod also argues for a feminine Stephan, "whose taste for exotic, flowing silk robes brands him, like his estranged wife, Brigitta, as a kind of crossdresser (*Embodying* 205).

accentuated all the more by his "death" the first night at the estate.[213] The Major is not home when the narrator arrives, and thus the guest is led to the prepared rooms by a servant. As the narrator turns in for the night, he remarks that "alles war todt, was schon in meinem Leben gewesen ist, und was ich sehnlichst wünschte, daß noch in dasselbe eintreten möchte" (426).

The next morning, the narrator is "reborn" as a "woman." He is no long self-sufficient – he relies on the Major for everything. This uninformed, naïve behavior is supported and even reinforced by his host. The Major leads his young friend around his estate instructing him (428). The Major tells his guest to inform him if he wishes to venture out on his own so that he can warn him of "kleinen Gefahren" and advise him of "Umwegen [und] Schwierigkeiten" he might encounter (430). This is a strange request, indeed, of one who has just traveled alone throughout that same countryside for months. Yet, everything has changed – or at least the narrator is no longer the same person. Although he was able to get by for months on his own, he now needs the Major to translate everything from Hungarian into German for him, at least initially. This necessity contradicts both his proven ability to get by as well as his later comment as to why he can understand the Major's speech at the assembly: "da es von jeher meine Gewohnheit war, in jedem Lande, in das ich kam, schnell so viel von der Sprache zu lernen, als mir nur immer möglich war, so hatte ich auch bereits von den Leuten des Majors, und allen, die mich umgaben, etwas ungarisch gelernt" (441). As he travels around the countryside with the Major, it is as if he is seeing everything for the first time. Unlike the countless identical rocks he had seen on his way to Uwar, nothing is familiar now. Even the

[213] Several critics such as Rogan and Boehringer have also commented on what seems to be a death and resurrection of the narrator. While Rogan draws a connection much more to the symbolism of the eyes (245), Boehringer interprets the 'death' as completing the "process of disorientation" (95).

shepherds' dogs are unrecognizable. While the narrator does at least remember seeing dogs in the previous months, he remarks that these dogs are unlike anything he had seen before (434). The hyperbole with which he describes everything he sees is clearly influenced by his proximity to the Major and suggests a subtle homoerotic undertone.

Through the descriptions of the Major, the androgynous narrator reveals the homoerotic tension in the text. In the first chapter, as the narrator reminisces about his first encounter with the Major in Italy, the homoerotic tension is already present.[214] He recalls the Major's strikingly good looks "denn nie hat man einen Mann gesehen, dessen Bau und Antlitz schöner genannt werden konnte" (413). His remarks become even more direct when he comments on the effect the Major has on others: "es war eine sanfte Hoheit, die um alle seine Bewegungen floß, so einfach und siegend, daß er mehr als einmal auch Männer bethörte" (413). In a gesture that can be read as a cover up, he adds "auf Frauenherzen aber […] soll er einst wahrhaft sinnverwirrend gewirkt haben" (413).[215] By looking closely at these comments, the emphasis on which gender the Major has the greater effect stands out. Men have been bewitched "mehr als einmal" whereas the effect on women – or better yet, on just women hearts – was "einst." The narrator describes such an event of bewitchment and "sinnverwirrend[e]" affect during his first conversation with the Major. After hearing so much about this attractive man during his

[214] Claude Owen was the first to comment on the underlying homoeroticism in Brigitta. In "Zur Erotik in Stifters Brigitta," his detailed analysis outlines the many instances of homoerotic tension between the narrator and the Major. He also argues that it is presented as a threat as is evident in the mental confusion caused in the narrator (108), the multitude of gates and locks, as well as the narrator locking himself into his room at night (108-9). Joachim Stork also comments on homoeroticism in Brigitta in "Eros bei Stifter," however, he argues that Owen's argument is too black and white. While Owen ignores Brigitta's function within this homoerotic structure, Stork argues in the opposite direction claiming that Stephan is attracted to the woman in Brigitta: "er [hat] gerade durch seine Liebe die Weiblichkeit in ihr zum Erblühen gebracht" (145).

[215] In his analysis, Wiese completely ignores the stated effect the Major has on men, but instead only focuses on his affect on women (*Novelle* 198).

travels in Italy, the narrator seeks him out on an excursion to the Vesuvius volcano. Within their conversation, the narrator embeds the comment that "wirklich war damals eine furchtbar zerworfene dunkle Öde um uns" (414), projecting his own emotions onto the landscape. While this passage can be – and typically is – read as a mere description of the dark scenery of the volcano against the blue of the sky, it is significant that both directly preceding and following this sentence the narrator recounts his conversation with the Major. The darkness and confusion of their physical surroundings are mapped onto their communication. Thus, the homoerotic tension of this encounter is located at a dormant volcano, which is always threatening to explode.

An undertone of homoeroticism is also evident in the narrator's thoughts as he travels to Uwar. As the narrator fondly reminisces about his days in Italy with the Major, he transplants those memories into visions of the present as he endeavors to recreate a vision of the Major in the Hungarian *puzta*. Every rock, every valley, every stride across the land draws the narrator's attention back to the Major and his anticipation to see the older man again:

> alte Erinnerungen kamen wimmelnd über die Haide, und darunter war auch das Bild des Mannes, zu dem ich eben auf der Wanderung war – ich griff es gerne auf, und in der Oede hatte ich Zeit genug, alle Züge, die ich von ihm erfahren hatte, in meinem Gedächtnisse zusammen zu suchen, und ihnen neue Frische zu geben. (413)

These visions culminate in dreams of the future and past during the narrator's first night at Uwar as he restlessly sleeps through his "death" and sees the Major in various costumes: "Die ganze Nacht ging ich auf dem Vesuve herum, und sah den Major bald in einem Pilgeranzuge in Pompeji sitzen, bald im Fracke zwischen den Schlanken stehen und Steine suchen" (426).

The narrator's attraction to men further stands out in his descriptions of Gustav, Brigitta and Stephan's son. Whenever the narrator encounters the boy, he is fixated on the boy's beauty. In one telling episode, the narrator sees Gustav and remarks, "er gefiel mir sehr wohl. Sein dunkles sanftes Auge sprach so schön zu mir, und wenn er zu Pferde saß, so kraftvoll und so demüthig: neigte sich mein ganzes Wesen zu ihm" (442). The narrator is unconsciously but completely bodily drawn to Gustav.

An additional example of homoeroticism in the text can be read in the initial encounter between the Major and the narrator at the latter's first morning at Uwar. At the same time, by reading this passage against the *Urfassung*, it is clear that Stifter's *Studienfassung* covers the even more obvious homoerotic undertones of the earlier version. In the earlier edition, the narrator is in a state of undress when the Major arrives and apparently dresses in his company (*UF* 225-6). In the *Studienfassung*, there is no such strip-tease, just a near miss of the narrator's nakedness: "da ich noch kaum angekleidet war, klopfte es an meine Tür" (426).[216] The narrator's initial reaction to seeing the Major is to envision himself as the Major's partner, having always been a part of his life: "er sah nicht anders aus, als er eben aussehen konnte […] – mir war, als wäre ich stets mit ihm da gewesen, wo ich eben bin, und als gehörten wir eben hierher" (*UF* 225). In Stifter's later edition, there is more distance between the two: "er sah nicht anders aus, als er eben aussehen konnte, nemlich so zu der ganzen Umgebung stimmend, daß es schien, ich hätte ihn immer so gesehen" (427). The intimacy of the moment is replaced with cooler emotion. However, in both versions, the narrator describes how he

[216] The *Studienfassung* does not cover up all of the homoerotic tension between the men at Uwar. On another day, the Major wakes the narrator up and the fact that there was no knock on the door or the Major entering the room subtly suggests the Major was waking up with him. In addition, the narrator gets dressed while the Major is there (430).

carefully examines his friend, looking him up and down in such detail that the implications of such unabashed admiring cannot be ignored. He notes, for example, "von den Lenden fiel das weite weiße Beinkleid hinab" (ref). For the narrator, the relevant part of the pants start at the loins, not the waist or hips.

The passion of their first greetings and conversation of the *Urfassung* is considerably toned down in the *Studienfassung*. Their conversation is shortened from two hours to a mere thirty minutes. The earlier edition reads:

> Er grüßte mich freundlich herzlich, fast innig und seelenvoll – als wir etwas zwei Stunden geplaudert hatten, liebte ich ihn wieder, wie einst – unverkennbar lag die Glut einer starken, lodernden Seele in seinem Gepräge, und riß so hin – darum seine dunkle Energie – darum sein Glück bei Weibern. (226)

In the later edition, the initial sentiments are the same, but overall there is less emotion, less passion and it is much shorter:

> Er grüßte mich sehr freundlich, sehr herzlich, ja fast innig – und als wir eine halbe Stunde geplaudert hatten, waren wir uns schon wieder so bekannt, wie zuvor. (427)

Since the "pregnant dash" in Kleist's *Marquise von O…*, dashes and pauses cannot and should not be overlooked. It is hardly coincidental that the narrator attaches the unstoppable magnetism and attraction of his friend to his comment that he loves him as he once did. His enthusiastic praise for the Major and the very word "einst" align him with the women in Italy who had raved about the handsome man and would do anything for him.

The attempt to contain the homoerotic tension is seen in the heterosexual resolution presented in the text. Stephan and Brigitta overcome their platonic relationship to be, once again, a couple. Stephan lives the example for the narrator of how to redirect the homoerotic desire into a heterosexual relationship. The narrator follows his example

and mentions that he has also married in the meantime. In fact, he thanks the Major for the progress he has made in his life including having "eine liebe Gattin" (466). As Catriona MacLeod correctly argues, the text clearly propagates heterosexuality as the only acceptable sexuality: "In other words, what Brigitta stages – and stages with obvious pedagogical intent – is the shift from sexual mobility, indeed from homosexuality in the persons of both Murai and his wife Brigitta, as well as of the narrator, to a legible world of heterosexual relationships" (*Embodying* 205).

The containment of the homoerotic desire is undermined however in the seemingly heterosexual relationship by the gender ambiguity of Brigitta. As a very manly woman, she is the condition of possibility for the homoerotic relationship of the two men.[217] While both men transfer affection to the woman, the fact that she is very masculine calls into question the heterosexual nature of that affection.[218] For the narrator, this transfer begins even before he properly meets Brigitta. He dreams about her the night before he is to meet her. In his dream, no longer about the Major but about a woman, she is now the feminine rider, "die Reiterin," and she paralyzes him with her Medusa-like gaze: "daß sie mich mit schönen Augen banne, daß ich immer stehen müsse, und daß ich alle Tage meines Lebens nicht mehr von dem Flecke der Haide weg zu kommen vermöge" (444-5).[219] From this point on, his relationship with the Major develops via the manly Brigitta, who is tellingly depicted as increasingly feminine.

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[217] Owen argues a similar, albeit weaker point: "Man möchte darin fast die Folgerung des Arguments erblicken, daß eine unnatürliche Beziehung zu einem häßlichen Weib besser sei als die natürliche, homoerotische, zu der der Major zu neigen scheint" (110).
[218] Their triangular relationship seems to suggest a kind of "erotic triangle" (Sedgwick 23-5).
[219] Invoking Medusa underscores Brigitta's status as border figure for the mythical woman is marked by "intrinsic doubleness" (Garber and Vickers 1).

If we view Brigitta within the context of the 19th century as a valid displacement of homosexual desire, then Stephan's initial attraction to Brigitta, the teenager, loses all mystery. Stephan ignores all the pretty women around him and only pursues the silent, ugly, mannish Brigitta. Twice in the text – in the introduction and at the start of the third chapter – the reader is told about the mysterious draw of inner beauty. Thus, the reader is trained to read the text as one of a man recognizing the inner beauty in an ugly woman, and the lesson of "don't judge a book by its cover" becomes overdetermined. Read against the homoerotic undertones of the text, Stephan can be seen as attracted to the mannishness in Brigitta, which allows him to avoid complete repression of homosexual desire while remaining within the accepted norm of relationships.[220] Even Stephen's attraction to Gabriele can be seen in this light. Although incredibly beautiful and thus more feminine than Brigitta, Gabriele matches Brigitta as a figure of transgression in a variety of other ways (youth, dark skin, wild nature). In addition, through her femininized masculine name and 'masculine' libido, Gabriele arguably plays a role in the displacement of homoerotic desire.

