POWER PLAY: BEYOND THE EROTICS OF MASOCHISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

Elizabeth Anne Schreiber-Byers

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Approved by:

Jonathan Hess

Frauke Berndt

E. Jane Burns

Eric Downing

Richard Langston

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Abstract

ELIZABETH ANNE SCHREIBER-BYERS: Power Play: Beyond the Erotics of Masochism in Nineteenth-Century German Literature and Philosophy
(Under the direction of Jonathan Hess)

Power Play: Beyond the Erotics of Masochism in Nineteenth-Century German Literature and Philosophy investigates the genealogy of masochism *avant la lettre*. Scholarship on masochism has identified it as symptomatic of a late-century crisis of masculinity, synonymous with the erotic and semi-autobiographical writings of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, the Austrian writer for whom masochism is named. Using a Foucauldian approach to analyzing matrices of power, this project exposes the crucial prehistory of masochism in nineteenth-century German literature and thought, exploring how canonical works of German literature offer alternate genealogies located in discourses on subjectivity, pedagogy, aesthetics, and religion. Calling into question the gender discourses surrounding women in the masochistic dynamic, I compare the submission of Kleist's titular character in *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* with the female dominant in Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*, showing how both characters subvert social constructions of their identities counter the masculine discourse. The power of self-cultivation found in the German ideology of *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* genre are explored vis-à-vis the mode of reading and acculturation employed in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* via counter-readings of Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer*. Within discourses on the aesthetic, particularly the trope of the suffering artist and the inspiration he derives from suffering, I

compare the German artist in *Venus im Pelz* with artists in Heinrich Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, and Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*, to consider the connection between masochistic suffering and the transcendence of the suprasensual in the sublime. Finally, I engage with two religious discourses in Sacher-Masoch's text. First, the hagiography, providing inspiration through descriptions of suffering and transcendence, is critiqued through secular texts like Büchner's *Lenz.* Second, I look at the confession, identified by Foucault as critical to the nineteenth-century production of knowledge, and how it is critiqued and subverted through anonymous pornographic texts, sepecifically *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse*, *Schwester Monika*, and *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin*, which appropriate and oppose the confessional form. At stake is an analysis of power that directs our attention away from a purely erotic understanding of masochism to something that simultaneously participates in and critiques these discourses of power.

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Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin von ihr selbst geschrieben 252

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List of Abbreviations

ÄE	Schiller, Friedrich. *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1965.
DgH	Keller, Gottfried. *Der grüne Heinrich*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1983.
Giftmischerin	Anonymous. *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin, von ihr selbst geschrieben*. Edited by Diana Spokiene and Raleigh Whitinger. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.
Herzensergiessungen	Wackenroder, Wilhelm Heinrich. "Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders." In *Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder: Werke und Briefe*, 141–250. Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1984.
HvO	Novalis. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987.
KvH	Kleist, Heinrich von. "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn." In *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe: zweibändige Ausgabe in einem Band*. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001.
Lenz	Büchner, Georg. "Lenz." In *Georg Büchner: Werke Und Briefe*, 13: 85–111. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979.
Lina	Anonmymous. *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust*. Padua: Pietro Tarone, 1790. http://www.zeno.org/nid/20004440579
Monika	Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Schwester Monika*. Ungekürzte Originalausgabe. München: W. Heyne, 1982.
Nachsommer	Stifter, Adalbert. "Der Nachsommer." In *Adalbert Stifter: gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden*. Vol. 4. Wiesbaden: Bertelsmann, 1959.
Venus	Sacher-Masoch, Leopold von, and Gilles Deleuze. *Venus im Pelz: mit einer Studie über den Masochismus von Gilles Deleuze*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980.
WM	Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Vol. 5. Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens, Münchner Ausgabe. München: C. Hanser, 1985.

Introduction

> On this point, the [sadomasochistic] game is very interesting because it is a strategic relation, but it is always fluid. […] This strategic game as a source of bodily pleasure is very interesting. But I wouldn't say that it is a reproduction, inside the erotic relationship, of the structures of power. It is an acting-out of power structures by a strategic game that is able to give sexual pleasure or bodily pleasure.[1]

A fur-clad woman demanding obedience of a man she calls her slave; a man begging to be beaten, claiming to gain pleasure from the pain; a submissive woman who lives to serve the dominant man in her life. These are but a few stereotypical scenes associated with erotic masochism. Named for Austrian author Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, masochism is almost exclusively associated with flagellation and sexuality in contemporary discourse, and his 1870 novella *Venus im Pelz* has long been considered the keystone to our understanding of masochistic relationships, where dominant women subject submissive men to physical and emotional torture at their request. Typically it is believed that masochists are incapable of experiencing pleasure without pain or humiliation. The masochist is somehow psychically damaged, reinforcing negative associations with the term. Social constructions of non-erotic masochism have traditionally referred to it in exclusively negative terms (individuals voluntarily taking on difficult assignments are called "gluttons for punishment" or "masochists"), or as all-encompassing suggesting that contemporary society were somehow

[1]Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 1998), vol. 1, 169. From an interview conducted in 1982 and printed in *The Advocate* 400 (August 7, 1984), 26-30 and 58.

innately masochistic.[2] These characterizations of masochism are almost universally negative and perverse, and have become so engrained in our cultural vocabulary that we no longer interrogate their origin, commonalities with other sexual or non-sexual identities, or potentially positive aspects of the term or the phenomenon.

There is growing suspicion among scholars concerning the validity of understanding masochism as a purely erotic phenomenon, or one solely associated with pain, or with works that mimic Sacher-Masoch's. In addition, there is a desire to shift the focus of the understanding of masochism from a phenomenon grounded in the overtly sexual to one focused on power and agency. This shift, in part, has been led by psychological, sociological, and anthropological studies of sadomasochism and its subcultures through interviews with practitioners of masochism who assert that their participation in sadomasochism, either for pleasure or as a lifestyle, is done as a means of playing with the dynamics of social power and building community as much as it is about the pleasure they experience.[3] These practitioners suggest that masochism, while certainly sexual, is primarily concerned with laying bare institutions of power in a way that opens the door to critique and criticism of the status quo. The reevaluation of masochism upon which this project is based takes these recent studies as

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[2]For analyses of sadomasochism that suggest it is a fact of life and a part of the "modern condition," see: John Munder Ross, *The Sadomasochism of Everyday Life: Why We Hurt Ourselves - and Others - and How to Stop* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); Lynn S. Chancer, *Sadomasochism in Everyday Life: The Dynamics of Power and Powerlessness* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

[3]Anthropologist Staci Newmahr has recently undertaken significant field work on SM communities which disassociate sadomasochistic (SM) communities from sexual SM practices. Staci Newmahr, "Rethinking Kink: Sadomasochism as Serious Leisure," *Qualitative Sociology* 33, no. 3 (June 2010): 313–331; Staci Newmahr, "Becoming a Sadomasochist," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37, no. 5 (October 1, 2008): 619 –643. In the field of psychology debates surrounding sadomasochism's identification as a paraphilia and its inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) are ongoing. Recent research examining the issues of power at play in sadomasochism include: Angel M. Butts, "'Signed, Sealed, Delivered ... I'm Yours': Calibrating Body Ownership Through the Consensual Mastery/slavery Dynamic," *Sexuality & Culture* 11, no. 2 (Spring2007 2007): 62–76; Margot D. Weiss, "Working at Play: BDSM Sexuality in the San Francisco Bay Area," *Anthropologica* 48, no. 2 (2006): 229–245; Darren Langdridge and Trevor Butt, "The Erotic Construction of Power Exchange," *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 18, no. 1 (March 2005): 65–73.

its starting point for reconsidering both existing theories of masochism and literature which may be considered masochistic in a non-erotic way *avant la lettre*.

While accepting that masochism does manifest itself as an erotic phenomenon, this project asserts that sexualized masochism is not the only form to be found. Moreover, this project also interrogates whether erotic masochism is primarily about the pain/pleasure dichotomy that we have so long associated it with. Considering Michel Foucault's quotation from the epigram, we can see that even in writing about erotic sadomasochism, he suggests that sadomasochism engages in a sort of play that exposes and performs structures of power.[4] If we extend this to areas beyond the erotic, we can identify masochistic literature as a type of literature that, whether erotic or not, exposes and highlights these supposedly stable power relations and attempts to destabilize them. In writing about non-erotic masochism in nineteenth-century literature, therefore, this project underscores the historical interplay between power and subjectivity, exploring how even canonical literature throughout the nineteenth century might resemble masochism in various constellations of power. By constellations of power I mean to suggest that power is not merely a binary relationship, but that at any time power may intersect with subjects and other discourses of power in various ways and degrees. These constellations allow for a more complicated consideration of power dynamics than we might first conceive of when looking at the masochistic. This goes beyond dyad of dominant and the submissive, to include the potential for institutional power, social power, and the power of various discourses and how they impact each other. In some ways, this is the start of a much longer project and a much larger discussion about the critical potential of masochism, both erotic and not, and a reevaluation of the erotic. Rather than seeing

[4]See quotation in the epigram.

masochism as a simple dichotomy between master and slave, or mistress and slave, my project attempts to blur these distinctions and complicate the conversation in ways that allow for a more productive exploration of the intersections of subjectivity and power.

To establish alternate genealogies for masochism is not to look for other texts that involve the tropes of Sacher-Masoch's dominant woman or flagellation fantasies, either prior or subsequent to Sacher-Masoch's texts, but rather to call the existing theories and history of masochism into question so that the definition of masochism may be broadened to include other texts that deal with or confront the same questions of power and subjectivity we see in the erotic and negative forms of masochism. I argue that masochism, as it emerges in the late nineteenth century, is part of a much longer discourse on subjectivity and submission – and the means by which submission can be differently valued if one has the freedom and capability to create other values for it. While I take Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* as my starting point, or perhaps better said, as the ending point for my research, I do so as a means of drawing out various themes and explications of power in his work – social, pedagogical, aesthetic, and religious – so that we can see that there is more at stake in his novella than "deviant" sexuality.

Some existing scholarship on masochism, particularly masochism in the nineteenth century, focuses on discourses beyond the erotic. John Noyes, for example, looks at the political aspects of Sacher Masoch's works beyond *Venus im Pelz*.[5] Noyes explains that we cannot separate the man from his works and suggests a reading very closely tied to Sacher-Masoch's lived reality. Though Noyes argues that some of Sacher-Masoch's writings are also related to this same crisis of masculinity in the fin-de-siècle period, he focuses more on the political aspects of the works than the erotic. Nick Mansfield, taking Sacher-Masoch's text

[5]John K. Noyes, *The Mastery of Submission: Inventions of Masochism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

as his foundation, similarly considers how the male masochist serves as a metaphor for modern and postmodern power, and ultimately equates all contemporary masculine power with masochism.[6] Ulrich Bach's article on colonialism in Sacher-Masoch's works also considers some of Sacher-Masoch's less erotic texts and reads into them the same masochistic tropes of submission and freedom present in his erotic texts, thereby exploring masochism from a non-erotic and wholly non-psychoanalytic perspective.[7] Analyses like these are undertaking important work in reconceptualizing our interpretations of Sacher-Masoch, and other literature that could be seen as masochistic and mining it for its commentaries on power and politics.

Sacher-Masoch's metatextual references to other authors and genres, aesthetic and philosophical discourses, and historical figures enable us to place his work in dialog with works prior to his own, and thereby show how his work is part of a genealogy of masochism that is not merely erotic in nature.[8] Though the number of discourses in which Sacher-Masoch's text participates is vast, I have selected four areas on which to focus: the social or political, as shown in constructions of subject identity and gender; the pedagogical, in the form of German notions of *Bildung* and the genre of the *Bildungsroman*; the artistic or aesthetic, as represented by the social construction of the tortured artist; and the religious, in the form of the veneration of pain and self-abnegation in genres of hagiography and confession. By showing how Sacher-Masoch's work is in dialog with these various discourses we can begin to establish alternative genealogies for masochistic literature.

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[6]Nick Mansfield, *Masochism: The Art of Power* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997).

[7]Ulrich Bach, "Sacher-Masoch's Utopian Peripheries," *The German Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (April 2007): 201–219.

[8]Catriona MacLeod offers an excellent analysis of the metatextual elements in Sacher-Masoch's text with specific emphasis on his references to works of art. Catriona MacLeod, "Still Alive: Tableau Vivant and Narrative Suspension in Sacher-Masoch's Venus Im Pelz," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 80, no. 4 (2006): 640–665.

Theories of Masochism: Literary and Lived

While my work does not address the sexual as such, it acknowledges the work that has been done to define masochism subsequent to Sacher-Masoch's writing and that which points to the critical, political, aesthetic, religious and other forms of pain and pleasure that are at the core of erotic masochism. I am not attempting to reject the work that these scholars have done in identifying the influence of Sacher-Masoch on the literary field, or the influence of Richard von Krafft-Ebing in defining the term masochism in 1890.[9] Theories of masochism, or the hybrid concept sadomasochism, abound, but most tend to fall within a few distinct categories. In their work on theories of sadomasochism, psychologists Patricia Cross and Kim Matheson suggest that there are three commonly accepted perspectives to sadomasochistic desire: pathologizations of masochism, descriptions of lived experience, and social constructions. Early depictions of masochism, as we find with Krafft-Ebing, "regard [sadomasochism] as evidence of individual pathology – that is, disease, maladjustment, or congenital defects." [10] These are typically found in medical and psychoanalytic depictions of masochism. Krafft-Ebing and Sigmund Freud, among others, pathologized masochistic texts and transformed the masochist into a sexual deviant to be analyzed and cured. Though their work is based in the lived experience of the masochist, they begin with a medicalization of literary masochism as their exemplars. When looking at lived experience, participants of sadomasochism define it as "highly ritualized, mutually enjoyable role-play, in which pain is emblematic of power or powerlessness, rather than being sought for its own sake."[11] A

[9]Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis mit besonderer Berücksicktigung der conträren Sexualempfindung: eine klinisch-forensische Studie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1894).

[10]Patricia A. Cross and Kim Matheson, "Understanding Sadomasochism – An Empirical Examination of Four Perspectives," *Journal of Homosexuality* 50, no. 2 (2006): 134.