Just as Brigitta cannot be wholly contained because she remains fairly androgynous and thereby demonstrates the fluidity of gender manifestations, the homoerotic desire at least on the side of Stephan is only partially contained in the heterosexual relationship with the mannish woman, Brigitta. The text shows in the end that there is no essential femininity and that the 19th century notions of an ideal femininity are social, patriarchal constructs. In addition to the repeated failed attempts to 'feminize' Brigitta via beautification techniques, the suggestion that she is boyish as a

[220] Counter to most critics, who interpret Stephan's interest in Brigitta as his ability to recognize her inner beauty, Howe argues that Stephan is attracted to Brigitta's "singularity" (430) and Block posits that it is uncontrollable fate which draws Stephan to Brigitta (20).

child for not receiving proper training underscores the constructedness of femininity and the necessity of direct instruction for the internalization of the *Geschlechtscharaktere*, which are meant to exist naturally.

II. Aesthetics at the Border

Brigitta is infused with silence. The narrator repeatedly emphasizes the importance of gleaning knowledge via silent observation, and the eye, *das Auge*, dominates the text. Affected most by this silence are the women – and in particular Brigitta. Whereas the men choose silence, women are made silent. There are just a handful of Brigitta's recorded utterances in this text. Her voice is hidden behind the narrator who tells her story. Brigitta is so neatly hidden that she doesn't even appear by name until more than halfway through the text. Yet all attempts of silencing Brigitta prove futile in Stifter's text.

The silencing of Brigitta is overtly recognizable in the aforementioned absence of recorded utterances and covertly through the emphasis on the eye, which privileges the visual over the oral/audio. The tension between these senses – visual vs. oral/audio – is the basis of my analysis of the aesthetic border figure in Stifter's novella. I use aesthetics here in its literal, Kantian meaning: namely, that which pertains to the senses. Thus, in this section, I will discuss how the border figure of aesthetics separates the visual from the audio/oral, intuition from communication. As most scholars would agree, Stifter's *Brigitta* seems to be about the eye: both the external eye seeing the world outside oneself and the internal eye, intuition. In my reading of the text, I challenge this assumption and

demonstrate that the senses of communication – hearing and seeing – are not only important, but in fact trump the visual. The narrator's insistence on intuitive knowledge forces the reader to ask questions he is unwilling or unable to ask, thereby staging a feminist aesthetic theory *ex negativo*. With predominant aesthetic emphasis seemingly on the eye, the text attempts to contain Brigitta an androgynous, independent woman, with silence. Ultimately, I will show that silence will not prevail and this woman who transgresses gender borders cannot be silenced nor contained.

The text begins with a commentary on inner vs. outer beauty which is repeated in the third chapter. From the start, then, the narrative is clearly meant to be didactic. For most critics the lesson to be learned is that external beauty and internal beauty need not coincide. It is the age-old lesson of 'don't judge a book by its cover.' The focus is on vision – the internal vs. the external eye. Yet, with a close reading it becomes apparent that the visual is supplanted by other senses: those of the mouth and ear. In the following, I will first analyze the emphasis on the visual, in particular on the internal eye, to the detriment of communication. Then I will demonstrate the silencing of woman through standards of femininity and through the structure of the text. Finally, I will show how the audio and verbal triumph over silence and intuitive knowledge to prove the necessity of communication and speaking out. In the end, I will demonstrate that a woman outside of gender norms cannot be silenced, which indicates, at least in a subtle way, the rejection of 19th-century standards of femininity and the acceptance of women's emancipation.

Silence is Golden – or Deadly

The apparent privileging of the visual in Stifter's *Brigitta* is established without much hesitation. Throughout the text there are numerous references to the eye, and the predominant focus of scholarship on Stifter's text belongs to the eye. The eye under discussion is one of paradox. At times it is the external eye, which sees and judges the outside world. At other times, or even simultaneously, it is an inner eye, which reads the soul and determines facts and aesthetic judgments based on feeling. From the theoretical introduction to the end of the tale, the narrator repeatedly encourages the reader to construct meaning and intuit what is going on, just as he refuses to ask questions and believes to gain knowledge of the world around him through observation alone. This division between the internal and external eye is rarely noted, for most of scholarship focuses on the obvious lesson that is clearly delineated in both the introductory passage and then in a short repetition of similar ideas leading into the story of Brigitta's childhood in the third chapter. This lesson is that beauty cannot and should not be judged solely on external characteristics.

The narrator begins with the observations on the mystery of the human psyche to be attracted to some, despite external ugliness, and to reject others who are physically beautiful. The narrator hints at the importance of using the "right eye" to judge others, and by word and action he demonstrates the necessity of visual judgment. In fact, communication is virtually useless for him as he repeatedly suggests that one can only know the truth through personal observation. Thus, when a neighbor reports what he knows of Brigitta and the Major, the narrator relays the neighbor's words in a way which displays skepticism. In addition, while in Italy, he hears rumors that the Major is a lady's

man, yet he refuses to believe it because he "sich auch nie Gelegenheit zu Beobachtungen vorfand" (415). However, even as he reportedly rejects gleaning knowledge from others, the very fact that he reports these rumors demonstrates some value in the passing on of information.

Throughout the text, the narrator holds true to his principle of not asking questions. One major concern of his is the "goal" of which the Major had written. In his letter, the Major claims that he has finally found his aim in life, but does not state what this aim is. The narrator frequently thinks about the Major's goal, but since the older man never offers any information about it, the narrator never asks. But the issue is not that simple. The narrator's principle to keep quiet is something that develops over time. He originally plans to ask about the "goal," but can never find the right moment to do so. In the end, he claims to never ask about personal information out of principle. After some time he is rewarded for his discretion, when he states that the Major now allows the younger visitor in his office: "Diese Vertraulichkeit mochte ich wohl dem Umstande zu verdanken haben, daß ich nie forschte und grübelte" (440). By repeatedly referring to the supremacy of intuitive knowledge, the narrator forces the reader to ask the questions he will not. In that respect, the text stages a feminist aesthetic theory *ex negativo*.

In contrast to the men, who are silent by choice, the women are, for the most part, made silent. Brigitta's sisters and mother as well as the beautiful Gabriele are not only silenced by death, even in life there is no record of their voices. Brigitta is the sole living female in the text and she is virtually silent. As a child she is ignored and any sounds she does make are heard by no one. During her courtship, she is also almost completely silent –in contrast to Stephan, who speaks to her and flirts with the other girls. In one particular

scene, Brigitta's silence is significant. There, Stephan approaches the girl on the balcony. He then speaks of the night and the unjust manner in which the night is treated for being dark. Brigitta remains silent throughout Stephan's entire speech; and after he too falls silent, she remains silent and then wordlessly returns to the party. She reveals no reaction to his words, whether she even heard them or not (452). The significance of her silence becomes more apparent in comparison with the *Urfassung*. There her reaction is more pronounced and unambiguous. In this earlier version, the two also meet on the balcony, but the scene is more rushed and passionate. The narration seems to echo more closely the thoughts of Brigitta. Out on the balcony "[…] vernahm sie seinen Tritt zu ihr, und vernahm sie seine Stimme, sie wußte die Worte nicht mehr, aber daß die Stimme gebebt habe, wußte sie, daß sie flehend an der Hand gefaßt wurde, wußte sie – und wie sie sich stolz abgewendet" (*UF* 239). Brigitte is just as outwardly silent here. But by experiencing the incident more from her point of view, the reader can at least hear an echo of her inner voice. This comparison shows that Stifter made a conscious decision to remove any trace of Brigitta's voice from this scene in the final version of his text.

Brigitta remains silent throughout their courtship, and, on the day of their wedding, Stephan leads his "schweigende Braut" from the church to their new home. Upon reaching their home, Stephan oddly remarks:

> Wie gut und herrlich ist alles abgegangen, und wie schön hat es sich erfüllt. Brigitta! Ich habe dich erkannt. Da ich dich das erste Mal sah, wußte ich schon, daß mir dieses Weib nicht gleichgültig bleiben werde; aber ich erkannte noch nicht, werde ich dich unendlich lieben oder unendlich hassen müssen. Wie glücklich ist es gekommen, daß es die Liebe ward! (456)

Even upon this proclamation, Brigitta says nothing. Near the end of the text, she is violently silenced during the reconciliation scene when the Major puts his hand over her mouth to stop her from speaking.

Brigitta's silence is clearly programmatic, as evidenced by the structure of the text. Stifter's novella is called simply *Brigitta*, yet the female protagonist does not make a named appearance until the third chapter, over halfway into the text. The painful details of her childhood are related by the narrator, but his account leaves us with more questions than answers. Her voice is consciously muffled in the *Final Edition (Studienfassung)* with the change in viewpoint from the *Urfassung* as in the previously discussed scene. When Brigitta does first physically appear in Stifter's text, she is unnamed, identified solely by the narrator as "eine Art Schaffnerin"(420). There is no further mention of this nameless woman and it is only much later that we learn she is, in fact, Brigitta.

Our title figure is also suppressed by an attempt to deny her agency. The narrator only begrudgingly credits Brigitta as the agricultural pioneer of the Hungarian steppe. Although she is the initial implementer of all of the positive agricultural reforms, the narrator is at pains to hide her agency behind this, as well as her leading role in the federation of estate owners. He first states that the advancements are a result of Stephan's work (441), but later revises this to Stephan having learned from the federation (443). The narrator immediately qualifies the federation as not being a federation at all: "Eigentlich war es kein Bund; denn die Zusammenkünfte und die Gesetze kamen erst später auf" (443), thereby implying that it became an official entity only after Stephan joined the group. We later learn that Brigitta was the driving force and pioneer of the reforms in a "by-the-way" kind of comment. Even then she is not given credit for the establishment of the federation. Instead, the narrator uses a passive construction: "Es erhob sich der Verein" (461). In addition, when Brigitta is finally spoken of as the first reformer, this is done in the subjunctive of reported speech, when the narrator relays a

neighbor's tale of Brigitta. While the use of subjunctive for reported speech might suggest credibility,[221] it is strange that only the story of Brigitta is in subjunctive. The narrator switches to indicative when he relays other information from this neighbor.

Further weakening Brigitta's agency is the description of the effectiveness of her reforms. The language becomes very poetic, which allows the direct action of Brigitta's work to be sublimated into an autopoetic moment in the land itself. The narrator suggests that once her soul is united with nature, the agricultural elements create themselves. "Diese Seele griff immer weiter um sich, der Himmel des Erschaffens senkte sich in sie: grüne Hügel schwellten sich, Quellen rannen, Reben flüsterten" (461). Thus, nature is personified and active, which removes any agency from Brigitta. This denial of agency and the attempt to cover up the female impulse behind all of the hard work in the Hungarian steppe is even clearer when compared with the *Urfassung*. There, Brigitta as the pioneer is mentioned explicitly very early on. The shift from the *Urfassung* to the *Final Edition* shows a clear effort to bury the fact of Brigitta as the pioneer and lead reformer, as previously shown.

Communication in Stifter's *Brigitta* is clearly problematic and there is a tension between talking too much, as evidenced in the rumors floating around, and speaking too little, which leads to Stephan and Brigitta's estrangement and divorce. The narrator encourages the reader to learn via observation, to intuit knowledge instead of asking questions. As previously mentioned, the women are silenced while the men choose silence. Both men problematize the issue of communication by speaking about something that is – as they say – unspeakable. Stephan, in his anger at Brigitta's request for divorce, exclaims: "Weib, ich hasse dich unaussprechlich, ich hasse dich unaussprechlich!" (459).

[221] See Boehinger (101).