[11]Ibid.

consideration of masochism as referencing "cultural and social context" may serve as a bridge between the purely negative view of medical discourse and the almost universally positive consideration of those who live the lifestyle.[12] To this end, Martin Weinberg and Paul Gebhard approach masochism from a psychoanalytic perspective, but their work is less about identifying sexual deviance and more focused on the cultural context which produces masochistic desire.[13] The writings of Pat Califia[14] and studies by psychologists Peter Dancer, Peggy Kleinplatz, and Charles Moser[15] have also attempt to reconsider the conclusions of early psychoanalysts and define the lived experience of masochism as something non-deviant and associated with the performative aspects of power in society.[16] Moreover, the works of authors like Theodor Reik, Gilles Deleuze, and Jessica Benjamin have connected psychology, lived experience, and literature in order to explain larger cultural phenomenon. Deleuze separates masochism from sadism, suggesting that the two phenomena come from dramatically different perspectives. He identifies masochism as embodying an aesthetic of delay, anticipation and tableau, which likewise creates a system of interaction, wherein various roles are taken on which alter the Freudian Oedipal.[17] Jessica Benjamin shifts the focus of desire from Freud's Oedipal stage to a preoedipal one and with this shift she posits a possibility

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Thomas S. Weinberg, ed. *S & M: Studies in Dominance & Submission* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Book, 1995); Paul Gebhard, "Sadomasochism," in *S & M: Studies in Dominance & Submission*, ed. Thomas S. Weinberg (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Book, 1995).

[14]Pat Califia, "A Secret Side of Lesbian Sexuality," in *S & M: Studies in Dominance & Submission*, ed. Thomas S. Weinberg (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Book, 1995).

[15]Peter L. Dancer, Peggy J. Kleinplatz, and Charles Moser, "24/7 SM - Slavery," *Journal of Homosexuality* 50, no. 2 (2006): 81–101.

[16]Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[17]Gilles Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty," in *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 9–138.

of moving masochism out of the erotic.[18] Her analysis and others which build on it are intriguing, as they offer a means of defining masochism not through Freud's notion of drives, but rather through his identification of the narcissistic, which would ultimately focus on the creation of the subject within the social sphere. It is, however, worth considering the field and development of these theories of masochism before continuing.

Masochism as Pathology

Austrian psychoanalyst Richard von Krafft-Ebing first coined the masochism term in the 1890 edition of his work *Psycopathia Sexualis*. Though Krafft-Ebing does mention pain. and pleasure by way of painful experiences, in his definition of masochism, he suggests that the pleasure through pain is incidental *(Nebensache)* and the primary pleasure gained in masochism emerges from submission: "Für den Masochisten ist die Unterwerfung unter das Weib die Hauptsache, die Misshandlung nur ein Ausdrucksmittel für dieses Verhältniss und zwar eines der stärksten. Die Handlung hat für ihn symbolischen Werth und ist Mittel zum Zweck seelischer Befriedigung im Sinne seiner besonderen Gelüste."[19] Krafft-Ebing genders the phenomenon and while suggesting the desire for submission is the true goal of masochism, he does little to explain why this is the case, instead expounding on the importance of flagellation for the masochist, even though this is only one of the ways this desire expresses itself. His conflation of sexuality and submission moves quickly and though he provides

[18]Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988). In addition, John Kucich has taken up this shift to the preoedipal to focus on subject development rather than sexual development in masochism and literature. John Kucich, "Melancholy Magic: Masochism, Stevenson, Anti-Imperialism," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 56, no. 3 (December 2001): 364–400; John Kucich, "Olive Schreiner, Masochism, and Omnipotence: Strategies of a Preoedipal Politics," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 36, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 79–109.

[19]Krafft-Ebing, 102. "For the masochist is submission to a woman the most important thing, the abuse is just a means of expressing this relationship and namely one of the strongest. The action has for him symbolic worth and is a means to the end of psychological freedom related to his particular desires."

numerous “real world” examples of masochists, he primarily bases his description of masochism on Sacher-Masoch’s work *Venus im Pelz*. In doing so, Krafft-Ebing is first of a long line of clinical theoreticians, including Sigmund Freud, who take literature as wish fulfillment or an idealized fantasy of the author. It is particularly difficult to separate the two in Sacher-Masoch’s work, given his self-professed enjoyment of serving as the slave to a woman dressed in furs. Yet uncritical association of his personal desires and his literary works leads to a blind spot with regard to the importance of the idea of submission as well as the notion of power that Krafft-Ebing sees as central to the phenomenon. Certainly Sacher-Masoch’s predilections are important, but only insofar as they explain why he is able to write so convincingly about these sexual encounters, not because these scenes are meant to be read purely erotically. Krafft-Ebing’s notions of submission and lack of masculine power have been seen as symptomatic of a crisis of masculinity. As Michel Foucault suggests, however, the medicalized discourse which Krafft-Ebing initiates has the potential to be generative, thereby placing the foundation of the crisis of masculinity, and its foundation in masochism, not on Sacher-Masoch’s text, but instead on Krafft-Ebing’s naming of the term. The more masochism it is talked about and defined in medical discourse at the end of the century, the more we see a focus on masochism in literary works and other writings. If, however, we begin to call into question the idea that masochism is to be found in a crisis of masculinity rooted in nineteenth-century fears of women’s power with the notions of erotic pain and pleasure as the foundations of the phenomenon, then we are left with issues of power and submission, not erotic masochism, and must therefore view existing theoretical perspectives on masochism and its expression in literature through this lens. A refocusing of masochism on notions of power allows for a reconsideration of the pathologization of masochism.

Subsequent to Krafft-Ebing, Freudian psychoanalytic theories of masochism have predominated in our understanding of the field. In his 1924 essay "Das ökonomische Problem des Masochismus" he begins to differentiate between three different types of masochism: erogenous, female, and moral.[20] Erogenous masochism is specifically detailed as a sexual perversion which associates pleasure with pain, female masochism is the expression of "feminine" characteristics of submissiveness in both sexes, and moral masochism is associated with unconscious feelings of guilt. Though each of these types of masochism maintains its own specific features, they are all tied to issues of sexual repression. As he explains in his essay "Ein Kind wird geschlagen," all masochism is rooted in the Oedipal complex and closely tied to sadism. Recent reconsierations of Freudian theories of masochism have been undertaken bu literary scholars. John Kucich suggests that instead of seeing masochism as closely connected with the Oedipal and sexual, that perhaps other constellations of masochism exist that are preoedipal in nature. In his analysis on Olive Schreiner's works, Kucich explores several contemporary analyses of masochism which center on preoedipal narcissism and relation theory as the foundation of masochism. While not suggesting that we discard Freud's oedipal explanations for masochism, Kucich broadens the perspectives on masochism and makes a convincing argument for a type of masochism which is neither sexual nor oedipal, but which may interact with other forms of masochism.[21] Similarly, Jessica Benjamin carries out a reading of *The Story of O* based on D.W. Winnicot's preoedipal object-relation theory. In her analysis she opens the realm of possibility with regard to masochism in women, and allows for

[20]Sigmund Freud, "Das ökonomische Problem des Masochismus," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 10, no. 2 (1924): 121–33.

[21]John Kucich, "Olive Schreiner, Masochism, and Omnipotence: Strategies of a Preoedipal Politics," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 36, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 79–109.

a reading of this particular text as masochistic rather than sadistic.[22] Both scholars, have attempted to utilize the theories of pathologized masochism as a means of breaking free from its discursive production. There are, however two bodies of literature that have begun to develop different and non-pathologized understandings of masochism. Both the literary and lived descriptions provide important contributions to our understanding of masochism as something beyond the erotic, to a literary and subcultural aesthetic which is not founded specifically in psychoanalytic, oedipal, erotic or gendered notions of masochism.

Literature, Culture, and Masochism

While accepting Freud's theories of sexual masochism, Theodore Reik in his 1941 work *Masochism in Modern Man (Aus Leiden Freuden)* posits a variation of Freud's moral masochism that he calls social masochism. In social masochism, however, the focus is not just on unconscious feelings of guilt but also on the pleasure gained through failure. He identifies four aspects of this type of masochism, three of which are essential and become useful for future discussions of masochism both erotic and non-erotic. The first feature is "phantasy" which focuses on the use of the imagination in the masochist. This is where the desires, sexual or not, of the masochist are developed. Suspense is the next feature, which implies that the masochist is always in a state of striving toward the desires produced in phantasy, but never able to achieve them. A demonstrative factor is the third feature, involving a sort of performance of one's suspense and suffering. This "audience" does not actively participate, but they are drawn into the desires of the masochist and the masochist requires them to observe his suffering in order to gain pleasure from it. The final trait is not indicative of all

[22]Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

manifestations of social masochism, and it involves an active participant in the suffering of others. The provocative factor is a method of provoking an "other" into causing one pain, so that they can experience pleasure from it. Critical to understanding Reik's theory of masochism and how it has shaped many contemporary theories of masochism without their ever acknowledging it, is that the importance of phantasy and that it is the masochist who controls the scene and directs how it will play out.

When we relate this back to the literary studies on masochism, we can see that there are few parallels in the field of literary studies when it comes to seeing the critical potential of masochism. Gilles Deleuze, and his 1968 essay "Coldness and Cruelty," have been instrumental in offering an interpretation of *Venus im Pelz* that separates masochism from sadism, rather than treating them as two sides of the same "disorder." Deleuze also restructures the Oedipal triangle by removing the father and instead focusing on three distinct mother figures who can be observed in the novel. His identification of the aesthetics of tableau and humor – or opportunity for parody – in Sacher-Masoch's text enable us to see that the erotics of masochism are not necessarily the primary goal of the masochistic endeavor. Masochism, in his estimation, is an expression of the male submissive's fantasy of which he is in complete control.[23] The power of the imagination and the anticipation of pain, rather than actual pain, are represented in the concept of the tableau and the scene-like nature of masochism, which all play a critical role in not only Deleuze's work on masochism, but also Kaja Silverman's and Barbara Mennel's analyses of masochism in film.[24] Albrecht Koschorke builds on Deleuze's argument when he contends: "While torments are indeed meted out to the willing male

[23]Deleuze, 43.

[24]Ibid., 69-80.

protagonist, his abandonment strictly follows rules he himself has devised. Playing the part of victim on a perverse stage, behind the set he is in fact the director."[25] When viewing masochism in this way, it becomes less socially subversive for a man to request domination by a woman and for the woman to dominate him. The male masochist maintains control of his fantasy and instructs his mistress as to how he should be dominated and what the boundaries and parameters of his domination should be; in this sense, the female – though nominally in control – still obeys the male.

Lived Experience

Though lived experience seems to venture far from the literary, it is important to look at descriptions of practitioners of sadomasochism as a companion piece to the literary. It may seem anachronistic to try to apply modern experiences of masochism to our understanding of earlier masochistic literature, but they provide an alternate perspective (or lens) through which to view the masochistic. In fact associating the literary with the lived is already part of our existing understanding of masochism given the early focus on Sacher-Masoch's own life. Most observers have assumed that the literary representations of pleasure gained from masochistic pain and the actual acts as they are experienced are one and the same. Contemporary discussions of sadomasochistic subcultures, like those of anthropologist Staci Newmahr, help us to identify what might be considered the most salient features of the phenomenon for those who are most closely connected with it.[26] Newmahr's research suggests that sexual

[25]Golb and Koschorke, 560.

[26]Staci Newmahr, "Rethinking Kink: Sadomasochism as Serious Leisure," *Qualitative Sociology* 33, no. 3 (June 2010): 313–331; Angel M. Butts, "'Signed, Sealed, Delivered ... I'm Yours': Calibrating Body Ownership Through the Consensual Mastery/slavery Dynamic," *Sexuality & Culture* 11, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 62–76; Patricia A. Cross and Kim Matheson, "Understanding Sadomasochism: An Empirical Examination of Four Perspectives," *Journal of Homosexuality* 50, no. 2 (2006): 133–166; Darren Langdridge and Trevor Butt, "The Erotic Construction of Power Exchange," *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 18, no. 1 (March 2005): 65–73; Pat

sadomasochism has a distinct character from the sadomasochistic subcultural community. Though both, in some ways, are focused on renegotiating the bounds of power, the community creates a subcultural space formed around exposing and explicating power rather than focusing on how that power might be used toward sexual ends. Likewise psychologists Darren Langdridge and Trevor Butt expose different types of power exchange from lifestyle to sexual and the differences in the densities and duration of such negotiations of power.[27] Similarly, Angel Butts has looked at the masochistic contract and how consensual slavery is constructed. These studies, among others, show us that there is a notion of power at play in the sadomasochistic that comes out neither in Freudian psychoanalysis, nor in a traditional understanding of gender or sexuality, but one that is clearly important to those engaged in masochistic relationships as well as contemporary scholars.

Psychoanalyst Richard Weinberg, in his studies of the sadomasochist community, suggests that at its core sadomasochism is "most of all, subcultural social behavior. […] Sadomasochism is a sexual lifestyle, one to which notions of dominance and submission are central."[28] Note that even as Weinberg claims sadomasochism is a sexual lifestyle, sex, sexuality, and gender are not at its core. The sadomasochistic subculture self-consciously focuses on aspects of culture which are typically sublimated and forced into the background. If the heteronormative community is focused on gender and procreation, then the sadomasochistic subculture is focused on exposing power relations. By defining the focus on power as a "defect," psychoanalytic theory is able to keep the issue of power inequality in

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Califia, "A Secret Side of Lesbian Sexuality," in *S & M: Studies in Dominance & Submission*, ed. Thomas S. Weinberg (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Book, 1995).

[27]Darren Langdridge and Trevor Butt, "The Erotic Construction of Power Exchange," *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 18, no. 1 (March 2005): 65–73.

[28]Weinberg, 20.

heteronormative relationships at bay, thereby pathologizing the masochistic one. By accepting that the masochistic is not aberrant, but instead functions as a form of critique, we are able to see that instead of representing a particular gendered crisis, it exposes systems of power.