The two remarkable features of this passage are the paradoxical statement of unspeakably hating someone and then repeating the unspeakable twice. The narrator also comments on the paradox of silence and his inability to put things in words. However, his remarks seem ironic, since he says he cannot describe something but then proceeds to do so. He describes the reconciliation scene at the moment when Brigitta has heard Stephan proclaim "Ich habe kein Kind" (141) and moves into the room to respond: "Denn sie erschien in diesem Augenblicke unter der Tür des Zimmers, sah sehr scheu auf meinen Freund, und mit einem Blicke, den ich nicht beschreiben kann, und der sich gleichsam in der zaghaftesten Angst nicht getraute, eine Bitte auszusprechen" (459). Thus, the narrator first states he cannot describe Brigitta's look, but then immediately describes it as "in der zaghaftesten Angst."

The narrator problematizes speaking and then hearing earlier in the text as well. After speaking to the unnamed woman in the field, he asks his newly-appointed guide who owns the lands he had just seen. However, he states that he cannot hear the man's reply – even as he records the correct answer "Marosheli" (421). "Ich wußte nicht, weil er die Worte schnell vor mir reitend gesprochen hatte, ob dies der Name des Besitzers sei, oder ob ich überhaupt recht verstanden habe; denn die Bewegung erschwerte das Sprechen und Hören" (421). The name disorients the narrator. Although he hears correctly – and knows that, when he is recounting this story as an old man – he doubts his ability to speak and hear correctly.

To Speak or Not to Speak

The attempt to contain woman through silence proves to be disastrous for men as well, as it leads to a breakdown in communication. Containment through silence and silent intuition is undermined by the recognition of the necessity of speech. On the edge of silence, there is a crisis of communication. At the border between voiceless observation and conversation, words at first only tentatively cross the threshold. The hesitation is marked by repetition: the words come back to the speaker like an image in a mirror, repeating and doubling themselves. Brigitta breaks her silence the night she realizes that the beautiful Stephan Murai is pursuing her. She exclaims to herself in the dark: "Es ist ja nicht möglich, es ist ja nicht möglich" (453).[222] Later, after Stephan has made it clear that he would like to court her, she responds: "Nicht abgeneigt, Murai […] oh nein, nicht abgeneigt" and then adds "aber ich habe auch eine Bitte an Sie: tun Sie es nicht, tun Sie es nicht, werben Sie nicht um mich, Sie würden es bereuen" (453). After a courtship and marriage of silence, she repeats herself again when she requests a divorce: "Ich habe es dir gesagt, daß es dich reuen wird, ich habe es dir gesagt, daß es dich reuen wird" (459). And Stephan's response is also repeated, which is, as previously quoted: "Weib, ich hasse dich unaussprechlich, ich hasse dich unaussprechlich!" (459). While both attempt to break the sound barrier, their words bounce back and seemingly never reach their partner.

The emphasis of repeating words thematizes the importance of speaking and hearing. The internal and external eyes are surpassed by the senses pertaining to communication. This shift is already evident from the start of the text. There, as the narrator ruminates on the importance of acquiring knowledge through intuition and

[222] In the *Urfassung*: "es ist nicht möglich, es ist ja nicht möglich" (*UF* 240).

observation, the significance of hearing is present but subtle. The narrator comments on how we make a judgment of beauty: “In dem Angesichte eines Häßlichen ist für uns oft eine innere Schönheit […] während uns oft die Züge eines anderen kalt und leer sind, von denen alle *sagen*, daß sie die größte Schönheit besitzen” (411, *emphasis mine*). Beauty is not *visually* recognized as such, instead, the recognition of beauty is *heard* and works indirectly through the judgment of others.

That speaking or hearing beauty is at least on par with the eye is evident when the narrator describes the Major. Before he ever meets the man, he hears of his extraordinary beauty. The comments are fitting, since the narrator can then easily identify the Major when he first sees him in person. Thus, he already accepts a judgment of beauty on an oral/audio basis. Even when he sees the Major and can confirm his beauty with his eyes, the oral component of beauty recognition is there: “[…] denn nie hat man einen Mann gesehen, dessen Bau und Antlitz schöner *genannt* werden konnte” (413 *emphasis mine*). This oral component appears again in the text, this time in the judgment of something ugly. Brigitta wears a headdress to a party, which “[…] den ihre Schwestern häßlich *nannten*” (450 *emphasis mine*).

The significance of the eye is then completely usurped by the mouth and ear in the climax of the text, in the reconciliation scene. The couple only reunites after a series of episodes involving listening and speaking. By listening correctly, the Major is able to save Gustav from the wolves. He hears a gunshot and recognizes that it comes from a pistol he had given the boy (468). He is alerted to Gustav’s dangerous situation and is able to save him. As the three await Gustav’s recovery, a chain of communication leads to the climax. First, the narrator forgets his principles and asks the Major a personal

question. That his question only tips off the important communication that will then occur is marked by indirect speech. The text reads: “Ich ging gegen ihn, und fragte ihn, was ihm sei” (472). The Major’s vocal response, recorded in direct speech begins the real communication. He answers quietly, “Ich habe kein Kind” (472). Brigitta hears his softly spoken words, enters the room, and says simply, “Stephan” (472). This single word is significant because it uncovers the central mystery of the text, collapsing the figure of the Major onto Brigitta’s ex-husband, Stephan. From here, the two finally begin to communicate with each other. They speak of the past and of their future. Their stuttered speech has disappeared and they say more to each other in this one scene than throughout their courtship and marriage.

Both Brigitta and Stephan break through the silence and are reunited. Stephan’s self-imposed silence and the importance of quiet observation and intuition are reversed as the couple recognizes that their happiness depends on communication. Brigitta, too, breaks through her imposed silence. Unlike the beautiful, but dead women of the text, she finds her voice. Yet, if we look back at the text, we can see that even in silence there is sound through Brigitta’s poetic production. As a child, she makes “[…] Laute, die sie von niemanden gehört hatte” (447). She creates her own language in the loneliness of her childhood. She writes and draws: “In der Wohnung fand man oft Papiere, auf denen seltsame wilde Dinge gezeichnet waren, die von ihr sein mußten” (448). During their courtship, Brigitta’s poetic talent is one thing Stephan particularly appreciates about his fiancée as he discovers the world she had created in her solitude. “Weil sie stets allein gewesen war, hatte sie auch allein ihre Welt gebaut, und er wurde in ein neues merkwürdiges, nur ihr angehörendes Reich eingeführt” (455). In addition, through the

birth of her son, she is creative in a way no man can imitate. Finally, even as the narrator attempts to deny Brigitta's agency as the pioneer agricultural reformer, the very language he uses demonstrates Brigitta's poetic power to weave together nature and man and bring about more than bumper crops and healthy livestock. The entire quote reads: "Diese Seele griff immer weiter um sich, der Himmel des Erschaffens senkte sich in sie: grüne Hügel schwellten sich, Quellen rannen, Reben flüsterten, und in das öde Steinfeld war ein kraftvoll weiterschreitend Heldenlied gedichtet. Und die Dichtung trug, wie sie tut, auch ihren Segen" (461). Brigitta does more than turn barrenness into productivity, with her "kraftvoll weiterschreitend Heldenlied" the narrator directly ties her and the aesthetic she represents to politics and the move towards Hungarian independence.

There is a clear tension between the aesthetically challenged Stephan and the naturally and essentially talented Brigitta, which echoes the concerns of the Romantics.[223] Romantic writing frequently connects the birth function to poesy. For the Romantics – particularly for the male poets – the ability to bear children was the ultimate creative function. Thus, women were seen as a supreme source of creativity. In a number of Romantic texts, there is an attempt to transfer the birthing function from the woman to the man so that the male poet can harness the creative power of birth.[224] However, Stephan recognizes his poetic inadequacies and explains to the narrator that when he was much younger, he thought he would be a poet (438). The narrator sees in Stephan's soul "das Glühendste und Dichterischte" (415). As previously discussed, Brigitta is the real

[223] Martini suggests that the text itself is a border figure between Romanticism and Realism (501). The Romantic elements – particularly in the *Urfassung*, have often been commented upon.
[224] For a discussion of 'male birthing' see Martha Helfer's "Gender Studies and Romanticism" and Alice Kuzniar's "Labor Pains: Romantic Theories of Creativity and Gender."

poet demonstrating aesthetic creativity in a threefold way: poetic language and writing as a child, giving birth to Gustav, and weaving poesy into the land.

While perhaps a somewhat feminist impulse could be read into reinstating the birth function with the woman and moreover placing the locus of poetic talent also with the gender of the so-called weaker sex, this feminist move is undermined by positing Stephan as the father of his workers, who does not rely on a physical birth for procreation. In addition, through his name, Stephan is linked with the historical Hungarian reformer Istvan Széchényi, who is the father of the modern notion of Hungary. Brigitta's 'natural' poetics stand in contrast to Stephan's autopoeisis: although Brigitta can create agricultural productivity, she could not conceive Gustav without Stephan. Contrarily, Stephan "gives birth" to his people and to a nation without the intervention of woman.

Just as Brigitta's poetics trump the barrier of silence, the attempt to contain her through the structure of the text is undermined by the very attempt of containment. Even though Brigitta does not identifiably physically appear until the third chapter – and even then, she does not appear, but her history is related – the title of the narrative makes her apparent everywhere. Since the text is called *Brigitta*, the reader anticipates her arrival. We read through the narrator's tedious descriptions of the Hungarian steppe and his time in Italy while eagerly looking out for this woman Brigitta. When an unnamed woman appears, we want to identify her as Brigitta – and we later learn that this is so. The dominance of Brigitta in the text is made nowhere clearer than in the narrator's dreams. Once he learns he will finally meet the Major's esteemed friend, he dreams of her:

> Dann träumte mir allerlei von ihr, vorzüglich kam ich von dem Traume nicht los, daß ich auf der Heide vor der seltsamen Reiterin stehe […], daß sie mich mit schönen Augen banne, daß ich immer stehen müsse, daß ich keinen Fuß heben

> könne, und daß ich alle Tage meines Lebens nicht mehr von dem Flecke der Heide wegzukommen vermöge. (444-5)

Like the narrator, we are caught in the gaze of this mysterious woman, watching and waiting.

It is clear that Brigitta dominates the narrator's dreams just as she dominates Stifter's text. This demonstrates that an androgynous woman, who challenges standards of femininity, cannot be silenced or contained. In the end, Brigitta's agency cannot be denied. The text indirectly acknowledges her efforts as the pioneer agricultural reformer when, after their reconciliation, Stephan moves to Marosheli, Brigitte's estate – although it must be added that this was Stephan's decision. Communication – the correct hearing and listening between equal parties – is proven to be crucial. With the sense of sight supplanted by the ear and mouth, it is significant that it is Brigitta who brings about the climax of the text with the utterance of that single word – the name that connects her childhood to her present and allows her to be reunited with her beloved. In an interesting paradox, the narrator who attempts to remove her agency in so many other ways specifically crafts this narrative to lead to this very event, so that at the most crucial point in the text, the singular moment of clarity, Brigitta's voice is heard.

III. Time and Space – Negotiating a Multi-Dimensional Border

The multi-dimensional borders of time and space in *Brigitta* are highly ambiguous and, unlike other ambiguous border figures discussed in this study, there appears to be little effort to rein in this ambiguity in and through the text. The absence of obvious containment is not accidental: the ambiguity of time and space itself acts as the

containment. The ambiguous multi-dimensions in this text encompass time, geographic location, and the geophysical overlapping of man and nature. By placing Brigitta, Stephan, and the Hungarian landscape where they enact their social and agricultural reforms, into a kind of outerworldly time warp, the text cordons off the effect they have in the real world. In other words, their political activity or political potential becomes inconsequential, because they are operating outside the actual political sphere. However, this containment through ambiguity is ultimately undermined by the text itself through the human/plant hybrid enacted in the triad of father, mother, and son at the end of the novella.

Let's Do the Time Warp

In *Brigitta*, time is fluid and obscure. It is impossible to construct a timeline of events based on this narrative, particularly concerning Gustav and Stephan. In the case of Gustav, it is not possible to establish the age of the boy. The text mentions that Stephan moves his wife and child out to the country after a period of dissatisfaction in the city (457). This means that Gustav is born in the city and must be an infant or toddler when moved out to the country by his father. Out in the country, Stephan meets Gabriele and eventually his parents divorce. Even if we assume this all happens in a matter of months, the child must be at least two or even three by the time his father leaves. The text then mentions that the reforms Brigitta implements on her estate take 15 years before Stephan arrives. This would make Gustav at least 17 or 18, when Stephan returns to run his estate. At the time of the narrative, Stephan has been at Uwar two years. This implies that Gustav is even older, perhaps 19 or 20. At the same time, the narrator states that Gustav

is between boyhood and youth "in den frühsten Jahren des Jünglings, kaum bei dem Übergang vom Knaben zum Jünglinge" (442). This more accurately describes a pre-adolescent boy of 12 than a young man of 20. While Gustav's exact age is ultimately not significant for the overall text, the fact that his age is indeterminable suggests that he – and by extension his family – exist in a kind of time warp.

Time is in flux for Stephan as well. There is a disturbing lack of chronological continuity describing Stephan's time at his estate Uwar. The narrator mentions that he meets the Major two years prior to his, the narrator's, arrival at Uwar (413). Yet, the Major had already extended the invitation to visit him at least one year previously (412). While these two numbers are already inconclusive, it is more disturbing to comprehend how Stephan is able to work the land, implement the same reform ideas it took Brigitta fifteen years to effect, as well as the time for the two to live side by side without speaking until Brigitta's illness brings Stephan to her side (444),[225] after which the two then live as friends. None of it adds up. Stephan is said to have gone to his estate after he was done with his travels, but according to the narrator that was merely two years previously. The Hungarian *puzta* would then prove to be in a kind of time warp – in which time exists at a different pace than it does in the rest of the world.

Stifter consciously made time less defined and more ambiguous as is evident by comparing the *Urfassung* to the *Studienfassung*. In the later edition, time descriptions are extended and even lose all definition.[226] The detailed description of the space makes time stand still, as Wiese notes: "Durch das Verweilen des Dichters beim Räumlichen scheint

[225] In the *Urfassung*, Uwar is where the Major had grown up (*UF* 246). This was changed in the *Studienfassung*, where Stephan had never previously been to Uwar (461).
[226] There is one exception to this. In the *Urfassung*, the narrator takes 3 days for his travel plans to Hungary and in the *Studienfassung* only two (412).

die Zeit fast stille zu stehen" (*Novelle* 199).[227] In the *Urfassung*, the servant who opens the gate upon the narrator's arrival to Uwar, says that the Major had been waiting one month for the narrator (*UF* 223), but in the *Studienfassung* he has been waiting "schon lange" (423). Further, in the *Urfassung*, it takes the narrator eight days to settle into the busy life at Uwar (*UF* 227) and in the *Studienfassung*, this happens over an undefined "längere Zeit" (437). In an ambiguous crossing of time and space, the narrator travels the 1.5 miles from Brigitta's field to the gates of Uwar first by horse and then on foot. Despite the distance traveled on horse, the narrator still takes "eine gute Stunde" (422) from the *Todeseiche* to Uwar. While the "Stunde" points to a specific unit of time, the phrase "eine gute Stunde" makes the "Stunde" vague. The adjective "gut" in this context denotes more time, but it is not clear how much more time. Again, the exact times themselves are not important for the overall interpretation of the text; however the repeated vague references to time are symptomatic of the overall temporal ambiguity.

Curiously, several critics have noted – but not interpreted – the inconsistencies in dates and places within the text. Ernst Feise, for example, has a long footnote on various time discrepancies in the text. Feise remarks, "die Chronologie der Novelle ist sehr widerspruchsvoll und auch aus der ersten Fassung nicht zu begründen" (176). He demonstrates what is "widerspruchsvoll" with various calculations, but then does not comment on any additional significance. For critic Ulrich Dittmann, who rejects Feise's concern with the inconsistencies, the incongruence of times and locations proves that certain realistic aspects of the narrative are just not important ("*Brigitta*" 26). Dittmann's comment, however, disregards the otherwise careful construction of the narrative.

[227] See also Pfeiffer (21).

Out of this World

In the same manner, locations are indeterminate, evoking a feeling of suspension in another spacial dimension. The setting of the repetitious landscape of the Hungarian *puzta* disorients the narrator at the beginning of his travels to the extent that walking forward and in circles are not distinguishable from each other. As he is being led by Brigitta's servant Milosh to the Major's estate, he remarks: "wir ritten an denselben unzähligen grauen Steinen vorbei, wie ich sie heute den ganzen Tag zu Tausenden gezählt habe" (421). He moves within time and space without a sense of direction. He counts rocks which cannot be counted and recognizes the familiarity of a location in which he has never been. The feeling of being suspended in a kind of nothingness is accentuated further by the fact that the narrator cannot even hear that he is moving as the horse's footfall is muted by the mossy ground (421).

This locational/spacial ambiguity runs counter to the numerous specific references to Hungary, the Hungarian landscape, and Hungarian people, on the one hand, and to the German fatherland, German clothing, and German walking stick on the other.[228] In addition, the river Leitha is mentioned, which is both a natural border and the geopolitical border between Austria and Hungary. For the most part, the events in *Brigitta* seem to be clearly located in Hungary.[229] However, this clarity becomes muddied when attempting to follow the entire text on a map. Brigitta grows up in an unknown city; her father lives

[228] "Im Frühjahr nahm ich wieder mein deutsches Gewand, meinen deutschen Stab, und wanderte dem deutschen Vaterlande zu" (475).

[229] Meier argues that Stifter chose Hungary "because of the specific change from nomadic animal husbandry to organized agriculture in the process of becoming an independent nation" (218). Weiss posits that Stifter's choice of Hungary was due to the "semantisch aufgeladenen, sinnbildlichen Wert der hinausgeht über eine ‚realistische' Charakterisierung. Und doch erhält diese Symbolik in ihrer spezifischen Ausprägung als Abweichung [...] als modelhafte Erfüllung österreichischer Ideale" as well has fulfilling the stereotype of the Habsburg myth of supranationality, "weil darin die nationalen Differenzen und Spannungen abgeschwächt bis verdrängt würden" (121-2).

in the capital (449); Stephan grows up in the country (449); and after they are married they move into the country (457). None of these locations is named, although there is some indication that most of these places are in Hungary. First, there is no explicit mention that Brigitta or Stephan grew up in or moved to a different country. Second, the adjective "deutsch" is only used in connection with them when referring to the language they speak. The third indication that the majority of the events take place in Hungary is in connection with Gabriele's gravesite (475). At the end of the text, the narrator describes Gabriele's grave, which he passes as he leaves the country where Stephan lives for his German homeland (475). This places her grave in Hungary, since he only crosses the physical border of the Leitha River after seeing her grave.

Even less defined are the cities in which Brigitta and her father live. While the text states that her father lives in the capital, it is not clear which capital that is. Is it the capital of Austria [Vienna] or the capital of Hungary [Pozsony]?[230] While it is not directly important for the story to know the exact location of these places, it is conspicuous that such locations are so undefined, compared to the detail of the previously mentioned locations. The question of capitals is even more interesting within the context of borders and border figures, for both Vienna and Pozsony are very close to the border between Austria and Hungary. A nondefined capital or the possibility that either could be the capital mentioned maps them onto each other in a way which makes the boundary between Austrian and Hungary then equally undefined and undefinable. Thus, the geographic borders are significantly not clearly delineated but, much like the timeframe

[230] Today, Pozsony is the Slovak Republic and is called Bratislava. The capital and seat of government was moved to Pest in 1848. Pest merged with Buda and Óbuda (Old Buda) in 1873, which created Budapest.

in which this story is meant to occur, are as fluid as literally represented in the molten volcano in Italy.

Wo(man) and/or Nature

Outside any concrete time or place, and thus outside any political past, present, or future, the ambiguous geophysical border requires no containment. Thus, the inseparable border between man and nature is extended to an extreme in *Brigitta*.[231] Each repeatedly takes on characteristics of the other, as Frey correctly notes: "Landschaft und Mensch sind bei Stifter eingenartig ineinander verzahnt; nicht so, dass das eine des andern Stimmung flüchtig widerspiegelte, sondern eher so, dass der Mensch das Gepräge einer Umgebung trägt, der er seinerseits oft eine Gestalt zu geben vermag, die seinem innersten Wesen entspricht" (59). Particularly Brigitta is repeatedly spoken of in terms of nature: "Parallelitäten kehren denn auch so oft zur Beschreibung der Heide gebrauchten Wörter 'Öde' und 'Wüste' wieder, wenn von Brigitta die Rede ist" (59). She is not like a desert, but she *is* the desert. And even this is not stated as such. For example, the experiences of her lonely childhood are followed with an actual break in the text, and occupying its own paragraph, are the words "so ward die Wüste immer größer" (447). In addition, the rejection by her mother is also depicted in geophysical metaphors: "[die Mutter] nicht wußte, daß die kleinen Würzlein, als sie einst den warmen Boden der Mutterliebe suchten und nicht fanden, in den Fels des eigenen Herzens schlagen mußten, und da trotzen" (447). And as a young girl, Brigitta stands "wie eine fremde Pflanze" among her

[231] Holub comments on the "undecidable duality of civilization and wilderness underlying both the ideological and the literary structure of the text" particularly in connection with Stephan and the dogs – the latter are called *Wolfshunde* combing both civilized and uncivilized in their name, and in Stephan through his character (41).

more beautiful sisters (448). Moreover, Brigitta is “wie eine schattende Wolke” when she finds out about Stephan’s infidelity (459). Brigitta is not the only figure who becomes nature. As the narrator describes the Hungarians he encounters on his initial journey to Uwar, he remarks that “alle Menschen, wie die Bachkiesel gleichen” (417).

In the same way, the earth is often not only depicted with human metaphors but also becomes human. As the narrator describe his initial wandering through Hungary, he describes air which caresses and a “Glanz der Einsamkeit” which weaves (413). The sunrays play (“die Sonnenstrahlen spielten”) and in Italy, little puffs of smoke move “traulich” (415), and the horizon is created by the kiss of heaven and earth (“der feine Ring, in dem sich Himmel und Erde küßten” [413]). Like the previously discussed silence of Brigitta, the *puzta*, is not only silent, but reticent (*schweigsam* [416]) even as the grasses of the heathland lisp (422). The narrator also encounters the *Steinfeld*, which is so hot and dry in the red sunrays of light that it then look towards what is cool, green and fresh (“in den rötlich spinnenden Strahlen heiß und trocken herein sah zu dieser kühlen grünen Frische,” [419]). He also walks in a world where nature displays human or animal characteristics: Tree branches are arms which can grab and are as thick as men: “Riesige Tannen streckten sich gegen den Himmel, und mannsdicke Eichenäste griffen herum” (423-4). Rivers move like snakes: “Der Bach schillerte und glänzte und ringelte sich um Binsen, wie eine todte Schlange” (422). The land and rivers wait for a rebirth: “Zwei sehr edle Ströme ziehn durch unser Land, über ihnen ist so zu sagen, die Luft noch tot, und harret, daß unzählige bunte Wimpel in ihr flattern” (437). This goes beyond metaphor to a personification of nature. The land can be reborn, just as the narrator was.

Nature undergoes other changes as well. Physical elements of nature resemble man-made constructions in the way the human-made gallows replace the *Todeseiche* – the tree on which criminals were hung. The meadows resemble velvet (419),[232] a single blade of grass becomes a beam in the setting sun, which also reveals the juniper and blackthorn bushes to be distant cathedrals and palasts: "Ein Grashalm der Haide steht wie ein Balken gegen die Glut […] und arme Wachholder- und Schlehenbüsche malen ferne Dome und Palläste" (429). In addition, intangible objects become corporeal human constructs: the sky is a dome that glows (429).[233] The sunrays are nets (426)[234] which can be tangibly swept out of the narrator's face ("und mir gleichsam die Strahlen der Abendröte, die schief herein kamen, aus dem Gesichte streichend" [418]). Finally, the tears of both Stephan and Brigitta demonstrate characteristics uncommon to water: Brigitta's tears are so hot "als müssen sie ihr Gewand, den Teppich und das Getäfel des Bodens durchbrennen" (460) and Stephan's are hard ("harte Tropfen") as he watches Brigitta caring for their son after the wolves' attack (472).