Crisis of Masculinity

The majority of sexual paraphilias, the pathologizing psychoanalytic term for sexual disorders, are identified as afflicting men. Krafft-Ebing's view of masochism as a purely male phenomenon, seen only in relation to the women who would dominate them, has necessarily gendered and sexualized masochism; as such it has set the stage for connecting masochism with a crisis of masculinity, which has been said to have begun after the French revolution and continuing, in various forms, into the present day. The foundational supposition for this crisis is that masculinity is fragile and under constant attack. As men become more "femininized" or "civilized" they lose their hegemonic position in society. Historians Peter Gay and Lynn Abrams and literary critic Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg all posit a crisis of masculinity in the late nineteenth century that was rooted in the growing anxiety of at least some men toward women's increasing social power. Among other sources of this crisis, they point specifically to the increasing presence of the so called "New Women" in the workforce and the nineteenth-century European women's movements that left the social standing of men precariously positioned.[29] They argue that evidence of this was rendered in the literature and art, citing Bram Dijkstra's work *Idols of Perversity* and his discussion of art depicting women

[29]See Peter Gay, *Education of the Senses* (New York: Oxford University Press,, 1984); Lynn Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman* (London, New York: Longman, 2002); Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *Sublime Surrender: Male Masochism at the Fin-de-siècle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

as vines, vampires, or other typical images of the *femme fatale* in fin-de-siècle art and literature.[30]

Depictions of powerful and frightening women in art and literature need not be explained by a weakened male subject. Though these tropes may have become more popular during the late nineteenth century, through the First World War and into the Weimar period, they are by no means exclusive to this time period. In fact, descriptions of powerful women dominating men go back much further than the nineteenth century.[31] In the early twentieth century, scholars Alfred Kind and Eduard Fuchs documented a lengthy history of dominant women, beginning in the classical period, in their work *Weiberherrschaft* (1913-14, 1930).[32] These representations of powerful and dominant women seem to be a fairly constant trope, and there appears to be little correlation between the images and the specific focus on masochism, except that they are perhaps more sexualized after the invention of the term. Rather than seeing masochism in the late nineteenth century as a manifestation of a crisis of masculinity particularly focused on the gendered domination of a man by a woman, we should rather consider sexualized masochism as a phenomenon that proliferated after its naming as a paraphilia, in keeping with Foucault's productive hypothesis, which posits an increase in

[30]Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[31]For some discussion of the long European pedigree of the "Battle of the Breeches," see John Lynn, "Essential Women, Necessary Wives, and Exemplary Soldiers: The Military Reality and Cultural Representation of Women's Military Participation 1600-1815," in *A Companion to Women's Military History*, ed. Barton Hacker and Margaret Vining (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 93–136; Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

[32]Alfred Kind, *Die Weiberherrschaft in der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Wien: Verlag für Kulturforschung, 1930).

discourse surrounding something once it is named.[33] Likewise the literary representations of this "crisis" may be reconsidered as well.

The crisis of masculinity has been linked specifically to the works of Sacher-Masoch as well as works associated with the like Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* (1882) and decadent literature like Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À Rebours* (1884). In her description of the critical reception of Sacher-Masoch's texts, Stewart-Steinberg suggests that in addition to the diagnostic psychoanalytic readings, there is another type of reading that is rather "celebratory" in nature, crediting Sacher-Masoch with "not only having outlined a new aesthetic practice but also having diagnosed the historical malaise of late-nineteenth century relations of power."[34] This "historical malaise" is nothing other than the crisis of masculinity, which she suggests also relates to a "crisis of liberalism and of the bourgeois subject" emerging at the end of the century, a subject that is gendered male.[35] Though the nineteenth century is often credited with the birth of liberalism, Stewart-Steinberg suggests that by the end of the century, liberalism stands in crisis, much like its masculine subject.

Discourses on liberalism certainly emerge both prior to and in the wake of the French Revolution. The German intellectual response to the French Revolution was mixed, shifting over the course of the revolution, particularly in response to the Reign of Terror (1793-94). Prior to and at the beginning of the Revolution, many German intellectuals lauded the progress and freedoms of the revolution, including Herder, Kant, Campe, and Forester, among others.[36]

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[33]Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

[34]Stewart-Steinberg, 62.

[35]Ibid., 10.

[36]G. P. Gooch, "Germany and the French Revolution," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10, Third Series (1916): 51–76.

One notable dissenter was Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was critical of the revolution, particularly in its imposed unyielding rationality and did not account for the specificities of national spirit.[37] Schiller, too, was put off by the violence of the revolution, and is said to have retreated into aesthetics, as evidenced by his supposedly apolitical text *Äesthetische Briefe* (1793-95).[38] The Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), the Revolutions of 1848, and the founding of the German nation (1870) all contribute to an uncertainty with regard to the place of the subject within the German political sphere. These moments of instability are reflected in German literature throughout the nineteenth century. For example, literature by Heinrich von Kleist, though not erotic, is full of disruptive moments of volatility. Steven Howe argues that Kleist's political aesthetic is represented by his repeated efforts to place "the dynamics of subjectivity and self-hood in a politicized context of social change," as well as his engagement "in complex and often subtle fashion with revolutionary discourses of freedom and tyranny, rebellion and assimilation, agency and conditioning."[39] While we often point to Kleist's "Kant-Krise" as his primary crisis of intellectual "faith," the notion of a crisis has been called into question by contemporary scholars of his works.[40] I would suggest that the issues of power brought up by literature, erotic or not, during the nineteenth century are an attempt to come to terms with this unstable subjectivity and are not unique to either erotic literature or the fin-de-siècle period.

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[37]Ibid., 58-9.

[38]Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1965).

[39]Steven Howe, *Heinrich Von Kleist and Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Violence, Identity, Nation* (Rochester: Camden House, 2012), 41.

[40]See Kristina Fink, *Die sogenannte ‚Kantkrise' Heinrich von Kleists* (Königshausen & Neumann, 2012).

It is important to question to what end these crises of masculinity might have served the political and social purposes of the patriarchal structures of their times. By establishing a crisis, one creates a need to support and reinforce that which is in crisis: namely, masculinity and the patriarchal structure. Even within the past decade, numerous monographs have been published claiming a modern "crisis" of masculinity.[41] One must therefore pose the question that if masculinity has been in constant crisis over the past two thousand or more years, why is it that we live with what sociologist R. W. Connell in his groundbreaking monograph *Masculinities* refers to as hegemonic masculinity, by which he means "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women."[42] By questioning whether masochism is symptomatic of a nineteenth-century crisis of masculinity – or one in any century for that matter – we can see literary and psychoanalytic representations of masochism as male subjects who maintain control whether in positions of dominance or submission. We also see women as representative of passivity and subservience, even as they dominate men. Neither of these positions seems to call into question the gender dynamics at play in society.[43]

Instead of considering a crisis of masculinity, we should instead call into question all claims of crisis throughout the century, and open up the possibility of ambiguity with regard to constellations of power, which allows for a more complex understanding of the field and one

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[41]See Brian Taylor, *Responding to Men in Crisis: Masculinities, Distress and the Postmodern Political Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Anthony Clare, *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000); Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1999).

[42]R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 55.

[43]For a discussion of these dynamics and how they are in keeping with gender norms particularly in this period see: Alison Moore, "Rethinking Gendered Perversion and Degeneration in Visions of Sadism and Masochism, 1886-1930," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 138–157.

which goes beyond gender. If we discard the crisis of masculinity and its association with masochism, then we are left with complex issues of power and submission. We can therefore shift our view of existing theoretical perspectives on masochism and its expression in literature to be queried through this lens. A refocusing of masochism on notions of power has gained significant acceptance in both psychoanalysis and cultural studies over the past two decades as has a reconsideration of the pathologization of masochism. Though we can certainly see the beginnings of this process with the work of Gilles Deleuze and his 1968 essay "Coldness and Cruelty," it is cultural and literary theorists like Jessica Benjamin, John Noyes, Robert Tobin, and John Kucich, among others, who have done the most significant work to reclaim masochism from the field of the erotic. Michel Foucault has proposed a comprehensive analysis of systems of power upon which this project shall draw its theoretical foundation.

Whether philosophical treatises describing the phenomenon, like descriptions of the power of the sublime in Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, or literature that portrays submission as a means of offering critique like Büchner's *Woyzeck*, or Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, the phenomena described need not be specifically tied to relations between genders as though this were the only mode of tension within the social order, but instead may be related to the general social order and human condition in post-Revolutionary Europe. Foucault suggests that in this period, particularly in the German context with the writings of Kant, we begin to see a critical attitude and a critical subject.[44] This subject has from the very beginning been in the position of interrogating systems of power and his place within that system; though gendered male, I would suggest that this does not mean that his role as a male was at risk. Instead, the

[44]Foucault specifically addresses the notion of critique and the modern subject as one who engages in this critique in his essays "What Is Enlightenment?" and "What Is Critique?" Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?," in *The Political*, ed. David Ingram (Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 191–211; Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 1, 3 vols., Essential *Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 303–320.

position of the subject within the social order was laid bare, and called into question. The genealogy of masochism is therefore not a history of male subjugation or male loss of power, but an acknowledgement that power is at the foundation of all relationships, and must be exposed and critiqued. This is not to elide the male and female subjects, as though there is no degree of specificity between their experiences, but to suggest that all subjects whether male or female have the critical potential to expose relationships of power.[45]

Approach

My approach to masochism as a phenomenon primarily concerned with power is indebted to the theories of Michel Foucault. Though the statements Foucault makes about sadomasochism late in his career center on pleasure and the erotics of power, he is still interested in how masochism plays a strategic game with the structures of erotic power.[46] If masochism can be seen in erotic and non-erotic texts alike, then we need not be focused on issues of sexual gratification and pleasure, but instead on power and its exposure. The issues of power specific to masochism that we can identify in the nineteenth century prior to the naming of the term by Krafft-Ebing in the 1880s begin with the creation of what Foucault refers to as the critical subject. By critical subject Foucault refers specifically to the autonomous subject

[45]For discussions of gender and subjectivity in Foucault's work, particularly his usefulness for feminist critique, see: Mariam Fraser, "Feminism, Foucault and Deleuze.," *Theory, Culture & Society* 14, no. 2 (May 1997): 23–37; Biddy Martin, "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault," *New German Critique* no. 27 (Autumn 1982): 3–30; Shane Phelan, "Foucault and Feminism," *American Journal of Political Science* 34, no. 2 (May 1990): 421–440.

[46]Suzanne Gearhart, "Foucault's Response to Freud: Sado-Masochism and the Aestheticization of Power," *Style* 29, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 389–403. Gearhart has constructed an interesting analysis of Foucault's theories of sadomasochism based on his writings on Freud and the three volumes of the *History of Sexuality.* While this analysis is thought provoking and brings up important considerations with regard to the implicit relationship between sadomasochism, power, and subjectivity, I am more interested in Foucualt's explicit discussions of sadomasochism, as they are perhaps more direct representations of his views as to how the phenomenon functions in his system.

that emerges out of the Enlightenment.[47] Though many scholars have remarked on the discontinuities between Foucault's early and later writings, his essays on the Enlightenment and the notion of critique are marked by a relative coherence. In his essay "What Is Enlightenment?" (1984) Foucault identifies the Enlightenment impulse as synonymous with the modern:

> on the one hand, […] the extent to which a type of philosophical interrogation – one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject – is rooted in the Enlightenment. On the other hand, I have been seeking to stress that the thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude […] a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era.[48]

The critical subject's ability to critique centers on the power of the subject in relation to other – much greater – powers, but need not focus entirely on the sexual. In his earlier essay "What Is Critique?" (1976) he defines Enlightenment critique, not as a singular phenomenon, but rather as a "critical attitude" that has permeated philosophical discourse since the period between the fifteenth century and the Reformation. Critique emerges at this point to call into question not only the modes of governance themselves, but also the truth produced by these governing bodies. "Critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on the effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth […] critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination."[49] This insubordination attempts to reveal the fabrication of this dominant truth and understand that such knowledge is produced for a specific reason, namely,

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[47]Though Foucault seems to take for granted that the "critical subject" is ungendered, this project understands that this ungendering of the subject is not possible. Gender is one of the many matricies of power that constructs the individual, and which must likewise be critiqued along with other discursive power structures.

[48]Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," 312.

[49]Foucault, "What Is Critique?," 194.

to maintain the status quo and systems of power – but also which leads to the critical subject in the eighteenth century.

The major source of friction in Foucault's work lies with the conceptualization of resistance in structures of power. Many critics of Foucault's early writings point to the oppressive and inescapable power of his analysis. While Foucault admits throughout his career that there is no "outside" the system of power, he does allow for critique and freedom from within the system. In a 1977 interview Foucault states, with regard to the exercise of power in society, that "power *is* 'always already there,' that one is never 'outside' it, that there are no 'margins' for those who break with the system to gambol in." However, he then suggests that this does not necessarily mean that there is not "an inescapable form of domination or an absolute privilege on the side of the law."[50] This means that, contrary to what many other critics of Foucault have suggested, the networks of power, or apparatus per Foucault's terminology, one is not trapped in this system, and power can be used to oppose the law rather than just in support of it.[51] As part of the hypotheses as to how resistance might function within this system, Foucault states that "one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination, a binary structure with 'dominators' on one side and 'dominated' on the other, but rather a multiform production of regulations of domination which are partially susceptible of integration into overall strategies."[52] Foucault argues that "that there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed

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[50]Michel Foucault, "Powers and Strategies," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 141.

[51]Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 1, 3 vols., *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 167. Foucault is clear in later interviews that the term "trapped" does not adequately describe the situation and prefers to regard it as a "power struggle" whereby both parties have influence over each other.

[52]Foucault, "Powers and Strategies," 141.

right at the point where relations of power are exercised."[53] While many have taken this to mean that resistance is built into the system of power and therefore ineffectual, Foucault suggests that though resistance does not exist outside the system, that it is still capable of effecting change from within. "[R]esistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power."[54] This resistance, or what we have been calling the "critique," that masochism offers is part of the system of power. By exposing the inner workings of the power relationship, literary masochism offers one mode of critique and resistance.

Foucault suggests that escape from the system is possible, and points to Kant as indicative of moments of critique which are available to the modern subject. Foucault argues that the best means of offering critique in these systems is through the power of the system itself, by using the power against the status quo, against the systems of power, and thereby taking its power away. He particularly turns to Kant for this, pointing to Kant's notion of critique that he outlines in his essay, "Was ist Aufklärung?" Foucault's analysis seeks Kantian critique as the ability to construct oneself within the public sphere. Kant identifies areas where individuals must submit, particularly where the state has the most control. His desire to create a public sphere, however, gestures toward an individual being able to construct himself. This creation of a separate sphere within the system of power, to escape the confines of social construction, is at the heart of what Foucault sees as critical to the way out of the systems of power and what emerges at the beginning of the nineteenth century in response to these ever greater discursive forces. Scholars of Foucault have extended these notions of critique and

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

resistance in their own works. In considering how this relates to identity formation, Judith Butler gestures to the agency individuals have to critique the construction of normative identities through variations of performative acts: "In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; 'agency,' then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition."[55] This variety in performativity offers potential for critique. With relation to masochism, this may take a number of forms: differently valuing ones submission or exposing the inner workings of the relationship of power by introducing variation to the interaction, causing fissures and discontinuities in the matrix of power. In fact, because masochism is a method of critique founded on exposing the systems of power, it is inherently different from the power that it critiques, which tries to obscure its power. As Foucault maintains, this resistance "exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies."[56] Masochism, then, is able to critique in multiple ways at once, since it intersects with multiple systems of power.

Finally, in his 1982 essay *The Subject and Power* Foucault argues that "power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social." He goes on to clarify this statement by explaining that there is not "a primary and fundamental principle of power which dominates society down to the smallest detail" but rather that all forms of social interaction form the basis for power.[57] This sense that power is at the center of all social interaction from the personal

[55]Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 198.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 345.

and sexual to the public and political certainly does not originate with Foucault.[58] He does, however, point out that the prospect of individuals questioning and influencing this interplay of power begins only when the subject is free to participate in the power relationship. This freedom can be seen as the primary indication of a creation of a subject capable of critique which Foucault argues is at the heart of the Kantian conception of Enlightenment. When taken together, Foucault's ideas of power and resistance relate directly to his statement that sadomasochism acts out the power structures that it critiques. By taking the structures of power and putting them on display, masochism is able to performatively critique the power it participates in. Though Foucault primarily focuses on the sexual implications of sadomasochism, my project extends this into discursive relationships beyond the sexual to consider what masochism might offer us in literature throughout the period that Foucault identifies as rife with new modes of discursive power. It will be my suggestion throughout this study that the historical basis for masochism does not lie in the late nineteenth-century decadence literature that seems to exemplify masochism as we know it. Rather, masochism, as it develops at the end of the nineteenth century, is indebted to the struggle for independence within systems of power that comes about through the creation of Foucault's critical subject. Aesthetics, politics, religion, and education all serve as systems of power alongside and coexistent with gender and social power. In order to understand a genealogy of masochism it is necessary to examine literature within these fields for their expressions of the masochistic.

[58]Jeffrey Weeks, "Remembering Foucault," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 1/2 (January 2005): 188. Weeks points out that Foucault's theories emerged at a point when many scholars were identifying the social construction of identity, sexuality, and other previously static fields.

Dissertation Organization

Each of the four chapters in my dissertation is devoted to exploring a specific matrix of power that we might identify as masochistic as it is expressed in various literary discourses and constructions of subjectivity. Since this dissertation attempts to show a genealogy of masochism in literature prior to Sacher-Masoch, the texts have been chosen to demonstrate how similar themes have been addressed in non-erotic forms throughout the nineteenth century. Chapter 1 looks at the social construction of subjectivity and how masochistic texts are uniquely positioned to both critique and expose discursive power by looking at Heinrich von Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* (1807–08) and Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* (1870). The texts I have selected include female characters typically thought to embody the possible roles for women in the masochistic dynamic, both of which were identified by Krafft-Ebing as part of the masochistic. Heinrich von Kleist's titular character from *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* has long been identified as representative of the image of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century femininity, in which women take submissive positions typically related to their roles as mothers and daughters. However, Käthchen, by choosing the ways she will submit to men and other social constructions of power, is anything but passive, and, I argue, should be reexamined as an agent in control of her destiny. While this work has been considered an outlier in Kleist's body of work, because it is read as devoid of critical potential on account of its construction of normative femininity, I argue that that Kleist's drama concerns itself with the same issues of subjectivity as his other more overtly political texts. The second work in this chapter is Leopold von Sacher-Maoch's *Venus im Pelz.* The prevailing reading of this text suggests that the dominant female Wanda is passive in her acting out of the role created for her by her submissive partner Severin. Just as with the character Käthchen, these readings of the text, construct Wanda as passive in an attempt to minimize her potential to serve a critical role in the novella. Though it is difficult, and ill-advised, to ascribe

feminist or protofeminist intentions to these authors, there is a critique of subjectivity and the social construction of the individual at play which will be assessed and considered in the context of a gendered reevaluation of these texts. Reading these women as representative of specific subject positions, enable us to consider how they may serve the political ends of Kleist's and Sacher-Masoch's other works.

Chapter 2 looks at the German genre of the *Bildungsroman*, or novel of education and character formation, and how it demonstrates submission to a specific pedagogical vision, both through its content and the depiction of the interaction between the reader and the text. While exploring the discourses surrounding *Bildung* and socialization, this chapter begins with a brief consideration of Johann von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96) before continuing on to Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) and Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* (1857). I suggest that the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, particularly subsequent to *Wilhelm Meister*, focuses on both reading and socialization, and does so in a self-reflexive and deliberate way thereby exposing the function of power within both the novel and the system of *Bildung* and hence its masochistic leanings. Since Novalis' text was consciously written in response to *Wilhelm Meister*, it is particularly productive to consider the role reading takes in these novels. *Der Nachsommer* serves as a point of comparison for *Bildung* through the *Bildungsroman* in the period following the revolutions of 1848. In a way, these texts all create subcultural spaces within themselves that serve as microcosms for the reader and his experience. Though this chapter does not look at the potentially masochistic act of reading the *Bildungsroman*, it does consider the sort of socialization that such texts enact and how they demonstrates this socialization through the characters in the novels.

Chapter 3 addresses expressions of artistic production and the sublime. In it I argue that the

image of the suffering artist bears a striking resemblance to the masochist. Beginning with a brief examination of Sacher-Masoch's metatextual references to the sublime and the suprasensual (*übersinnlich*) via Kant and Goethe, we then turn to Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1796) to examine its presentation of artistic inspiration in connection with the sublime. The text, an early elucidation of the Romantic veneration of art, provides both a counter-point and a compliment to Sacher-Masoch's. While there are certainly other works of the period that could be considered, Wackenroder's connection to Georgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (1550-1568), and the sheer variety in the types of artist he describes, offers a means of seeing the impact of suffering and artistic inspiration across a broad spectrum. Moving farther into the nineteenth century, I then consider Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* (1854-1880) and artistic inspiration as related to his titular character. I argue that, though most scholarship excludes a sense of the sublime in Keller's text, there is still a longing and a desire to embody the suffering artist that comes through in the text, demonstrating an understanding of the masochistic in artistic production.

The final chapter focuses on two genres of religious literature: the hagiography and the confession, both of which play a role in Sacher-Masoch's text. Hagiographies, which describe the religious lives, conversion, and transcendence of saints and martyrs, have been described as masochistic in their demonstration of *imitatio Christ*, the Christian exhortation to live a life in the imitation of Christ's suffering. To show how such texts are considered an inspiration for the protagonist in *Venus im Pelz*, and how we might rethink the appropriation of that genre for secular ends, we will look at Georg Bücher's *Lenz* (1836-7), the biographically grounded story of Reinhold Lenz, a *Sturm und Drang* dramatist well known for his schizophrenic break. Scholars of this text typically suggest that Lenz's continual self-mortification is representative of his

madness. Instead I suggest that just as we have called into question the commonly held belief that the desire for pain in masochism should be considered deviant and indicative of psychic illness, so too must we call into question Lenz's self-flagellation. Instead I read this as an act of *imitatio Christi* by which he attempts to fill the consuming darkness that embodies his madness. When read in this way, the masochistic moments are not the representation of madness, but the attempt to free himself from his madness. From there we will turn to confessional literature, particularly three pornographic texts that leverage the genre of the confession. The three anonymous works of popular literature, *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust* (1790), *Bekenntnis einer Giftmischerin, von ihr selbst geschrieben* (1803), and *Schwester Monika* (1815) utilize the tropes of the confession (biographical narrative and enticement of the reader to stand as judge) to stand defiant to these tropes by rejecting the authority of the absolution. Through metatextual references, these texts also participate in the genre of libertine fiction popularized in eighteenth century France, perhaps best known through the works of the Marquis de Sade. While the pornographic texts of Sade have long been considered part of a political project rejecting the authority of the church and society, Sacher-Masoch's texts, and other erotic texts that reference the libertine, have typically been studied for their erotic content. By focusing on the parts of these texts that are not necessarily erotic, but that directly subvert the confessional form they mimic, or that illuminate the social construction of sexuality, these texts deny the authority of the reader as judge, themselves standing in judgment of socially constructed norms for sexuality and normative social behavior. I conclude the dissertation by returning to the ideas we have considered in the introduction: namely, what we are to make of masochism that is not explicitly erotic, but that is tied to the discourses of power we have considered throughout the four chapters.

Chapter 1

The Social Construction of Identity in Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* and Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*

> Geh'! gehorche meinen Winken,
> Nutze deine jungen Tage,
> Lerne zeitig klüger sein!
> Auf des Glückes großer Waage
> Steht die Zunge selten ein.
> Du mußt steigen oder sinken,
> Du mußt herrschen und gewinnen
> Oder dienen und verlieren,
> Leiden oder triumphieren,
> Amboß oder Hammer sein.[1]

> J'ai peur que dans ce monde on ne soit réduit à être enclume ou marteau; heureux qui échape à cette alternative![2]

Introduction

The protagonist of Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* ends the novel's framing narrative with a series of morals to his story of domination. He explains that women by nature and social construction are despotic enemies of men, and that only through equal rights, education, and work can they be made into men's companions. This relatively progressive appraisal of the state of gender relations is followed with the statement, echoing the above quotations by

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[1]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Ein Anderes," written 1787 in *Italien und Weimar 1786-1790*, vol. 3.1, Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens, Münchner Ausgabe (München: C. Hanser, 1985), 10. "Go! Obey my message, / make good use of your young days, / learn early to be clever; / on the great scales of fortune, / the balance rarely keeps still; / you must rise or sink, / you must rule and win / or serve and lose, / suffer or triumph, / be the anvil or the hammer."

[2]Voltaire, *Dictonnaire philosophique, portative. Nouvelle edition, Revue, corrigée, augmentée de divers Articles par l'Auteur*. (London, 1765), 334. "I fear that in this world one is reduced to being either hammer or anvil; lucky the man who escapes this alternative!"

Goethe and Voltaire: "Jetzt haben wir nur die Wahl, Hammer oder Amboß zu sein, und ich war der Esel, aus mir den Sklaven eines Weibes zu machen […]."[3] Though the metaphor of hammer and anvil serving as two extremes of a dichotomous power struggle has a long history,[4] given the numerous other references to Goethe in Sacher-Masoch's work, this could easily be a reference to Goethe's 1782 "Cophtisches Lied (Ein Anderes)," originally composed for his comedy *Der Groß-Copht.*[5] The song, replicated above, indicates that in life one is either the hammer or the anvil, with the anvil representing suffering and loss and the hammer tied to power and triumph. There are three points of particular interest with regard to the interplay of Goethe and Sacher-Masoch. Not surprisingly, by equating the hammer with the anvil, Sacher-Masoch also draws a direct comparison between the despot and the slave and thereby women and men. He also argues that men have the choice to be either the hammer or the anvil, suggesting that men are not fixed in a submissive position related to women. Finally, the juxtaposition of the seemingly essentialist and constructivist arguments for women's position as either hammer or anvil plays off of the "jetzt" at the beginning of the invocation of Goethe, and in this way, Sacher-Masoch's protagonist indicates that this hammer-anvil dichotomy is a socially constructed condition which might be overcome. This is not the only

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[3]*Venus im Pelz*, 138. Presently we have the choice to be either hammer or anvil, and I was the ass, who made himself the slave of a woman…

[4]There are numerous Italian, French, and German proverbs connected to the hammer-anvil metaphor. Louis XIV is said to have made an analogous statement relating to his ouster and a similar quotation is attributed to twelfth-century monk Saint Dominic de Guzman, founder of the Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, with regard to an individual mastering his passions.

[5]Goethe's poem and his subsequent mentions of the hammer and anvil in his epigrams are often noted as a source of inspiration for German authors who use the hammer and anvil metaphor. One example is the novel *Hammer und Amboss* (1869) by German novelist Friedrich Spielhagen. In the English translation of his work, the "Critical Notices" that precede the translation mention, in an excerpt from a review in the Springfield Republican: "The name is suggested by a passage in Goethe, which serves as a motto for the book. Spielhagen means to illustrate what Goethe speaks of – natures not in full possessions of themselves, 'who are not equal to any situation in life, and who no situation satisfies' – the Hamlet of our latest civilization." Friedrich Spielhagen, *Hammer and Anvil: A Novel*, trans. William Hand Browne (New York: Leypoldt & Holt, 1970).

example of the hammer-anvil dichotomy which we might relate to Sacher-Masoch's text, however.