Finally, the role reversal of nature as human and human as nature becomes so entangled that they remain inextricably linked with each other. For the narrator, the heath, the herds of livestock, and the people themselves can be equated with each other and represent each other: "so viel Wildheit, so viel Üppigkeit, so viel Anfang und Jungfräulichkeit, diese Haiden, diese Heerden, ein Volk, in einer uralten Verfassung steckend, aber so frisch lächelnd, wie ein Kind im Rocke seines Vaters" (*UF* 217). The

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[232] "Die Ebene zwischen den Kastanien und dem Schlosee war eine Wiese, so rein und sanft, als wäre Sammt gebreitet" (419).
[233] "Im Osten fängt dann nach wenigen Augenblicken das feuchte kalte Blau der Nacht herauf zu steigen an, und schneidet mit trübem und undurchsichtigem Dunste den einheitlichen Glanz der Kuppel des Himmels" (429).
[234] "[…] und als ich aufgestanden und an eines der Fenster getreten war, funkelte die Haide draußen in einem Netze von Sonnenstrahlen" (426).

most dramatic unification of human and nature occurs in Brigitta as she cultivates and reforms her estate: “Ihr Geist fing an, die Öde rings um sich zu bearbeiten […]. Diese Seele griff immer weiter um sich, der Himmel des Erschaffens senkte sich in sie: grüne Hügel schwellten sich, Quellen rannen, Reben flüsterten, und in das öde Steinfeld war ein kraftvoll weiterschreitend Heldenlied gedichtet. Und die Dichtung trug, wie sie tut, auch ihren Segen” (461). Brigitta becomes nature and as nature she runs and whispers, creating a heroic song into the land.

The inextricable link between human and nature – and here more to the point – between woman and plant is also evidenced in the various connections between Brigitta and flowers. The first allusion to Brigitta the flower occurs in the commentary on the mystery of beauty at the start of the third chapter, *Steppenvergangenheit*: “Es liegt im menschlichen Geschlechte das wundervolle Ding der Schönheit. Wir alle sind gezogen von der Süßigkeit der Erscheinung, und können nicht immer sagen, wo das Holde liegt” (445). In the space of incomprehensibility, the unrecognized beauty as an unnamed flower spurts from the ground “wo man es gar nicht geahnet hatte” (446). That this strange flower is meant to be Brigitta is first suggested by the comment shortly thereafter that Brigitta was like a “fremde Pflanze” among her sisters (448). Fast forward from Brigitta’s neglected childhood to her present relationship with the Major, there, again, the woman/flower hybrid reemerges. In the Major’s presence, Brigitta’s “Freude, wie eine späte Blume, blühte auf ihrem Antlitze” and over the woman appears “die feste Rose der Heiterkeit und Gesundheit” (467).

Through the ambiguous figure of the woman/flower hybrid, the text and its cast of characters are freed from the outerworldly time warp and are firmly connected with the

political. The flower is first a memento preserved in a book. In a conversation with the narrator, the Major compares the Hungarian constitution and history to this memento: "Unsere Verfassung, unsere Geschichte ist sehr alt, aber noch vieles ist zu thun; wir sind in ihr, gleichsam wie eine Blume in einem Gedenkbuche aufgehoben worden" (436). The now seemingly lifeless flower – cut off from growth through containment in the book – points to the even greater possibilities latent in the Hungarian *puzta*: "Dieses weite Land ist ein größeres Kleinod, als man denken mag, aber es muß noch immer mehr gefaßt werden. […] Welcher Blüthe und Schönheit ist vorerst noch der Körper dieses Landes fähig, und beide müssen hervorgezogen werden" (436). However, the productive possibilities emanating from the androgynous flower Brigitta are closed off to the "ideal" feminine Gabriele, as indicated by the stone lilies that adorn her grave (475).

The political containment of Stephan and Brigitta through the ambiguity of time and space is further undermined by concrete time and location markers at the end of the text. First, the time warp is broken when Stephan remarks to Brigitta during their reconciliation, "Arme, arme Gattin […] fünfzehn Jahre mußte ich dich entbehren und fünfzehn Jahre warst du geopfert" (472). Second, in the final lines of the text, the narrator places a concrete spacial marker as he heads home: "Mit trüben, sanften Gedanken zog ich weiter, bis die Leitha überschritten war, und die lieblichen blauen Berge des Vaterlandes vor meinen Augen dämmerten" (475). The narrator crosses the Leitha River, the natural border between Hungary and Austria, and can see the Alps in the distance. With that Stephan and Brigitta leave their alternate dimension and are planted concretely on Hungarian soil. Finally, through the figure of Stephan and Brigitta's reforms, the text

is further connected with a concrete Hungarian past and 19th century present through the historical reformer of Hungary, Gróf Széchenyi István (1817-1860).[235]

IV. On the Political Border: Reform or Revolution

Situated in Stifter's present in early 19th century Hungary,[236] *Brigitta* is marked with contemporary issues of ambiguous ethnicity and political instability. In contrast to the other texts analyzed in this study, in which the overwhelming drive to contain the ambiguous border figures – and by extension the androgynous, emancipated or emancipating woman – is revealed, Stifter's novella marks a shift away from the desperate attempts to halt political progress which eventually, inevitably, must also produce women's emancipation. Where one would assume that particularly an apparently apolitical writer such as Stifter would posit complete political stasis, his *Brigitta*, instead, suggests the necessity of progress and ends the text with a vision of the immediate future, which incorporates both reform and revolution. In the remainder of this chapter, I will first briefly discuss the necessity of reading the Biedermeier author Stifter politically. Second, I will present an overview of the historical situation of Hungary during the first half of 19th century, against which I will, finally, read the political in *Brigitta*.

Stifter: (A)political Writer

To date, only one critic, Richard Block, has interpreted Stifter's *Brigitta* purely for its political message. He makes a strong case for reading *Brigitta* as a political

[235] Most critics agree that Széchenyi is the historical model for Stephan. For example, see Enzinger (140).
[236] The presence of a wholly intact feudal system mirrors the situation in Hungary in the first decades of the 19th century (Ignotus 39).

allegory which "predicts the fate of Hungary insofar as that land's quest for self-expression will always in the act of that self-positing awaken or give rise to a law that structures and misdirects that effort; that is, a law that frustrates any attempt at self-expression" (18).[237] For Block, fate is the main force behind the events in the text. He argues that the lack of self-expression for the Hungarians as well as an inability to construct their own destinies is demonstrated in the figures of Brigitta and Stephan (18). While some of Block's readings are a stretch (Brigitta's sense of betrayal "is suggestive of Széchenyi's troubled relationship with the people he sought to bring forward while still maintaining ties to the established order," and Brigitta's forgiveness of Stephan as symbolic for Széchenyi's hopes for a "sober and quiet reformation" [27]), he is able to convincingly demonstrate a political message in *Brigitta* which should not be overlooked.[238]

Often classified Biedermeier, Stifter is generally considered to be an apolitical author. In a letter to his publisher Gustav Heckenast, Stifter explains why he feels distanced from the literary movement *Junges Deutschland*:

> Das junge Deutschland habe ich am meisten gefürchtet, indem ich mit einer Schattirung desselben, die Tagesfragen, und Tagesempfindungen in die schöne Litteratur zu mischen, ganz und gar nicht einverstanden bin, sondern im Gegentheile meine, daß das Schöne gar keinen andern Zweck habe, als schön zu sein, und daß man Politik nicht in Versen und Deklamationen macht. (9 January 1845)[239]

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[237] In his reading of Brigitta, Block sees the narrator as an envoy who is sent to check that the patriarchal order is still in play and whether Stephan poses a danger to the Empire (30).

[238] Hunter-Lougheed acknowledges some political element to Stifter's text based on his choice of location in which to set *Brigitta*. She goes even further to explain that "Kritik an Metternischen System kann gesehen werden in der von Brigitta ausgehenden Gründung eines landwirtschaftlichen Vereins auf freiwilliger Basis, mit demokratischem Abstimmungsrecht" (362).

[239] Stifter, Delbert. Sämtliche Werke XVII. Ed. Gustav Wilhelm. Briefwechsel. 1. Band. 2nd ed. Hildesheim: Verlag Dr. H.A. Gerstenberg, 1972. The subsequent quotes are from this letter are from this edition.

Based on such proclamations, with the exception of Richard Block, most 'political' readings of *Brigitta* do not go beyond mentioning the historical background of that time. Instead, the text is considered to be about recognizing beauty and love – not an expression of politics.

However, this statement that politics and literature should not be mixed is undermined in the words which immediately follow:

> sondern im Gegentheile meine, daß das Schöne gar keinen andern Zweck habe, als schön zu sein, und daß man Politik nicht in Versen und Deklamationen macht, sondern durch wissenschaftliche Staatsbildung, die man sich vorher aneignet, und durch zeitbewußte Thaten, die man nachher sezt, seien sie in Schrift, Wort, oder Werk. Solche Thaten dann, die aus der Wärme des Herzens und aus der Competenz des Kopfes hervorgehn, werden jederzeit ein Gutes stiften wenn sie auch ohne sichtbare unmittlebare Folge bleiben.

Thus, the problem Stifter has with *Junges Deutschland* is not inserting politics into literature *per se*, but with inserting uneducated political opinions. He explicitly notes the various 'permissible' venues for political critique "Schrift, Wort, oder Werk." In his 1848 essay *Ueber Stand und Würde des Schriftstellers,* Stifter explains that an author has a holy duty to say the right thing:

> Alles Unheil, welches je die Weltgeschichte erzählt, entsprang daraus, daß man die Gegenstände wider ihre Natur behandeln wollte. Hiezu wird der Mensch oft durch seine Leidenschaften verblendet, oft durch Irrthum. Welche heilige Pflicht hat daher der Schriftsteller, und wie furchtbar ist seine Verantwortung, wenn er durch das glänzende Schwert seiner Rede leichtsinnig Irrthum verbreitet und Unheil stiftet. (8)[240]

"Irrthum" and "Unheil" can be avoided through the proper education. Later in the January 9, 1845 letter to Heckenast, Stifter outlines his political education: "Ich habe viele Jahre Staastwissenschaften getrieben, lese immerdar politische Journale." He then goes on to explain that it would be strange, "wenn ein Mensch mit Gefühl, (das ich mir

[240] Stifter, Adalbert. "Ueber Stand und Würde des Schriftstellers." Sämtliche Werke. XVI. Ed. Gustav Wilhelm. Vermischte Schriften. 3. Abteilung. Hildesheim: Verlag Dr. H.A. Gerstenberg, 1972. 5-18.

zutraue) da ohne Parthei zu nehmen, bliebe." Yet, he then immediately contradicts himself and states that the "Mensch mit Gefühl" should be strong enough "nicht in das, wo er die Schönheit Gottes und der Welt darstellen will, seine Ansichten über den Zollverein einmischen zu müssen."

If both the essay and the letter are considered together, then it appears that the (properly) educated author has a moral duty to express himself politically. This point can be argued for Stifter's *Brigitta* all the more when the letter is seen in conjunction with the thematization of beauty in the novella. In the letter, Stifter states that "daß das Schöne gar keinen anderen Zweck habe, als schön zu sein" – yet Brigitta is not beautiful, therefore, she and the text can function beyond the beautiful to incorporate politics.