Similar sentiments are suggested earlier in the eighteenth century by Enlightenment thinkers in France. French Enlightenment philosopher François-Marie Arouet, better known by his pen-name Voltaire, engages with this same metaphor in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, with his definition of the term "tyranny." In this entry, when considering whether he would prefer the tyranny of a single despot to the tyranny of the masses, Voltaire states that he is not interested in serving a despot at all. If forced to choose, however, he argues the tyranny of a single despot is more desirable because even the single tyrant has his good moments, or can be influenced through those close to him. The mass of tyrants, on the other hand, is always capricious and the individual can exert little to no influence over them. In his final statement on the tyranny of the masses he writes: "I fear that in this world [the world of multiple tyrants] one is reduced to being either hammer or anvil; lucky the man who escapes this alternative!"[6] Voltaire suggests that the dichotomy of hammer and anvil is embodied primarily by the notion of group tyranny. As such he contends that one is fortunate to escape such exercises of power. While Sacher-Masoch's reference to the hammer-anvil dichotomy is primarily focused on associating the despotic hammer role with an individual, Voltaire warns against what we might term social power, or the mechanisms of power which are socially constructed and maintained. In both cases, however, the hammer-anvil metaphor provides an image of tyranny, triumph, and power juxtaposed to subservience, loss, and weakness. Voltaire's tyranny of the masses exerts power in such a way so as to be virtually inescapable, just as we see with the social

[6]Voltaire, *Dictonnaire philosophique, portative. Nouvelle edition, Revue, corrigée, augmentée de divers Articles par l'Auteur.* (London, 1765), 334. "J'ai peur que dans ce monde on ne soit réduit à être enclume ou marteau; heureux qui échape à cette alternative!"

production of knowledge and discourse from Foucault which we discussed in the introduction. Whether this is a tyrannical power of social construction, a cooperative power of joint construction between the individual and the social sphere, or subversive power in which the "anvil" role affects change, it all takes place within a system of power which controls it. The possibility for critique, however, is still present and can be found in the individual's ability to revalue their position.

Independent of these literary references to the hammer of tyranny, Heinrich von Kleist uses this same language in correspondence with his sister Ulrike. In describing his experience at court in Potsdam, he expounds on the interaction between the king and his subjects. While the princes were well disposed toward him, the king was not: "und wenn er meiner nicht bedarf, so bedarf ich seiner noch weit weniger. Denn mir möchte es nicht schwer werden, einen andern König zu finden, ihm aber, sich andere Untertanen aufzusuchen."[7] By stating that the king is more dependent on his subjects than the subjects are the king, he indicates that while the binary power structure may continue to exist, the subjects (*Untertanen*) have a choice when it comes to their sovereign and a despotic or tyrannical sovereign may be left without subjects. Within the court, however, Kleist does see the hammer metaphor come into play. "Am Hofe teilt man die Menschen ein, wie ehemals die Chemiker die Metalle, nämlich in solche, die sich dehnen und strecken lassen, und in solche, die dies nicht tun – Die ersten, werden dann fleißig mit dem Hammer der Willkür geklopft, die andern aber, wie die Halbmetalle, als unbrauchbar verworfen."[8] Kleist relates this back to himself, explaining that

[7]Letter to Ulrike von Kleist Berlin, 25. November 1800. Heinrich von Kleist, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe: Zweibändige Ausgabe in einem Band* (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001), 601. Future references to Kleist's letters will be with reference to Kleist DTV, II. "And if he could not abide me, so I could abide him even less."

[8]Kliest DTV, II, 601. At court people are divided as chemists separate metals, namely those who let themselves be stretched and pulled and those who do not. The former are beaten strenuously with the hammer of despotism, the latter, however, like metalloids are thrown away as unusable.

he cannot compromise and offer himself up for a position for which he is ill suited. Instead he rejects the "Hammer der Willkür."[9] Kleist is willing to be a subject, but only on his own terms. He indicates a shift of power from the sovereign to the individual, denying the ability of the governing body to assume full control over the social construction of the individual, simultaneously seeing oneself as an *Untertan* while rejecting the power of those who stand above them.[10] This is a profoundly unusual conception of what it means to be a subject in early nineteenth-century Prussia. Kleist suggests that he is willing to serve another but on his own terms not on the tyrannical and capricious terms of the ruling powers. In doing so, he exposes the power dynamic and claims authority for himself, even within a system where declarations of such agency were uncharacteristic.

Just as Sacher-Masoch cites Goethe with his reference to the hammer and anvil, so too does Kleist seem to echo one of Goethe's epigrams which Friedrich Sether analyzes as more complicated explication of the hammer-anvil relationship in *Das copthische Lied.*[11] The epigram reads: "Diesem Amboss vergleich ich das Land, den Hammer dem Herrscher / Und dem Volke das Blech, das in der Mitte sich krümmt. / Wehe dem armen Blech! wenn nur willkürliche Schläge / Ungewiss treffen, und nie fertig der Kessel erscheint."[12] Goethe thereby introduces the notion of the sheet of steel to be formed between the hammer and anvil. Sether draws the conclusion that both the steel and the hammer are co-participants in this action. The steel must be malleable and the hammer must hit with intention and with a plan for its final

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[9]Hammer of Arbitrariness (despotism).

[10]*Untertan* translates to "subjects" as in royal subjects.

[11]Frederick S. Sethur, "Goethe und die Politik," *PMLA* 52, no. 1 (March 1, 1937): 160–194.

[12]Qtd in Sether, 190. I compare this anvil to the land, the hammer the ruler and the people the sheet of metal that bends in the middle. Woe to the poor metal! When it is hit uncertainly with only indiscriminate strikes, and a finished pot never materializes.

product. If the hammer improperly forms the steel, then it can never become a finished pot. Likewise if the state abuses its people, they will never reach their full potential.[13]

The hammer-anvil metaphor is instructive as a means of engaging with the social and literary intersections on discourses of subjectivity and power. Goethe, Kleist, and Voltaire all comment on the social construction of the individual. Whereas Voltaire, prior to the French Revolution, cautions against the despotic rule of society, Goethe states that all parties are culpable in this integrated system, but that there are responsibilities for intentional and directed rule by the sovereign. Kleist, perhaps in response to Goethe, tries to shift some of the power to the subjects while at the same time suggesting that individuals can only be properly formed by society and their sovereigns if by nature, the people are receptive to the education and formation of the system and the system is just. Sacher-Masoch's invocation of the metaphor, while related to gender and the power dynamics between men and women, simultaneously gestures to some of the same issues surrounding the social construction of subjectivity proffered by the other authors. It is within this context that this chapter will consider how literature by Kleist and Sacher-Masoch engages with the social construction of subjectivity and the political construction of meaning by attempting to expose the power relationships at play and reevaluate dominant power binaries. I will suggest that Kleist and Sacher-Masoch construct modes of subjectivity that attempt to reject these binaries, even while seeming to reinforce them, by exposing the social institutions that form the bases of power. In order to show this, we will look at the genealogy of this rejection of power particularly through masochistic women.

[13]Sethur, 190.

Theories of masochism based on Sacher-Masoch's works have afforded two roles to women. The first is the submissive, masochistic woman, who, unlike her male counterpart, maintains no amount of control and agency. Instead, this masochistic woman is viewed as naturally submissive and therefore naturally masochistic.[14] The second is the female dominant, who, post-Deleuze, is not defined as a sadist, but is also not considered to be active in her domination of the male masochist.[15] Instead she is described as meting out the punishments constructed by her male submissive. In both instances, regardless of the position the female takes in the masochistic dynamic, she is passive and without agency. While these analyses feed into the discourse on the crisis of masculinity by discursively denying agency within the field of masochism, I would suggest that they overlook the way which a masochistic dynamic exposes power relations. Though Sacher-Masoch's protagonist states one is either hammer or anvil, the text also suggests that individual subjects, male and female alike, are socially constructed, and that there exists a way out of this discursive dilemma through the revaluation of socially constructed roles. By focusing on how the characters in these works acknowledge attempts to control their identities we can see how these particular female characters demonstrate an ability to work within the social sphere to revalue their identities and assert agency counter to their socially proscribed subject positions. To determine how this has been done in nineteenth-century literature we will need to look at the two roles for women in masochistic literature –the naturally submissive woman and the dominant woman – to show how they each in turn offer critique through the stories in which they play their roles. Both Kleist's Käthchen, as a young woman of low social class and Sacher-Masoch's Wanda, a

[14]Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis mit besonderer Berücksicktigung der conträren Sexualempfindung: eine klinisch-forensische Studie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1894).

[15]Deleuze 41.

widow with no family to speak of, exist on the borders and margins of power structures, and therefore can serve as critical apparatuses through which to examine the social construction of the individual.

As we explored in the introduction, Foucault's writings on power, discourse, and critique establish a theoretical foundation for this chapter. Reflecting on the connection between Voltaire's definition of tyranny and Foucault's concept of power, I suggest that the alternatives to group tyranny which Voltaire posits are strikingly similar to the Foucauldian notion of critique. Likewise, Judith Butler's notions of repetitive performativity and its ability to function as a mode of critique are central to my analysis. The two works we will look at each embody different positions for women in masochistic constellations: Käthchen, the protagonist of Kleist's drama *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* (1807-1808), represents normative femininity and submission, whereas the female protagonist in Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* (1870), Wanda, serves as the stereotypical domina. I argue both female protagonists redirect the power of their respective submission and dominance in ways that mark them as subjects, rather than static objects of men's fantasies.

With this theoretical background in mind, the chapter will proceed with a reading of Kleist's drama *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* to consider how it exposes the power dynamics at the core of the social construction of subjectivity. This drama has long been considered an outlier in a period where Kleist was engaged in fiercely political writing.[16] Traditional valuations of Kleist's titular character are aligned with Richard von Krafft-Ebing's analysis of Käthchen as representative of women's naturally submissive and masochistic attitude, and

[16]Steven Howe, *Heinrich von Kleist and Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Violence, Identity, Nation* (Rochester: Camden House, 2012). Howe provides an excellent background on Kleist's political writings as well as secondary literature which speaks to this trend in his works. Howe points primarily to the notion of paradox at the center of Kleist's concerns with political and social matters.

have fossilized and forestalled other interpretations that might differently value Käthchen's role in the piece.[17] I maintain, however, that while *Käthchen* does not seem like a politically motivated drama, there are political overtones in her submission that point to an acknowledgement of the social construction of the individual and his or her desires to overcome this construction through a differently-valued submission. At issue in my analysis is not an attempt to ascribe feminist intentions to Kleist, but rather tho show that through his drama, as with most of his oeuvre, Kleist demonstrates the social construction of the individual in much the same way that we identify the subject in contemporary feminist writings. Moreover his explication of this social construction demonstrates a means of fulfilling one's socially constructed and submissive role, while at the same time exposing the structures of power which require this submission. Analyzing *Käthchen* within this context enables us to situate the drama better within the body of Kleist's work, and to call into question the binaries constructed in the masochistic dynamic.

From there I will pick up the thread of the social construction of gender relations to look at how Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*, in by describing women as naturally cruel, engages in a similar exposure of the construction of the individual through social discourse. Drawing on scholarship detailing the political legacies of Sacher-Masoch's work, I will show how this "erotic" text contributes to a larger body of literature on subjectivity, not through the protagonist, Severin, but as with Kleist, through the titular character of "Venus" or her personified character of Wanda. Though his text seems to make claims about a binary of

[17]See: Ruth Klüger, "Die andere Hündin - Käthchen," *Kleist-Jahrbuch* (1993): 103–115; Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn oder das Weib, wie es seyn sollte," in *Käthchen und seine Schwestern. Frauenfiguren im Drama um 1800. Internationales Kolloquium des Kleist-Archivs Sembdner*, ed. Günther Emig and Anton Knittel (Kleist-Archiv Sembdner, 2000), 9–37; Günther Emig and Anton Knittel, eds., *Käthchen und seine Schwestern. Frauenfiguren im Drama um 1800. Internationales Kolloquium des Kleist-Archivs Sembdner* (Kleist-Archiv Sembdner, 2000); Steven R. Huff, "The Holunder Motif in Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* and Its Nineteenth-Century Context," *The German Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (July 1, 1991): 304–312.

power, it simultaneously complicates this binary by involving the socially marginalized position of the widow.

Before continuing, I want to reiterate that I am not suggesting that either Kleist or Sacher-Masoch were necessarily personal advociates of liberal or emancipatory political views with regard to women and gender. I believe, however, an argument can be made that the political statements being made with these works are more complicated than has been previously been stated, just as the political views of gender, marriage, and rights were more complicated in Germany and Austria during this time than we sometimes credit.[18] In her recent analysis of *Penthesilea* Ricarda Schmidt warns against associating any message of female emancipation to Kleist's works, pointing specifically to his letters which take on a particularly condescending tone toward women. Instead Schmidt suggests that Kleist's texts are less about binaries and more focused on the complexities of subjectivity and the construction thereof.[19] Furthermore, though Sacher-Masoch's personal relationships were marked by desires for masochism, there is no reason why the discourses on emancipation should not be taken as commentary on socially constructions of identity. While personal beliefs and biography are often important in analyzing texts, with these two particular authors, their personal backgrounds have taken over the analyses of their bodies of work. By connecting our readings of these texts with social context and not the biographies of the authors per se, we can better analyze the texts' constructions of and attitudes toward gender in the period as well as the structures surrounding subjectivity and gender that are being exposed

[18]For recent scholarship on the complicated field of marriage and gender relations in the nineteeth century, which allows for more ambiguity than previous studies, see Brian Vick, "Liberalism, Nationalism, and Gender Dichotomy in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Contested Case of German Civil Law," *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 546–584.

[19]Ricarda Schmidt, "Performanz und Essentialismus von Geschlecht bei Kleist: Eine doppelte Dialektik zwischen Subordination und Handlungsfähigkeit," *German Life and Letters* 64, no. 3 (2011): 386.

by these authors. This is not to suggest that either Kleist or Sacher-Masoch is advocating for one position or another, but rather that both authors are complicating the discourses of gender and subjectivity with their works and exposing the function of the systems of power which control them. Though the authors may not be seen as advocating a particular political program in their texts, the work that their texts do and the content of their works, takes on a decidedly political tone, particularly with regard to individual agency and subjectivity which is demonstrated by their focus on gender and power.

Critical Devotion in Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*

Kleist's drama *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn, oder die Feuerprobe* depicts the story of the fifteen-year-old titular character's devotion to Count Strahl. Käthchen, the daughter of a blacksmith, follows the count around with "doglike obedience" while at the same time the Count is pursued by another woman, Kunigunde, whose interest in him has more to do with obtaining his land and increasing her own wealth than a desire for love and marriage. As a result of Kunigunde's manipulations, the Count must fight off an attack from her rival love interest. The main plot of the story is set against a background of possible divine intervention in the attraction between Käthchen and the Count, who shared a dream that foretold their marriage. At the conclusion of the drama, in a supreme act of *deus ex machina*, Käthchen transcends her social position and is declared the daughter of the Emperor, paving the way for the Count to marry her. The drama ends with Kunigunde under arrest for the attempted murder of Käthchen, and Käthchen collapsing due to her surprise wedding to the Count.