Hungary in the 19th Century

Stifter wrote his novella against the backdrop of great political and social change in Austria and Hungary.[241] While Hungary had always retained a certain amount of autonomy within the Austrian Empire through its ancient constitution (Király 32), it did not become an independent nation until 1918, when Mihály Károlyi declared Hungary an independent republic (Ignotus 143). This late date for the proclamation for Hungarian independence does not reflect a passive Hungarian mindset. By the early 19th century, Hungary had been under Habsburg rule for 300 years. Numerous wars of independence and rebellions over the years had, however, only led to the "repeated acknowledgement […] that Hungary was entitled to, and indeed had, a special constitutional status that

[241] Clearly the nations of Austria, Hungary, and Germany did not yet exist in the early 19th century. However, I will use these terms to represent the relative territories.

distinguished it from their hereditary provinces" (Király 32).[242] Only in the late 1800s was Hungary able to take the first concrete step toward real independence with the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, which created the dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

A real sense of Hungarian nationalism (and, by extension, the drive for independence) did not emerge until the 1780s, when Emperor Josef II sought to implement and enforce the substitution of German for Latin as the official language of the state (Tzöbl 11).[243] Even though the choice of German was based on practicality, since German was the sole language present in all parts of the empire even if sometimes only in a minority, the Hungarians felt affronted and threatened (Anderson 73). Their fear had nothing to do with the Hungarian language itself, as it was not widely spoken nor was it the current bureaucratic language. Instead, the Hungarians feared that this step would lead to a loss of privileges among Magyar aristocracy (Ignotus 49).[244] While Josef II reversed his order and Latin remained the official state language, the spark of a strange kind of Hungarian nationalism had already been lit. Over the next decades, there was an increased emphasis on the use and poetical development of the Magyar language via the publication of literary works in the vernacular as well as dictionaries and language histories.[245]

Along with the refusal to follow Josef II's injunction on language, the Hungarians took a general stance against any reform coming from the Court at Vienna, no matter how

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[242] The Hungarian constitution was based on the Goldene Bulle of 1222 and the *jus tripartitum* of 1514" (Mayer 10).
[243] There was originally no difference between Magyar (= mawdiawr) and Hungarian. Today, Magyar signifies the ethnic or language group and Hungarian the political nation or state (Ignotus 12). See also Bérenger (147).
[244] See also Anderson (85).
[245] For example, in 1772, György Bessenyei published some "unreadable works" in his attempt to demonstrate that the "Hungarian language was suitable for the very highest literary genre" (Anderson 73).

beneficial those reforms may have been.[246] The attempted modernizations were accepted and successful in Austria and Bohemia, but the resistance from Hungarian nobility was enormous (Ignotus 42)[247]. A significant problem for any reform of that time was rooted in the absolute elitism and privileging of the nobility who were a small minority, but had the power over all. The Magyar nobility were a "class consisting of about 136,000 souls monopolizing land and political rights of a country of eleven million people" (Anderson 102). They enjoyed privileges such as a tax-free status or the ability to have their serfs perform any required military service (Anderson 73).

During the first half of the 19th century there were two main Hungarian political figures, Count Stephan Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth. Széchenyi, an enlightened magnate influenced by the English model (Bérenger 147), is known as the great reformer of Hungary and created many important educational and cultural institutions. He had the chain bridge built linking Buda with Pest, established the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1825, and in 1840 instituted a quality of press imitating the English (Bérenger 147).[248] He also implemented important agricultural reforms and took steps to improve the industrial capacity of Hungary through "die Donauregulierung, die Sprengung des Eisernen Tores, die Donaudampfschiffahrt, die Kanalbauten, die Industrie" (Steinacker 43). While Széchenyi's influence was extensive and he instituted many great changes, he was not liked by all. Many Hungarian nobles disapproved of his method to attempt to work together with the Court at Vienna instead of fighting for independence. Due to

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[246] "Daß die Verfassung bedroht sei und vor aller Veränderung, allen Zugeständnisse an die Krone, bewahrt werden müsse, wurde gleichsam zur fixen Idee des Adels. Das bedeutete aber den Verzicht auf alle Reformen, die ohne gewisse Verfassungsänderungen einfach undurchführbar waren; Ungarn blieb dadurch wirtschaftlich, sozial, geistig im Mittelalter stehen" (Steinacker 39).

[247] Joseph II "took steps towards the abolition of serfdom and of noblemen's privileges; he granted legal support to the peasants; he had the population registered as a preliminary to general taxation" (Ignotus 47).

[248] His father, Count Franz Széchenyi, established the Hungarian National Museum (Steinacker 42).

Széchenyi's position and favor with the Court at Vienna, many considered him a traitor (Ignotus 52).[249]

Around 1840, Széchenyi, at the height of his success, was conferred "den Ehrentitel des 'größten Ungarn'" by his admirer Kossuth (Silagi 39). However, quickly thereafter Széchenyi increasingly lost his influence to Lajos Kossuth, who wanted to fight for the same reforms, but also wanted to challenge the Court at Vienna (Silagi 42). Kossuth became the parliamentary leader of the reform party and he demanded radicalism and revolution. Kossuth sought complete political independence for Hungary. He believed in forced assimilation, which ultimately became the practice. He was a tremendous orator and was easily able to persuade the masses – particularly against Széchenyi (Bérenger 142-3).

Underlying much of the political and social turmoil of the first half of the 19th century was the issue of national identity. Mother tongue, ethnicity, and geographic location did not necessary overlap or even correspond to each other. There was the question of fatherland:

> Was it a territorial-political unit, like the kingdom of Hungary, the province of Bohemia, or indeed the Monarchy as a whole? Or was it the domain of one's mother tongue, essentially a cultural concept? Liberal nationalism, with its stress on patriotism as civics, implied the former. In practice, nationalism in the 19th century Habsburg Monarchy moved increasingly towards the latter. (Okey 109)

Many nobles like Széchenyi were ethnically Magyar, but spoke German as their primary language (Tzöbl 12).[250] In fact, because of the prevalence, particularly among the high

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[249] Széchenyi was also not trusted by Metternich, who had Széchenyi under surveillance for decades (Andics 7).

[250] The importance of German can be seen everywhere. Stephan Széchenyi "der größte Ungar" wrote his diaries in German and "lernte erst später magyarisch" (Tzöbl 12). "German further entrenched its position as the most common medium of inter-ethnic communication, not because it was required by the state but because it served the self-interest of the upwardly mobile" (Ingrao 245). In addition, even with increased Hungarian nationalism, there was still a dominance of German: Booksellers Landerer (Pest, Bratislava) and

aristocracy, of speaking German and French diluted with some Spanish or Italian and, later, English, the Magyar language could have easily died out over the course of the 19th century.

> The lesser nobility or, precisely, the men of the middle-nobility, the office-holders in the counties and the like, conversed in dog-Latin strewn with Magyar but also with Slovak, Serb, and Roman expressions, and vernacular German, such as the 'Swabian' in the west and south or the 'Saxon' dialects in Transylvania and the north, according to the district. (Ignotus 45-6)

The Magyar nobles, feeling threatened by Austria and forced assimilation, returned to their 'roots' and, in the process, forced all non-Magyar to conform. This was no easy feat, since Hungary was "ein Vielvölkerstaat" (Steinacker 36).[251]

At the same time, there was political upheaval in Austria as well. First, after many changes to the empire's possessions in the previous centuries, in the early 19th century additional trades "created a territorially united monarch for the first time. But it was also a less German one just at a point when Prussia was strengthening her German credentials by taking over the Rheinland" (Okey 73). In addition, the emergence of the 'großes Deutsch, kleines deutsch' issue was also prevalent. Austria was in discussions with Prussia – the great German power at the time – to decide if and how all German-speaking territories (*Kleindeutsch*) could be unified someway as a German nation (*Grossdeutsch*). However, Austria and Prussia could not reach an agreement – Austria envisioned some construct over which the Austrian monarchy would rule (Okey 143).[252] But Prussia – the

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Heckenast (Košice), leading Hungarian historians wrote in German and even writers "made German their literary medium" as "Magyar culture lacked clear hegemony in its own land" (Okey 119-120).

[251] Around 1840, the population of the Hungarian Kingdom was 13 million and of that 36% were Magyar, 16% Romanian, 13% Croatian, 12% Slav, 12% German, 9% Serb, 3% Ruthenian and 2% Jew (Steinacker 36).

[252] This for two reasons: First, "the more integrated Germany, which the Frankfurt assembly was to bring about, and which presumably only Austria's German provinces would join, threatened to divide the Monarchy in two, provoking the government to declare its commitment to imperial unity" (Okey 143). And second, the Austrians argued that anything German should be united under Austria since: "Was not a strong

militarily stronger of the two – envisioned more of a confederation of German states. In the end, the two empires could not come to an agreement.

Ethnic Ambivalence in *Brigitta*

Stifter's *Brigitta* set in an undefinable but approximately early 19th century, reflects the political and national issues of 19th century Hungary through ambiguous ethnicities and political instability. Throughout the text, the narrator attempts to overcome the ethnic ambiguity, as figured in the assimilating power of the Hungarian, by stabilizing his own German identity.[253] In the end, he can only contain the Magyar influence by physically leaving the Hungarian territory and explicitly recapturing his German essence. However, this implicit critique of Magyar expansion is undermined by the ambiguous demarcation of both Brigitta and Stephan's ethnicity, as well as by the narrator's admission that his future success is the direct result of his experiences with Stephan and Brigitta. The political ambiguity in *Brigitta*, represented by the tension between reform and revolution, faces some containment, but, in the end, the tension is resolved through an androgynous utopia represented by Gustav.

The narrator's concern with ethnic assimilation stands out from the start. During his first moments at Uwar, he compares the uncannily familiar Hungarian landscape with his German homeland in an effort to stabilize his German identity. Upon his arrival at Uwar, the narrator immediately notices how different the furnishings are: "Die Geräthe waren anders, als sie bei uns gebräuchlich sind" (424). He is then relieved to discover

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Austria a vital German interest, as an instrument for the transmission of German culture to the Slav and Balkan worlds which might otherwise fall under Russian or even Hungarian hegemony?" (Okey 143).

[253] I am using German here as an adjective to denote ethnicity. The narrator is most likely Austrian, however, in the mid-1800s, ethnic Germans in the Austrian Empire were not termed Austrian.

German books at his bedside table: “Selbst Bücher lagen auf dem Nachttische, und sie waren sämmtlich in deutscher Sprache” (425). The narrator compares the vineyards of Marosheli to those on the Rhine: “Der Weinberg, an dessen Rande wir eben ankamen, erinnerte mich an die des Rheins, nur habe ich am Rheine nicht dieses derbe Trotzen und Strotzen von Blatt und Reben gesehen wie hier” (419). He also points out the difference between himself on horseback and his Hungarian guide Milosch: “Der deutsche Wandersmann sammt Ränzlein, Knotenstock und Kappe zu Pferde sitzend, neben ihm der schlanke Ungar mit rundem Hute, Schnurbart, Zottelpelz und flatternden weißen Beinkleidern” (420). The landscape visible from his guest suite at Uwar reminds the narrator that he is not at home: “Das aber erkannte ich im Mondlichte, daß die Landschaft nicht deutsch sei” (425).[254] By contrast, the mark of the Hungarian on the Major’s body induces pleasure instead of unease or fear: “Seine Tracht schien mir reizend, daß mir mein deutscher Flaus, der bestaubt und herabgeschunden auf einer Bank unter dem verschossenen Seidenkleide eines Tartaren lag, fast erbärmlich vorkam” (427).

Eventually, the narrator decides to don the Hungarian clothing (427): “Da ich mich ankleidete und dazu bemerkte, daß ein Koffer mit meinen andern Sachen ankommen werde, schlug er vor, ich möchte bis dahin, oder wenn ich wollte, in der Zeit meines ganzen Hierseins ungarische Kleider anziehen.” He also learns the language in order to better fit in during his lengthy stay at Uwar. In preparation for his return to his German *Vaterland*, the narrator accentuates the necessity to reinstate his ethnicity: “Im Frühjahr nahm ich wieder mein *deutsches* Gewand, meinen *deutschen* Stab, und wanderte dem *deutschen* Vaterlande zu” (475, *emphasis mine*). However, even in this attempt to

[254] This same passage in the *Urfassung* indicates that the landscape is specifically Hungarian through the specific reference to the traditional Magyar *Bunda*: “ich trat ans Fenster, aber auch die Landschaft war nicht deutsch; wie eine andere, nur riesengroße Bunda” (*UF* 224).

comfort his anxiety over losing his German identity, the text postulates ethnicity as external influence rather than inborn or inherent traits. Thus, the narrator dresses the part of a German in order to return home. His German identity is dependent on the ethnically coded clothing and walking stick.

Even as the narrator heads to "dem deutschen Vaterland" (475), it becomes clear that the label "German" does not offer any stability. At the end of the text, the narrator states that he can see the "lieblichen blauen Berge des Vaterlands" alluding to the Alps. Since he has just crossed the Leitha River – the geological border between Austrian and Hungarian territories – it is easy to assume that his *Vaterland* is Austria. However, as mentioned earlier as an attempt to stabilize his German identity in the foreignness of Hungary, the narrator compares the grapevines to those of the Rhine, which calls Austria as the narrator's homeland into question: "Der Weinberg, an dessen Rande wir eben ankamen, erinnerte mich an die des Rheins, nur habe ich am Rheine nicht dieses derbe Trotzen und Strotzen von Blatt und Reben gesehen wie hier" (419). While the Rhine does flow through Austria (it is the natural border between Austria and Switzerland), the vineyards of the Rhine are located in Germany, not Austria.[255] The ambiguous German label of the narrator mirrors the *Großdeutsch/Kleindeutsch* issues of Stifter's day.

The narrator's attempts at creating ethnic stability are also undermined by the ambiguous ethnicity of Brigitta and Stephan. Both speak German as their primary language, which can indicate either German or Magyar ethnicity, since the 'mother tongue' of many Magyar nobles was German (Tzöbl 12). They are both from the capital, which, as previously discussed, can indicate either Vienna or Pozsony. As with the language, even a confirmation that the city is Vienna, does not explicitly clarify their

[255] Austria's wines come predominantly from the vineyards on the Danube.

ethnic heritage. During the 19th century, many Magyar nobles resided in Vienna and not at their Hungarian estates (e.g. Széchenyi). Stephan has a German given name (or at least a non-Hungarian name), but both have Hungarian surnames (Murai and Marosheli). The name Brigitta comes from the Gaelic name Brighid and exists in German and Hungarian. However, the more common German form of the name is Brigitte (Kálmán 34). Even the fact that they both own land in Hungary does not exclusively determine their ethnicity. Around 1840, 12% of the population in the Hungarian territories was ethnically German and some of them were landowners (Steinacker 36).

In addition to the ambivalent ethnic characteristics Stephan and Brigitta share, individually they present further challenges to any attempt to stabilize identity. Based on the decorations and furnishings at Uwar, Stephan's Magyar heritage appears conclusive: "Auf der Treppe brannte noch Licht und beglänzte hohe seltsame Steinbilder mit weiten Stiefeln und schleppenden Gewändern. Es mochten ungarische Könige sein" (424).[256] The repeated marker of Hungarian is also found in the weapons and clothing on display: "An den Wänden hingen Waffen aus verschiedenen Zeiten der Geschichte. Sie mochten einst der ungarischen angehören. Es waren noch viele Bogen und Pfeile darunter. Außer den Waffen hingen auch Kleider da, ungarische, die man aus früheren Zeiten aufgehoben hatte" (425). However, two elements in these descriptions call into question the conclusiveness of Stephan's Magyar heritage. First, among the clothing are also "jene schlotternden seidenen, die entweder Türken oder gar Tartaren angehört haben mochten" (425), which casts the Magyars as the same "general, barbaric 'Asiatic' threat" (Metz,

[256] See also Block (24), Enzinger (149), and B. Osterkamp (145).

"Adalbert Stifter" 3-4).[257] Second, the narrator uses words which suggest an inherent instability: "es *mochten* ungarische Könige sein" and "sie *mochten* einst der ungarischen angehören" (425, *emphasis mine*). The verb *mochten* indicates uncertainty. Here, the uncertainty on the surface intimates that the narrator is guessing the origin of the "Steinbilder" and weapons. The use of *mochten* can also denote a subtle uncertainty of the adjective *ungarisch* by marking it as an unstable category. This reading is supported by the way *ungarisch*, *Türken*, and *Tartaren* appear together to describe the clothing on the wall.

The figure of Stephan further undermines any kind of ethnic stability. By name he is connected to both the Hungarian reformer Széchenyi and the first king and patron saint of Hungary.[258] As previously quoted, Stephan marks himself as a fellow Magyar with his landsmen in his pronouncement "unsere Verfassung, unsere Geschichte ist sehr alt" (436). (In the *Urfassung*, Hungary is posited more explicitly as Stephan's homeland: "Ich glaube, daß es Vaterlandsliebe ist, was ich fühle" [229]). However, he will later differentiate himself from these same people, by explaining how he has come to gain their trust, which has become the source of his happiness:

> Seit ich in der Mitte meiner Leute lebe, […], seit ich mit ihnen in *ihrer* Kleidung gehe, *ihre* Sitten theile, und mir ihre Achtung erworben habe, ist es mir eigentlich, als hätte ich dieses und jenes Glück errungen, das ich sonst immer in der einen oder der andern Entfernung gesucht habe. (437)

Stephan's remarks indicate that the Hungarian ethnicity – much like the previously discussed German – is an external marking achieved through clothing and mimicked behavior. Hungarian as a removable garment is emphasized later, when Stephan gives a

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[257] This reference and subsequent references are to a privately circulated book manuscript currently being prepared for publication. This manuscript should not be cited without written permission of the author.
[258] One speaks of ruling Hungary as "Stephansreich" (Silagi 36).

speech in Hungarian to crowd. For the event, he carefully dresses in an "enganliegende[s] ungarische[s] Volkskleid […] in großem Schmucke, mit dem Säbel an der Seite" (ref). However, after the speech, Stephan appears at the lunch table "im Fracke, wie einstens in Italien" (441). The other participants demonstrate as well the fluidity of ethnicity, most of whom "ihre Volkskleidung abgelegt hatten, und in dem gemeinschaftlichen europäischen Fracke waren" (441).

The figure of Brigitta casts ethnic instability into a realm of complete ambivalence through the marker *fremd*.[259] Brigitta is not only ugly, but there is something strangely foreign in her darkness. Her infant face is "verdüstert[]" and her eyes are black (446).[260] As a young girl, Brigitta has a "dunkle[] Farbe" (450) and she is described as a "fremde Pflanze" among her sisters (448).[261] In the picture of Brigitta on the Major's desk, the narrator notes "die dunkle Farbe des Angesichtes" (440).[262] With one exception (the picture), the marker *fremd* distinguishes Brigitta from the rest of her family. Outside of Brigitta's childhood story, her dark coloring plays no role as evidenced by absence of such comments by the otherwise astute narrator.[263] What is missing in relation to the marker *fremd* is any kind of valuation. If anything, the narrator evokes pity for Brigitta

[259] In Sigrid Weigel's study "Die nahe Fremde," she explains that the discourses of 'Frauen' and 'Wilden' run parallel and overlap during the late 18th and early 19th centuries: "In der Funktion einer Projektionsfläche für Wunsch- und Angstbilder, als Objekt der Eroberung und als Territorium für die konfliktreiche Auseinandersetzung zwischen Natur und Zivilisation aus der Perspektive des sich konstituierenden männlichen Subjekts treten Frau und Weiblichkeit in der Nähe an die Stelle der Wilden in der Fremde" (189).

[260] "Das starre schwarze Auge Brigittas" (446).

[261] There is slightly more emphasis on Brigitta's dark color in the *Urfassung*. There, she is "eine *dunkle* fremde Pflanze" (*UF* 236, *emphasis mine*).

[262] Joseph Metz reads these and other descriptions of Brigitta as a "pejoratively racialized combination of animal and African" ("Inner Colonialism" 1476) and that "Brigitta's racialization unfolds within the novella's broader spectrum of colonial rhetoric ("Adalbert Stifter" 6).

[263] This would suggest that the marker *fremd* indicates only Brigitta's alien position within her family and perhaps subtly hints at Brigitta's questionable parentage. She could be the result of an extramarital affair, for her mother relates to her with unease and her father ignores her presence for the most part.

and her unhappy childhood. In other words, the narrator simply notes the differences without indicating a preference or valuation.

The issue of language – in particular the Hungarian language – is presented in a similar way. On numerous occasions, the narrator calls attention to the fact that Hungarian is being spoken. Significantly, Hungarian is only used when addressing two specific groups: the serfs and the dogs. The narrator explicitly notes that the Major uses the Magyar language with the serfs (434).[264] Upon his arrival at Uwar, the narrator is greeted by a servant at the gate. Where there is no mention of the language of communication between the two men, the narrator points out that the man addresses the dogs in Hungarian: "sofort beschwichtigte er mit ungarischen Worten die Hunde" (423).[265]

Aligning the Magyar language with the lowest class and dogs suggests a negative valuation of the language; other points in the text indicate the opposite. First, the narrator stresses the 'nobility' of the dogs. He states that one of the dogs he meets at Uwar is "der größte schönste Hund, den ich in meinem Leben gesehen habe" (423). He will later extend this positive description to the other "edlen, schönen, […] Doggen" (469). The narrator even notes the unusual intelligence of the Hungarian dogs that are sitting around the campfire with the humans "als verstünden sie etwas von der Verhandlung und nähmen daran Theil" (434). While the Magyar-speaking serfs are never depicted in such flattering terms, the narrator holds the Magyar-speaking Stephan in high regard. He specifically notes that Stephan speaks Hungarian to his people (434) as well as to the

[264] In the Urfassung, Milosch replies to the narrator's question "Wem gehört das Anwesen, das wir verlassen haben?" with "eine ungarische Antwort" (221).
[265] This is emphasized even more so in the *Urfassung*, where the narrator mentions the usage of Hungarian for the dogs twice (*UF* 223-4).

other estate owners of the federation (441). In both instances, the Major translates his speeches into German for the narrator. Moreover, the narrator makes the effort to learn the Magyar language as he remarks, "so hatte ich auch bereits von den Leuten des Majors, und allen, die mich umgaben, etwas ungarisch gelernt" (441). Thus, while the association of Hungarian with the poor, disenfranchised serfs and the dogs might connote a negative valuation, in the end, there is no clear preference for either language. In fact, because the instances of spoken German are so infrequent (the first conversation between the narrator and Brigitta, the previously mentioned translations into German by the Major), the text leans slightly toward Hungarian. However, the very infrequency of the explicit mention of spoken German can also lead to the exact opposite interpretation. It is implicitly understood that the three main characters speak German with each other, thus, it is only noteworthy when Hungarian is spoken. Therefore, German is the 'normal' language spoken. The fact that only two Hungarian words (beside proper names) occur in the whole text – *puzta* (desert) and *bunda* (an article of clothing) – also suggests that German is the 'standard' language. Ultimately, the overwhelming drive to contain difference, as first noted in the narrator's attempts to retain his German ethnicity, proves to be neither possible nor desirable.

Political (In)stability

In the same way, the attempt to completely contain the political instability in *Brigitta* and, by extension, in Hungary – as represented by the revolutionary threat to peaceful reform – is unattainable. Instead, the revolutionary element (Stephan) is 'married' to the more measured reform (Brigitta) to produce a future unified movement

(Gustav) as a model for successful political progress in 19th century Hungary. As the Major, Stephan is marked by a term of leadership and battle throughout most of the text. His charisma unites his neighbors and his people gather to hear him speak. He recognizes the potential of the Hungarians within Europe and even the world: "Die ganze Welt kömmt in ein Ringen sich nutzbar zu machen, und wir müssen mit" (436).