Though the drama seems almost like a comedy of errors and is described in the subtitle as "ein großes historisches Ritterschauspiel,"[20] from Kleist's letters it is clear that *Käthchen*

[20]"A great historical Knight's pageant."

was more than just a simple drama. He describes it as a companion piece to the story of his Amazon queen, *Penthesilea*, which he asserts represents his "innerstes Wesen."[21] As he put it to his cousin Marie, "der ganze Schmutz zugleich und Glanz meiner Seele" could be found in the Penthesilea.[22] Käthchen is put forth as "die Kehrseite der Penthesilea, ihr andrer Pol, ein Wesen, das ebenso mächtig ist durch gänzliche Hingebung, als jene durch Handeln."[23] As this letter suggests, though Käthchen is submissive, obedient, and devoted, these acts of deference exhibit as much power as one finds in Penthesilea's actions. Kleist's use of the term *Hingebung* is striking. On the one hand *Hingebung* can be translated as devotion, but on the other it implies a sort of active surrender. The term stems from the verb *hingeben* which in this case would mean means to give oneself over or to sacrifice oneself. It also implies that Käthchen's devotion is of her own accord and as such she is both the subject and object of the submission – both the one giving herself to Strahl and the one being given.

The predominant strain in Kleist scholarship positions Käthchen, and indeed all female characters in the drama, as the products of men's fantasies.[24] Gonthier-Louis Fink posits that Kleist is not concerned with establishing women as the center of a bourgeois-aristocratic family in *Käthchen*, but rather "er überlässt sich vielmehr egozentrischen, possessiven Männerwunschphantasien und träumt von totaler Hingabe und Selbstlosigkeit der Frau, von

[21]Kleist DTV, II, 797. Letter to Marie von Kleist, Dresden, late Fall 1807. "inner spirit"

[22]Ibid. "The entire filth and brilliance of my soul together."

[23]Ibid. "The other side of Penthesilea, her other pole, an entity, which is just as powerful through complete devotion as the other is through action."

[24]Though the texts cited here are older analyses of Kleist's work, this trend continues into more contemporary analyses of Käthchen, including Seán Allan, *The Plays of Heinrich von Kleist: Ideals and Illusions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

absoluter Unterordnung der Frau unter den Mann."[25] Fink's focus on the construction of Käthchen's identity primarily as a male fantasy echoes the analysis by William Reeve that Käthchen represents Kleist's idealized woman.[26] Kleist's statement that Käthchen is powerful through her devotion runs counter to the idea of women as completely self-effacing and weak. These analyses are primarily grounded in an assumption that Käthchen represents an almost naturally submissive woman. Gerd Ueding echoes Fink's and Reeve's focus on male fantasies and the ideal woman when he contends that Käthchen's power through obedience is very similar to Kunigunde's power of femininity:

> Ist Käthchen mächtig durch Hingabe, so nicht zuletzt weil ihr natürlich-unschuldiges Verhalten eine erotisch stimulierende Wirksamkeit besitzt. Diese wiederum ist nur möglich, weil ihre Liebe nicht narzisstisch beschränkt bleibt und nur das eigene Verliebtsein geliebt wird, selbst wenn sie unbeirrbar ist auch im Hinblick auf den Gegenstand ihrer Liebe. Denn der grenzenlosen Hingabe […] liegt ja die traumsichere Überzeugung von des Grafen Gegenliebe zugrunde.[27]

By suggesting that Käthchen's devotion is simply a means of convincing Strahl to marry her, Ueding confines Käthchen's obedient behavior to an expression of love, thereby overlooking the moments in the drama that do not fit this role, and where she intentionally rejects these cultural constructions of her identity.

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[25]Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn oder das Weib, wie es seyn sollte," in *Käthchen und seine Schwestern. Frauenfiguren im Drama um 1800. Internationales Kolloquium des Kleist-Archivs Sembdner*, ed. Günther Emig and Anton Knittel (Kleist-Archiv Sembdner, 2000), 11." He cedes much more egocentric, possessive male fantasies and dreams of total devotion and woman's selflessness, of absolute subordination of woman und man."

[26]William C. Reeve, *Kleist's Aristocratic Heritage and* Das Kathchen von Heilbronn (McGill Queens University Press, 1991), 68.

[27]Gerd Ueding, "Zweideutige Bilderweld: 'Das Käthchen von Heilbron'," in *Kleists Dramen: Neue Interpretationen*, ed. Walter Hinderer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), 182. "If Käthchen is powerful through devotion, this is not in the least because her naturally innocent manner posesses an erotically stimulating effect. Then again this is only possible, because her love does not remain narcissistically limited and only loves her own being in love. For the boundless devotion is founded in the dreamlike faith in the Count's reciprocal love."

The social construction of the relationships between Käthchen and others in the drama have been addressed by Chris Cullens and Dorothea von Mücke, particularly with regard to the issues of power, sexuality, and submission. Taking a Foucauldian approach, they echo the emphasis on male fantasies in the drama and focus on the social impact of the power that Käthchen enacts through her submission.[28] Of particular importance to both this project and Cullen's and von Mücke's argument is Foucault's contention that within the post-Revolutionary nineteenth-century constellation of power, while the subject is controlled by power and discourse, he or she is ultimately free to make choices within these systems.[29] It is the field of possibilities that provides opportunities for critique in an otherwise closed system. While it is true that as defined by both Butler and Foucault, the subject already co-constructs his/her identity within the system, the critique in *Käthchen* is presented through actions that mimic the submission expected of the title character, but which do so in unexpected ways. Käthchen does not opt out of the system of power, but finds a way to participate in it on her own terms, and in a way that forces others to accept the positions she creates for herself. This demonstrates the potential that Butler sees for agency when she suggests: "what we might call 'agency' or 'freedom' or 'possibility' is always a specific political prerogative that is produced by the gaps opened up in regulatory norms, in the interpolating work of such norms, in the process of their self-repetition."[30] Käthchen's behavior in Kleist's drama exemplifies this sort of freedom. Within the confines of the social matrix and the realm of what is acceptable, she is able to assert her individuality and freedom

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[28]Chris Cullens and Dorothea von Mücke, "Das Käthchen von Heilbronn: 'Ein Kind recht nach der Lust Gottes'," in *Kleists Dramen*, ed. Walter Hinderer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), 117.

[29]Foucault, "Subject and Power," 342.

[30]Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 1 (1993): 22.

and shift her position as a subject in opposition to counter the dominant discourses. Her submission, while appearing to be that of normative femininity, is really a means of taking on submissive positions which she defines and constructs.

In keeping with the social construction of Käthchen's identity, Seán Allan has emphasized that the motivations and meanings behind Käthchen's submission are largely defined by the male characters in the play.[31] The male characters may therefore be considered the clearest representatives of the dominant social discourse surrounding female submission in the drama. The readers and audience view Käthchen as a representative of normative femininity because this is how she is rendered by others. By understanding her behaviors outside of this discourse as non-normative but not necessarily deviant, it becomes possible to see that Käthchen's repetitive yet varied acts of obedience enable her to actively construct her identity within and between these constellations of power that seek to define her. To this end, in her study of Käthchen as an ironic and parodic character, Yixu Lü indicates that Käthchen's moments of silence reject these constellations of power and are a means of creating her own identity against the masculine discourses which surround her.[32] As such, they are able to serve as a rejection of social constructions of her subjectivity. Käthchen thereby stands in contrast to Kunigunde, who, through her manipulation of men, submits to socially constructed roles and expectations for women, but who is equally active in the construction of her identity within these social norms.

Limited scholarship identifies Käthchen an active character in the drama. Ruth Klüger, while agreeing with Fink's and Uedings analysis of Kleist's female characters as

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[31]Allan, 189.

[32]Yixu Lü, "Die Fährnisse der verklärten Liebe: Über Kleists 'Käthchen von Heilbronn.'," in *Heinrich von Kleist und die Aufklärung*, ed. Timothy J. Mehigan (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), 171.

"*Männerwunschphantasien*" (men's wishful fantasies), calls into question the patriarchal system through which these fantasies are constructed by suggesting that Kleist is offering a parody of aristocracy and patriarchy.[33] She argues that Käthchen, though submissive, is the most active character in the drama, while Kunigunde, who appears to be dominant, is actually quite passive.[34] Her analysis challenges others that place Käthchen in a wholly passive role and claim that the drama is almost entirely focused on Käthchen's love and longing for Strahl. By reconsidering the core assumptions about Käthchen's active role in the drama, Klüger argues that Kleist's work contests the foundations of identity and subjectivity. However, rather than identify one character as active and the other passive, I believe both women can be identified as different alternatives to subjectivity: neither more valid than the other, and both equally consciously constructed.

The difference between their constructed identities can be located in both the intention and the means by which they arrive at subject positions. Though descriptions of Käthchen may be erotically charged, she takes on submissive positions that reject this eroticism and that are, if not masculine, then at least on a spectrum of gendered identities which range from hyper-feminine to androgynous. Conversely, Kunigunde consciously marks herself as feminine through physical constructions set in place in order to conform to the dominant social discourse surrounding femininity. The various means by which she is marked as feminine are physical constructions set in place in order to conform to masculine expectations for courtly women. Kunigunde's identity is created in support of the social norms, as a means of achieving her ends of social and political power. Kunigunde attempts to fit into and exploit the system

[33]Klüger, 107.

[34]Ibid., 110.

through femininity, while Käthchen tries to escape it social constructions of her identity by engaging in submission that belies her biological gender. By juxtaposing them, we see that Kleist is not necessarily critiquing normative femininity but rather the difficulties of establishing individual subjective positions and the various means by which one does so. This may be approached in several ways either as a representative of social expectations, working as an agent while still embodying the social norms, or as a representative of something new and representative of an active rejection of social norms. These new subjective positions subtly change expectations for the individual by running counter to social expectations for their gender, class, or other socially constructed identities.

This does not necessarily mark Kleist's work with a sort of prescient feminism. As many scholars suggest, Kleist's works often focus on contesting the foundation upon which identity and subjectivity are built. I would tend to agree with Schmidt's analysis that Kleist's work is less about gender than it is about the complexities of subjectivity and propose that Käthchen only represents female emancipation in the way that she attempts to renegotiate her identity and subject position in the drama. Insofar as the drama offers a critique of subjectivity, Käthchen's *Hingebung* can be seen as a means of shifting the dominant discourse away from socially prescribed identity through submission.

If Käthchen is meant to represent a kind of agency and power through submission, a closer analysis of the type of power she wields through her subordinate position bears closer analysis. Kleist's own focus on her powerful devotion suggests a reassessment of our appraisal of Käthchen as submissive and passive, and compels us to reframe her submission, not as a representation of normative female passivity, but rather as an active choice indicative of her power as a character and her ability to create alternate meanings for her submission within the

social sphere. Unlike her foil, Kunigunde, who is portrayed as both active and domineering, though in support of traditional expectations for her gender and her social standing, Käthchen submits in ways which oppose her social status and gender and which enable her to garner respect from others counter to her socially constructed identities. In this way Käthchen's submission has the power to call into question her place in larger social structures, to reject submission that is purely grounded in socially constructed gendered dyads, and to reevaluate our assumption as readers that obedience and submission are to be equated with passivity. To illustrate the ways that Kleist produces moments of critique through Käthchen's submission, it is necessary to look at two trends found repeated throughout the drama. We will consider how Käthchen marks her submission both through language and performative acts in a way that resists the tyranny of the social construction of her identity. Moreover the repetition of language and actions is done in such a way so as to continually resist her definition through the dominant discourse.

Before looking at the drama, however, we must consider how it fits in to Kleist's oeuvre. *Käthchen* seems like an anomaly to Kleist's body of work. Steven Howe has pointed out that starting in 1805, Kleist's correspondence becomes increasingly political and that following the "politically innocuous" *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, Kleist's work embodies a distinct political activism.[35] That *Käthchen* is bracketed from this politically marked period is curious and bears further critique. Howe suggests that Kleist's political aesthetic is represented by his repeated efforts to place "the dynamics of subjectivity and self-hood in a politicized context of social change," as well as engaging "in complex and often subtle fashion with revolutionary discourses of freedom and tyranny, rebellion and assimilation, agency and

[35]Howe, 40.

conditioning."[36] This subtlety is evident in Käthchen. While her submission appears to be normative and representative of the social construction of her subjectivity, the variety of her submission which stands outside social norms marks it as critical and political. If *Käthchen* is meant to be seen as the other side of *Penthesilea*, a distinctly political drama, then we must reconsider the political potential of the work. Rather than seeing *Käthchen* as apolitical or politically innocuous, we might instead look to Käthchen as a character to consider how her submission, and the power which Kleist sees therein, might tell us about the social construction of subjectivity and the political potential of submission.

The most striking feature of scholarship on *Käthchen* is the consistency with which her submission is equated with passivity. [37] Though Kleist's titular character has been described as a submissive woman, most have failed to engage in a critical analysis of what her submission means for her identification as a self-determined subject. Reeve suggests that the drama demonstrates "an antithesis between the self-affirming, active female [Kunigunde] versus the self-denying passive female [Käthchen], the latter conforming to Kleist's ideal woman."[38] His focus on the class differential and Strahl's desire to maintain his position suggests that Käthchen is simply being set up all along the way for her desire to be Strahl's wife. While Reeve's analysis is compelling, he ignores most instances where Käthchen assumes the role of a *Knecht*, thereby consciously and actively establishing her devotion to Strahl. Moreover, assessments of Käthchen as purely submissive, obedient and docile are very closely related to that of Richard von Krafft-Ebing in the ninth edition of his catalog of sexual deviance

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[36]Howe, 41.

[37]Scholarship on Käthchen almost universally refers to her as submissive and passive in her submission. For literature, which refers specifically to this passivity see: Huff, *Poetics of Passivity*.

[38]Reeve, 39.

Psychopathia Sexualis. In it, he describes *Käthchen* as a masochistic text: "In allen Literaturen spielt naturgemäss die Geschlechtshörigkeit eine Rolle. Eine vorzügliche Schilderung weiblicher Hörigkeit bietet [...] vor Allem Kleist's 'Käthchen von Heilbronn', von ihm selbst als Gegenstück zur (sadistischen) 'Penthesilea'."[39] Krafft-Ebing's definition of masochism has left a lasting legacy by institutionalizing our understanding of the term, coloring our perceptions of the masochistic, and classifying femininity with passivity, submission, and masochism. Depictions of female submission, such as those in Kleist's *Käthchen*, therefore have deemed more or less accurate representations of women's social roles rather than as potentially subversive or critical. In order to step beyond the classification of male and female masochism, it is perhaps best to investigate how voluntary obedience, undertaken by any subject, can serve as a type of submissive agency exhibited by those who choose to be controlled by others, and understand how this exposes the workings of social power and opportunities for resistance.

Constructing Alternate Identities

At the beginning of the drama, Käthchen emerges as both submissive and active in creating a new meaning for her subject position during the secret tribunal, called by Käthchen's father to bring Count Strahl to justice after Käthchen runs away to follow him. The audience hears lengthy descriptions of her actions from her father, Strahl, and the judges, who are ultimately unable to assign her a fixed subject position until judgment is passed at the trial's conclusion. Her father says that she is "ein Kind recht nach der Lust Gottes" but also "wie ein

[39]Krafft-Ebing, 143. "Sexual bondage, of course, plays a role in al literature. […] An excellent description of feminine "bondage" is […] first of all Kleist's 'Käthchen von Heilbronn,' who himself called it a counterpart of (sadistic) 'Penthesilea.'"

Hund, der von seines Herren Schweiß gekostet."[40] Count Strahl remarks that she is like his shadow and acts like a fool. The judges of the court declare her to be "voll rascher Einbildungen," a "sonderbaren Wesen," and "störrig."[41] These various descriptions are all attempts at constructing an identifiable position for Käthchen that she ultimately refuses. Though Käthchen says little about her own identity, it cannot be assumed that this silence is meant to be read as an acceptance of these characterizations.[42] Käthchen, however, at this point in the drama is very clearly defined by the dream she shares with Strahl. Her submission refuses external definition by the dominant discourse, yet is still somewhat externally marked by a mystical event, understood by no one except herself. On the other hand, I would agree with Lü's assessment that Käthchen's silence is not a mark of her passivity, but rather an active rejection of the male discourse and its attempts to gain access to her internal identity.[43] In this way, by accepting this supernaturally constructed identity and remaining silent, she holds onto power, which she later mobilizes to reject the identity of those judging her.

Käthchen, though expressing devotion to Strahl in this scene, is never truly submissive to the court. When Käthchen enters the scene, she addresses Strahl: "Vor meinen Richter hat man mich gerufen," insisting that he is her judge.[44] Strahl initially rejects this role, asserting that he is there to be judged as well. Her cryptic answers and apparent loss of memory, however, place Strahl into the role of judge and examiner. While there are clearly class issues

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[40]All citations of *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* will reference the line numbers from the Heinrich von Kleist, *Sämtliche Werke Und Briefe: Zweibändige Ausgabe in Einem Band* (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001). KvH, 66, 222..

[41]KvH 40, 369, 416. "full of quick imagination; a peculiar being; disturbed"

[42]Cullens and von Mücke, "Love," 479. Though Cullens and von Mücke suggest that this silence is a mark of Käthchen's identity, their analysis suggests a fundamental rejection of the social constructions of her subjectivity.

[43]Lü, 171-2.

[44]KvH, 365." I have been called before my judge."

at play here, as argued by Reeve, Käthchen is more than willing to place herself in a subordinate position and declare her devotion to Strahl. Käthchen offers her obedience, while the court attempts to coopt that subordination in the name of *Herkunft* (background). Käthchen thus intentionally subordinates herself in ways which belie both social status and gender in order to redefine the nature of her submission.

One important way she does this is through the naming of her position. During the secret tribunal, she insists that Strahl guide her through her testimony telling him: "Belehre deine Magd, mein edler Herr, Wie soll ich mich in diesem Falle fassen?"[45] Defining herself as a *Magd* may not be a simple description of an unmarried and virginal woman. The primary definition of *Magd* in the 1854 edition of the Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* is "eine Erwachsene, noch Unverheiratete" woman.[46] This does not describe Käthchen, since given her relative youth and inexperience she can hardly be considered an adult. One of the other entries lists a *Magd* as a female version of a *Knecht*: "*Magd* als Dienende, hat sich ähnlich ausgebildet wie *Knecht* als Dienender [...] durch alle Sprachepochen hindurch bis auf heute. gemeint ist mit *magd* im schärfsten Sinne die Unfreie."[47] This definition, which originates from the Middle High German and which is, therefore, wholly in keeping with the Kleist's classification of *Käthchen* as "ein großes historisches Ritterschauspiel," enables Käthchen to performatively establish her identity as a female servant and as well as Strahl as her

[45]KvH, 388. "Teach your maiden, my noble lord. How should I compose myself in this situation?"

[46]"Magd, n.," *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm* (Leipzig, 1971), http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemma=magd. "an adult, not yet married, woman"

[47]Ibid. "*Magd* as a servant, has trained herself similarly to a *Knecht* as a servant […] in all language epochs to today in the keenest sense the dependent (unfree)"

"Richter."[48] Though he initially rejects this role, he does indeed become her judge and "instructs" her throughout her testimony, while simultaneously being controlled by Käthchen.

Once Strahl is complicit in Käthchen's desires, she exerts power over him from her submissive position. When recalling how Strahl rejected her, Käthchen reminds him of his past behavior: "Du stießest mich mit Füßen von dir."[49] Strahl again rejects Käthchen's portrayal arguing, "Das tu ich keinem Hund," but as she becomes more insistent, he admits to kicking her, justifying it by saying: "Das war nur Schelmerei, des Vaters wegen."[50] Though it is often argued that Strahl directs Käthchen's testimony, at this point they begin to co-construct the narrative. Typical of the masochistic dynamic, she guides him into the position of her dominant, which one might mistake for Käthchen submitting to the narrative created by Strahl and to the identities created for her by the male characters.

Though this submission is the first encountered in the drama, it is not the first time that Käthchen serves in an obedient role. Prior to the tribunal, when she literally throws herself at Strahl and follows him to Strassburg, Käthchen had already assumed the role of a *Magd*, or at least that of a lower-class wife. Strahl explains: "*mir* hatte sie sich ganz und gar geweiht, und wusch und flickte, als ob es sonst am Rhein nicht zu haben wäre."[51] While these actions fulfill traditional feminine roles, they are done against the will of Strahl; they are not the actions of a woman in a position to marry a count. By following Strahl and forcing her submission upon him, she prepares him to take on the dominant role, as he does in the tribunal. Käthchen defines

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[48]Though the validity of this classification has been disputed, it is fair to say that the story, even if it is mean to be a Romantic interpretation of the Middle Ages, or a satire of medieval stories, still plays with the tropes central to the period, or at least the eighteenth-century perception of them.

[49]KvH, 578. "You kicked me with your feet away from you."

[50]KvH, 588. "That was just devilshness, on account of your father."

[51]KvH, 287-88. "to me she devoted herself completely, and washed and mended as if there were to be noone else on the Rhine."

the way she will be dominated, while controlling her interactions with others through her devotion. She generates an identity by assuming a submissive position, which is expected of her, but by then subverting these expectations by taking on submissive roles outside her actual social position. The audience, however, has little access to Käthchen's intentions in the drama, but instead are presented with the story through a mediated retelling of the events in Strassburg. Käthchen's submission is thereby defined through the masculine or dominant discourse without reference to how Käthchen's agency is represented by her submission. While her acts of submission throughout the drama vary, it is precisely in the differences and continual shifts in her modes of obedience where she explores the complexities of subjectivity and demonstrates the masochism of the relationship.

From Magd to Knecht

By choosing to offer devotion in ways which belie her gender and social position, Käthchen constructs new meanings for her submission. Following the tribunal, she travels with her father an happens upon a letter which indicates that Strahl will be attacked. Disobeying his order not to follow him, she arrives in the middle of the night to deliver news of the impending attack. While delivering the letter to Strahl, he picks up a whip telling Käthchen to give the letter to the *Knecht* standing at the entrance and return home. Instead of insisting that she stay, or leave without completing her self-assumed task, Käthchen responds: "Du wirst mich dir gehorsam finden. Peitsch mich nur nicht, bis ich mit Gottschalk sprach."[52] She then turns to Gottschalk and insists that he take the letter. Even though she claims that she will obey Strahl, she goes directly against his orders, giving the letter to Gottschalk rather than the *Knecht* and expressing a *willingness* to take her punishment and submit herself to Strahl's power. Contrast

[52]KvH, 1670-71. "You will find me obedient. Just don't whip me until I speak with Gottschalk."

this to her previous reaction to being whipped when she describes, during the tribunal, how when Strahl threatened her with whipping, she left rather than be whipped.[53] Though there is a repetition to the actions by both Käthchen and Strahl, it is the differences in the way that Käthchen reacts that show her freedom to construct herself anew and counter to the dominant discourse laid out by Strahl. While Käthchen's submission is still defined by the dominant discourse, she intentionally uses obedience in a categorically different way to exert influence over how she is perceived by others. Reeve suggests that Strahl's violent reaction in this scene is bound to issues of class and status, arguing that he fears for his reputation.[54] While gesturing to Käthchen's agency and its opposition to Strahl's desires, Reeve fails to consider how Käthchen's obedience in this scene is similar to the submission expected of her as a woman, as well as how Käthchen's agency serves to subvert this gendering by intentionally taking on the duties of a male servant rather than those of a woman seeking Strahl's approval and attentions. It is telling that Reeve considers Gottschalk her "social equal," since her age and socially constructed gender do not truly place them on equal footing. However, because of the new identity that she is able to generate between the identities imposed on her, she becomes a social equal with Gottschalk, even standing in for him in battle at Strahl's side.

The *Feuerprobe* (trial by fire) in the middle of the drama shows the clearest rejection of socially constructed identity. As Kunigunde's castle burns to the ground, Käthchen ventures into the fire to retrieve a scroll casing for Kunigunde, while Strahl stands by ineffectual. Klüger's analysis of this scene points out the masculine figures who dominate the stage, as well as Strahl's inability to grasp the situation. Set in opposition to this is Strahl's conscious

[53]KvH, 579-600.

[54]Reeve, 37.

struggle to choose the correct mode of action according to his station. When Strahl calls for his shield and lance, tools which would be ineffective at putting out the fire, it is Käthchen who brings him the weapons.[55] Strahl seems confused by her actions. Klüger points out: "So steht sie eine ganze Weile mit diesen Requisiten herrschaftlicher Männlichkeit auf der Bühne, wirkt also jungenhaft für das Auge des Publikums."[56] Käthchen assumes the role of Knecht, and at the same time, Strahl stands there as ineffective and impotent. Manfred Weinberg argues that Käthchen's choices are anything but representative of the frail feminine ideal.[57] When she braves the flames, Strahl makes overtures toward saving her, but ultimately Käthchen does not need rescue by Strahl, and his potential interest in saving her says more about his perception of the situation than Käthchen's construction of her identity.

While Strahl acts in accordance with his station, and is thereby completely ineffective, Käthchen acts absolutely outside her own station and the norms of her gender in order to find new ways to offer her service to Strahl. Though Käthchen is biologically female and accepted by all of the characters in the play as a young girl, the actions and tools with which she equips herself are masculine and, at this stage, the audience and the characters are forced to accept her as she performs this masculine role. Her submission is externally identical to that of a *Knecht*, but done by a young girl. Strahl does not initially acknowledge Käthchen's new self-assumed

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[55]Klüger 108.

[56]Ibid. "So she stands a long while with these props of authoritative manliness on the stage, and looks therefore boyish in the eyes of the audience."

[57]Weinberg, 35. "Dennoch kann keine Rede davon sein, dass Käthchen ganz in der Rolle des braven Mädchens aufginge. Schließlich ist sie es, die sich todesmutig ins brennende Schloss begibt, die jederzeit unbeirrt handelt; bringt sie als Bote eine Nachricht mitten durch die Linie der Feinde und vermag klare Angaben über Stärke und Stellung des Feindes zu machen: alles nicht gerade weibliche Tugenden." (Nevertheless there can be no talk of Käthchen being completely absorbed in the role of the good girl. Ultimately, it is she who goes fearlessly into the burning castle, always unflinchingly acts, brings them as a messenger a message right through the line of the enemy and is able to give clear indications of strength and position of the enemy. Everything not truly feminine virtues.)

identity, but through her actions she is able to reject her biological destiny, and reinforce the new subject position that she first established by warning Strahl of the attack. This repetitive gesture is necessary in order to continually reinforce her position as a subject. Kleist shows us not only that Käthchen is far from the socially constructed image of a young girl, but also that her devotion and submission have enabled her to iteratively and discursively construct a new identity and a submissive subject position. In the battle that follows, Klüger argues, Käthchen begins to be identified, or at a minimum accepted, by the male voices in the drama as belonging to their world.[58] Käthchen passes the test of both the purity of her intent, as well as the ability to take a subject position which is both within the social structure and counter to the biologically and socially determined positions. Those around her recognize her that she belongs to this new group of *Knechte* and she takes on additional responsibilities to this end.

This is not the submission of a young girl to her potential husband. Instead, Käthchen shifts her self-prescribed identity as *Magd* from earlier in the story, taking on the duties and responsibilities of its masculine counterpart, the *Knecht*. She is still a submissive, but based on different terms and a different constellation of power. Her submission is also such that Strahl must become an increasingly active participant in her submission in a way he was not prior to the trial. By forcing him into an active role in her submission, an additional masochistic dynamic is created similar to that which Gilles Deleuze describes: the submissive must educate the dominant in the ways of dominating.[59] Additionally, Käthchen maintains control of Strahl's domination through her powerful devotion and submission to Strahl. She establishes the boundaries of the interaction in such a way that she sets hard limits for what is acceptable.

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[58]Klüger, 111.

[59]Deleuze, 35.

By taking on increasingly masculine roles: as a messenger, as a *Knecht* who stands by her knight in battle, as a servant who goes in to save Kunigunde's possessions – still with devotion to her "Lord" but through service to his "Lady" – she shifts between various roles never allowing her identity to be fixed by the social constructions around her.