With changes to the *Urfassung*, Stifter emphasizes the role Stephan is to play in making Hungary a force to be reckoned with. In the *Urfassung*, the narrator describes his first morning at Uwar as he steps out into the courtyard, "so war etwas so kraftvoll Nationales und Brüderliches in der Scene, daß ich mich ordentlich erquickt fühlte" (*UF* 226). Here, the smoldering nationalist and fraternal feelings radiate from all the people at Uwar. No one single person stands out. In the *Studienfassung*, this scene is significantly subdued: "Wie wir nun so in den Hof hinunter kamen […], war etwas so Edles und Beruhigendes in dem Schauspiele, daß ich mich innerlichst recht davon erquickt fühlte" (427-8). The revolutionary potential latent in the *Urfassung* is calmed and sublimated. The Major's people as a group no longer stand out as a possible force.

Instead, Stifter shifts the emphasis to Stephan's role as revolutionary leader. This is again evident in the changes to the *Urfassung*. In the earlier version , the Major sees his workers within a defensive framework: "von allen denen die bei mir sind, ist kein einziger, der nicht eher seinen letzten Tropfen Blut verspritzte, ehe er zuließe, daß mir nur ein Haar gekrümmt werde" (*UF* 229). In this context, the Major is the passive object to be protected by others. By contrast, in the *Studienfassung*, we find the Major as an active subject, a fighter, and a revolutionary, who can depend on the loyalty of his people to serve in his revolutionary army: "Diese würde ich sogar zum Blutvergießen führen

können, sobald ich mich nur an ihre Spitze stellte" (438). Both texts emphasize the loyalty of his workers, who would take up arms on his behalf. However, the violent readiness in the *Studienfassung* suggests that the Hungarian people are ready for revolution and now only need a leader.

Stephan as the revolutionary element in *Brigitta* is contained through the questionable loyalty of his people as well as through the parallel to the historical Stephan and the second Széchenyi parallel: Brigitta. The loyalty of Stephan's people is called into question during the wolf attack on Gustav. Stephan gathers his people together and orders them to eliminate any wolves they find. However, instead of depending on their loyalty to rise up and fight at his request in order to defend him and his family, he offers payment for each dead wolf: "Ich gebe für jeden todten Wolf das doppelte Schußgeld" (469). That his people are driven by economics to remove this deadly threat suggests that the loyalty, of which Stephan previously so boldly spoke, is perhaps equally – and solely – economic in nature. For Stephan the revolutionary this means that his fighters will only go so far as his financial means can pay for their support.

The two parallels to the historical Stephan Széchenyi further contain the revolutionary potential in Stephan. The first parallel is more obvious: Stephan Murai and Stephan Széchenyi share the same name; both are Hungarian nobles who lived in Vienna before moving to Hungary; and both founded agricultural foundations and implemented agricultural reforms. In addition, both men learned Magyar as adults and strove to increase the use of Magyar among the Hungarians.[266] The two Stephans also each had military careers (Széchenyi never became a major). However, the two also differ considerably. As we have seen, Széchenyi implemented reforms throughout Hungary,

[266] Széchenyi "befürwortete alles, was der Sache der ungarischen Sprache förderlich erschien" (Silagi 35).

which were not limited to the agricultural realm. In addition, Széchenyi also was in favor of abolishing the feudal structure in Hungary (Ignotus 52) – something Stephan Murai clearly has no intention of doing, as is evident by his repeated reference to his people as children who need a father figure to guide them (437-8). Most importantly, Széchenyi believed in reform before revolution. He never built a secret army. In fact, he eventually lost popularity among his peers – and even with his biggest supporter, Lajos Kossuth – because he insisted on a dialogue with the Court at Vienna, instead of an open fight. Thus, by connecting Stifter's Stephan to the politically less risky historical Stephan, Stephan Murai as a revolutionary agent is contained within a more peaceful context.

Stephan is also contained through Brigitta, who is, upon closer reading, the implicit parallel to Széchenyi. As established earlier, Brigitta is the one who establishes the agricultural federation and implements the wide-reaching reforms. There are no revolutionary moments connected to Brigitta. Instead, we see a man who takes Brigitta's reforms and makes them his own. In this way, Stephan Murai can be seen, at least in some ways, to more closely parallel Széchenyi's later political rival, Kossuth. Through the reconciliation of the couple at the end of the text, Stifter unites the two great Hungarian leaders of the early 19th century, Széchenyi and Kossuth, who by the first years of the 1840s were intense rivals. Moreover, Stephan moves to Marosheli, Brigitta's estate, thereby voluntarily subjugating the revolutionary to the reform.

Brigitta's calming influence on Stephan can also be seen through the flower imagery mentioned in the previous section on Brigitta as a hybrid woman/flower. At the end of the text, Stephan, too, becomes a flower through forgiveness and love: "Eine Freude […] war an ihnen […]; denn die reinigendste, die allerschönste Blume der Liebe,

aber nur der höchsten Liebe, ist das Verzeihen, darum wird es auch immer an Gott gefunden und an Müttern" (473). The mother in this context is obviously Brigitta. A later comment equating Stephan with a "Gottheit" (475)[267] then suggests that the "Gott" who forgives is Stephan. The flower imagery connects Stephan and Brigitta again when the narrator nostalgically remembers his last winter with the couple: "Ich habe jenes Winters zwei Herzen kennen gelernt, die sich nun erst recht zu einer vollen, wenn auch verspäteten Blume des Glückes aufschlossen" (475).

It is the flower imagery at the end of the text that points toward how the containment of the revolutionary in Stephan is ultimately undermined by the text itself. Although Stephan appears to be dissolved into Brigitta – they will live on her estate – the final picture is not complete with just these "zwei Herzen." Indeed, the estranged couple reunites over their son's sickbed. A threat to his life draws them together. If we take the political reading further, then Gustav represents not only the future but also the enormous potential in uniting what is great in both Stephan (the revolutionary) and Brigitta (measured reform). The flower imagery supports this reading. From the start of the text, Gustav, as Brigitta's child, has demonstrated the same hybridity as his mother. The narrator states that Gustav is "ein lieblich schlanker Jüngling, eine Blume von Gesundheit" (464). In addition, the previously quoted imagery of the flower bursting through the desert ground can as easily refer to Gustav as his mother, Brigitta: "Oft wird die Schönheit nicht gesehen, weil sie in der Wüste ist […]. Aus welchem Boden aber diese Blume bricht, ist in tausend Fällen tausendmal anders" (445-6). Finally, Gustav as flower literally blooms when he learns that Stephan is his father. The narrator gives us a

[267] "Am freudigsten war schier Gustav, der immer so an dem Major gehangen war, der ihn immer leidenschaftlich und einseitig den herrlichsten Mann dieser Erde nannte, und der ihn nun als Vater verehren durfte, ihn, an dem sein Auge, wie an einer Gottheit hing" (475).

look into his room "wo Gustav, der das Ganze dunkel ahnte, wie eine glühende, blühende Rose lag, und ihnen athemlos entgegen harrte" (473). Already marked as a child of reform by Brigitta, Gustav as the future of Hungary breathlessly leans toward both the revolutionary and reform.[268] An earlier remark by the narrator already introduces Gustav as a marker of the future: "in seinen schönen Augen lag Begeisterung für die Zukunft und unendliche Güte für die Gegenwart" (464-5). By contrast, the entombed image of the stone lilies on Gabriele's grave effects a subtle critique of the blooming potential of the future.

While Stifter's *Brigitta* certainly demonstrates the most emancipatory potential for women among the texts analyzed in this study – particularly exhibiting that the family unit does not suffer from a woman in the public sphere – the text does not provide a utopian vision of an emancipated woman. In many ways, patriarchy is reinscribed into the text. Stephan decides where the family will live. Gustav, the male child, represents the future.[269] We learn nothing of the narrator's wife, but only how this experience has instructed his life in the public sphere. In addition, the patriarchal structures contained in the feudal system are never called into question.

In my reading thus far, the emancipation of Hungary stands out, but does not seem to stand in relation to women's emancipation. Whereas the inability to retain political stasis in the previous chapters is directly correlated with the failure to halt women's emancipation, by equating Brigitta with the less politically ambitious element

[268] In this way, the Brigitta-Stephan-Gustav triad ultimately does not stand too far from Széchenyi himself, who was not against revolution *per se*, but instead did not want to fight a battle he knew he could not win from the outset. Instead, he wanted to see the Hungarians built up and brought into the modern age in order for them to eventually be formidable opponents against the Court at Vienna (Silagi 37).

[269] Gustav also shares the androgynous features of his mother. In fact, Gustav's portrayal represents the androgynous youth so highly valued by Winckelmann.

of reform instead of revolution, it would appear that Stifter's novella is the most politically conservative of the four texts. However, such a reading ignores the feminist impulses enacted in the text. Not only does *Brigitta* stage a feminist aesthetic theory *ex negativo*, but it also presents a woman already emancipated. Unlike the other female androgynous title figures in this study, who must signal a revolutionary moment in the process of emancipation, Brigitta has been independent all along. Instead of accepting her husband's marital sidestep, she demands a divorce. She casts aside his name to reclaim her maiden name. And, most importantly, she enters the public sphere and becomes an independent landowner, who not only completely transforms her barren estate, but also forms an agricultural federation to disseminate her effective reforms to others. While not unlike her literary predecessor Theresa in agricultural and economical success from *Wilhem Meisters Lehrjahre*, Brigitta has stepped out of the role of simple "helpmate" and stars in her own show.

Finally, the text demonstrates that the success of the emancipated woman comes at a price: The libidinal element in woman, as represented by the carefree Gabriele, is stamped out and has no place in this future. In addition, with the focus on Brigitta as mother, 19th-century notions of femininity and gender roles are reinscribed. It is clear that woman never entirely breaks free of the private sphere. Instead, in the border figure of Brigitta, we have an early example of the working mother: a woman who finds fulfillment by combining the public and private spheres.

Conclusion

I have shown that the representation of androgynous women recognizes the inherent injustice in the treatment of women of the *Sattelzeit*. These successful, independent women demonstrate that 'masculine' characteristics are not necessarily 'male,' just as 'feminine' characteristics are not 'female.' The attempts to contain these women failed, just as, ultimately, real women proved to be uncontainable. However, a final question remains: Do these very representations function as the ultimate containment strategy? Ernst Bornemann explains the power of the image of woman in upholding the patriarchal structure:

> Nirgends tritt die Widerspruchlichkeit des Patriarchats deutlicher in Erscheinung als in diesen Gestalten, die aus dem Mutterrecht übernommen worden sind und dem Vaterrecht als Rechtfertigung für die Unterdrückung der Frau dienen; wenn man die Frau als Symbol verehrt, entledigt man sich der Pflicht, ihr auch als lebendem Wesen Ehre zu erweisen; wenn man sie als Gerechtigkeit, als Freiheit, als Weisheit symbolisiert, braucht man ihr in der Realität keine Freiheit, keine Gerechtigkeit zu geben und kann ihre Weisheit getrost mit Füßen treten. (367)

Thus, by representing the independent, androgynous woman in literature, these authors could give their female protagonists the freedom and equality they were not willing to grant their wives, sisters, friends, and daughters.

Ultimately, the real women of the 19th century did not wait for education, recognition, and freedom to be granted to them. Instead, an increasing number of women traded their linen and embroidery needles for paper and pen, thereby challenging societal expectations for proper feminine behavior. Studies such as Silvia Bovenschen's *Imaginierte Weiblichkeit*, Elisabeth Krimmer's *In the Company of Men*, Barbara Becker-Cantarino's *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit*, and Todd Kontje's *Women, the Novel, and*

the German Nation, and Katharine Goodman's *Amazons and Apprentices* (to name a few), call attention to these real women, who struggled against prejudice and social boundaries to enter the public sphere with their literary productions. Many of these works feature female androgynous title figures who stand at the intersection of multiple borders, challenging the injustice of gender inequality and invoking the necessity of freedom for all, albeit more subtly than in the texts found here.[270] Indeed, these transgressive border figures equally practice a politics of ambiguity.

[270] For example, Sophie von la Roche's *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, Giesela von Arnim's *Das Leben der Hochgräfin Gritta von Rattenbeiunszuhaus*, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's poetry.

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