Submission, rather than a desire for pain, is what Käthchen chooses as the focus of her masochism. After retrieving the picture but not the scroll case from the burning castle, Käthchen, who through divine intervention survived her *Feuerprobe*, is chastised by Kunigunde and praised by Strahl. Both characters treat her according to her socially constructed identity. Fearful that her deceptions will be discovered, Kunigunde takes a position of dominance opposite Käthchen. Strahl treats Käthchen affectionately and seems grateful that she is alive and unharmed, but also that she was able to serve his future wife Kunigunde. The exchange is less telling than the actions which follow. When Kunigunde threatens her, Strahl tells Käthchen that Kunigunde doesn't mean what she says, to which Käthchen responds: "Wenn *du* mich nur nicht schlägst, mein hoher Herr!"[60] She returns to the recurring trope of Strahl beating her and again rejects his beatings. Physical domination and pain are not the way that she desires to be dominated. She shifts from being beaten and returning to her father, to telling Strahl that she is willing to take his beating and return to her father, to explicitly rejecting his beatings and joining his retinue. She does not see herself as an animal to be beaten, the way others have described her supposed "hündische Dienstfertigkeit."[61] Instead the stage direction shows Käthchen claiming a new identity: "*Sie geht zu Flammberg und mischt sich im Hintergrund unter die Knechte.*"[62] While it may seem

[60]KvH, 1931. "As long as *you* don't hit me, my noble lord."

[61]KvH, 1966. "Doglike obedience."

[62]KvH, 1931. "She goes to Flammberg and mingles in the background amongst the *Knechte*."

trivial, by this point in the drama, she has become successful at influencing her identification by others.

Käthchen maintains her position as a *Knecht* later in the drama, even after she is declared the Princess of Schwaben. After Strahl defeats Käthchen's father in a duel, and the Emperor is forced to admit that Käthchen is his daughter, the retinue of Counts return to Strahl's castle to inform Käthchen and the others about her newly proclaimed identity. Käthchen, for her part, has been forced into hiding after receiving death threats from Kunigunde. When Count Otto arrives at the cave where she has been hiding from Kunigunde, he asks: "Wo ist dein Herr, der Reichsgraf, dem du dienst?"[63] The first response is from Käthchen, who says: "Ich weiß es nicht."[64] Käthchen asserts her submissive position, in order to reclaim her position as a *Knecht*. Her words, however, are quickly followed by Gottschalk's assurance, "Er wird sogleich erscheinen!"[65] Though left ambiguous in the stage direction, one might presume Count Otto was speaking to Gottschalk, but Käthchen's insistence that she is Strahl's servant counteracts Otto's new title for her: *Jungfrau.* He gives her the paper with her new identity, but she does not read it and thereby rejecting its authority. Because she does not read the document, the pronouncement that declares her princess is unable to strip her of her self-assumed identity and therefore her agency. When Strahl encounters the group in the next scene, Count Otto again refers to her as a *Jungfrau* and tells Strahl to ask her about the contents of the scroll. Käthchen, ignorant of the change to her identity, responds: "Weiß nit, mein hoher

[63]KvH, 2532. "Where is your lord, the count, who you serve?"

[64]KvH, 2532. "I don't know."

[65]KvH, 2532-3. "He will arrive at once!"

Herr"[66] Strahl then takes the scroll and reads it aloud. Though he declares: "Das Käthchen ist nicht mehr des Theobalds [...] und Katharina heißt sie jetzt von Schwaben,"[67] Käthchen's response is not an acknowledgement of her new position. She turns neither to her father nor to the Emperor, but rather to Gottschalk, who has been her mentor throughout her time serving Strahl: "Gottschalk, hilf, steh mir bei; mir ist nicht wohl."[68] The realization that her ability to reject externally constructed identities is becoming apparent, and she loses the power her submission has afforded her throughout the drama. When the Emperor and Theobald are revealed in the cave, she runs to Theobald exclaiming "Gott im hohen Himmel! Vater!" thereby returning to her position of obedient daughter, and rejecting the now authoritative law.[69] The submission, which was successful at subverting discursive constructions of her identity, is unable to counter the law and she must return to her previously socially defined position of deference: daughter. This normative position is one which she abandoned early in drama with a loss of consciousness subsequent to the trial.

Performative *Ohnmacht*[70]

The moments where Käthchen loses her ability to express her devotion and must renegotiate her position are most often marked by scenes of fainting, near fainting, or a loss of consciousness. At the end of the first act, after Strahl tells her to go back to Heilbronn and stop

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[66]KvH, 2545. "I don't know, my Lord. It may be of note that Käthchen seems to be using a colloquial or lower class pronunciation in this line."

[67]KvH, 2548-51. "Käthchen is no longer Theobalds [..] and how she is called Katharina von Schwaben."

[68]KvH, 2556. "Gottschalk, help, stay with me, I'm not well."

[69]KvH, 2558. "Great god in heaven! Father!"

[70]*Ohnmacht* has two standard definitions. First it describes a loss of consciousness or swooning. When used as a noun, one is described as falling into *Ohnmacht*. It is also used to describe a feeling of disempowerment in the social sphere. The literal translation is "without power," combining the words *ohne* (without) and *Macht* (power) in one term.

following him, Käthchen responds, "Ich hab es dir versprochen," and collapses into *Ohnmacht*.[71] This fainting spell marks a break in the flow of the drama and a shift in her devotion to Strahl. She is literally "ohne Macht," (without power), but this does not result in her being any less devoted to Strahl. Her obedience thereafter manifests in an explicitly desires to follow his commands and desires as his subject rather than as his future wife as predicted in her dream. Hans Dieter Zimmerman suggests that these moments of lost consciousness are where Käthchen exerts her power over Strahl.[72] This position is of interest as it represents not only an emotional attachment to him, but also the ability to place him in positions where he is forced to accept her submission. Based on the stage directions, however, this is the only time where Kleist explicitly describes Käthchen's actions as *Ohnmacht*. Other instances in the drama where she seems to lose consciousness are more active and based, not on external impositions of identity, but on her own ability to define herself. For example, she prostrates herself consciously before Count, her father, and the Cherub after surviving the *Feuerprobe*.[73] She is described as falling into Eleonore's arms after discovering Kunigunde in the grotto, without the makeup and prosthetics that literally construct her feminine identity, but never loses consciousness.[74] Finally, though it is commonly thought that she faints in the final scene of the drama, Kleist does not explicitly specify that she is *ohnmächtig* (fainting) only that she

[71]KvH, 646. "I promise you."

[72]Zimmerman, 206. "Die Liebe und die Macht: ist sie ohnmächtig, ist sie unterwürfig, also ohne Macht, dann kann er sie akzeptieren. Ihr Mittel, Macht über ihn zu gewinnen, ist gerade dieses Ohn-macht; indem sie immer wieder die Ohn-macht signalisiert, gewinnt sie Macht über ihn." (Love and Power: when she is powerless (also aswoon), subservient, thus without power, then he can accept her. Her means of gaining power over him, is precisely this *Ohn-Macht* (without power); that she continually signals *Ohn-macht*, she gains power over him.)

[73]Examples of these moments can be found on the following lines: Count: 438, 2153; Father: 1488; after the *Feuerprobe*: 1888.

[74]KvH, 2219.

sinks into the Countess Helena's arms just as she does with Eleonore earlier.[75] By not calling these acts *Ohnmacht*, Kleist is able to play with the notions of feminine weakness. He marks these performative acts as traditionally characteristic of a loss of consciousness and power, but opens the possibility that Käthchen uses them as a means of construction of her identity. She repeats these acts in order to delay the final interpretation of her identity by society around her and each repetitive act of submission is marked with slight differences to indicate Käthchen's renewed attempts at submissive agency. These are instances that we might describe as *Hingebung*, in that she gives herself over to these people, showing devotion. We will consider several of these losses of consciousness to show how Käthchen claims power through these moments of disempowerment.

I have suggested that her loss of consciousness subsequent to the trial marks a shift in her devotion. Following this, she travels with her father and betrothed to a monastery, when her father attempts to send her back to Strahl, suggesting that she is not well, she refuses by saying: "Der Graf, mein Herr, hat es mir verboten."[76] Here, Käthchen separates herself from her role as daughter, and instead becomes Strahl's subject. She chooses to obey Strahl's will, not the will of her father. In this way, the ultimately unsuccessful journey to the monastery becomes a sort of coming of age, where she gains agency and takes on a new subject position through her renewed desire to serve Strahl. This longing to chase after Strahl seems to repeat her initial submission which stemmed from her desire to fulfill the dream they shared, when she receives a divine message that they will be married. While there are similarities between the two, there are, however, significant differences in the valuation of her submission. When

[75]KvH, 2679.

[76]KvH, 1464. "The Count, my lord, forbade me."

she left for Strassburg to follow Strahl, she did so against the will of her father. In this case, her father supports her desire to be with Strahl. Käthchen is once again ill, or at least perceived as being in ill health by her father, but instead of having two broken legs, she appears flushed and tells her father that she feels "matt."[77] While her father sees her ill health as connected to her separation from Strahl, Käthchen does not choose to go to Strahl, as her father suggests. Instead, she throws herself at her father's feet, in a manner similar to how she had fallen at Strahl's feet, saying:

> Gott im höchsten Himmel; du vernichtest mich! Du legst mir deine Worte kreuzweis, wie Messer, in die Brust! Ich will jetzt nicht mehr ins Kloster gehen, nach Heilbronn will ich mit dir zurückkehren, ich will den Grafen vergessen, und, wen du willst, heiraten; müsst auch ein Grab mir, von acht Ellen Tiefe, das Brautbett sein.[78]

Käthchen pleads with her father to let her go back to Heilbronn; she tells him how much his words have hurt her; and finally she agrees to marry whomever her father specifies even if it would kill her. While this fatalistic attitude and longing for death have been seen as an expression of unrequited love for Strahl, it may also be read as a sign of devotion of daughter to father – not that she will marry anyone even if it would kill her, but rather that she would die for her father if that is what must happen. This evokes images of submissive daughters from works such as Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755) or *Emilia Galotti* (1772), who die in order to preserve their purity and the honor of the family. If this is not an expression of longing for death but a willingness to die for the family, it is yet another expression of obedience where Käthchen is able to gain control of the scene from a submissive position. Though she plays the role of devoted daughter, she does so in order to exert power over her father. As previously

[77]KvH, 1410. "To feel run down."

[78]KvH, 1488-1494. "God in highest heaven; you are killing me! Your words strike me crosswise like knives across the chest! I no longer want to go to the monestary, I want to turn back with you to Heilbronn, I want to forget the Count, and to marry whom you wish; must an eight yard grave be my bridal bed!"

mentioned, this submissive role is one she consciously embraces when she is declared Princess of Schwaben, but only as a means of rejecting the power of this pronouncement.

After this outburst, her father steps in and again tries to take her to the monastery, even though she rejects these attempts to change her mind. This scene commences with a very compliant Käthchen and ends with her actively insisting on her obedience to Strahl. Throughout the course of the scene she becomes more active, but all the while submissive and devoted to both her father and Strahl, often in ways which contradict the assessments of her physical health and capacity. Her loss of consciousness which marks the beginning of this journey, has given her the ability to shift her identity throughout the course of the scene, even threatening to lose consciousness when she says that she is "*matt*" as a means of maintaining control of the interaction with her father and thereby her identity.

Similarly, following the *Feuerprobe*, she abandons the battle group, and thus her position as a *Knecht*, to fall asleep under the *Holunderstrauch*, returning to her original mode of submission and forcing Strahl to seek her out. This scene is not really *Ohnmacht* in the strictest sense since she has chosen to go to sleep.[79] In her slumbering state, Käthchen is both submissive and passive. Strahl, for his part, as suggested by Allan, guides the dialog in this scene.[80] While she was able to direct the scene in the courtroom from a submissive position, now, in a truly passive state, Strahl's version of the story once again becomes dominant. This is evidenced by her initial rejection of his statement that she appeared before him wearing nothing but a "bloßen leichten Hemdchen," and her eventual acceptance of his version of the

[79]KvH, 2019.

[80]KvH, 194. Allen points out the importance of the reversal of position in this scene from the tribunal in the first scene of the drama.

narrative.[81] Though Käthchen is physically unconscious in this scene, it cannot be read in the same way as the moments that Kleist describes as *Ohnmacht* as we shall see later in the chapter. Reeve and Fink both point to the sleepwalking narrative as evidence that Käthchen is unaware of her actions and that they are simply second nature – as though her shadowing of Strahl were passive, socially constructed, and of the same quality each time she does it. There is a fundamental difference between the unconscious state of sleep, where she is unable to influence her identity in any meaningful opposition to the socially imposed one, and unconscious, meek obedience. At no point is she unaware of the dream she shares with Strahl. She seeks to hide it from the court at the beginning of the drama; she suppresses it, while she constructs her new identity throughout the greater part of the drama; and here, when she is in transition between constructed subjectivities, she recalls the dream, albeit with guidance from Strahl, because her ego is no longer protecting her. If anything, her somniloquy is evidence of her constant attempts at finding ways to submit counter to social expectations and in a way that exhibits resistance to social norms.

Upon awaking Käthchen is clearly caught unawares particularly because her "natural" state has been exposed. Immediately after the stage directions indicate she awakens, she declares: "Gott, meines Lebens Herr! Was widerfährt mir!"[82] She then hears Strahl's voice and upon realizing that he is there, the stage directions indicate that she dons her hat and the kerchief that the Graf removed while she was asleep: "*Sie setzt sich den Hut auf, und rückt sich das Tuch zurecht.*"[83] She then falls to her knees at Strahl's feet and apologizes for being there, indicating that she is on her way to her father. Now that the attack on Thurneck has been

[81]KvH, 2126. "simple light camisole."

[82]KvH, 2146. "God, Lord of my life! What is happening to me!"

[83]KvH, 2152. "She places her hat on, and adjusts her kerchief."

thwarted, she intends to follow Strahl's orders (which he issued in the Castle before the attack) that she should return home. Again, her position shifts, as she tries to reestablish her subject position. Moreover, Strahl, who now remembers the dream they shared, questions his feelings toward Käthchen, appears to accept her identity, when he too chastises Käthchen for her disorderly appearance upon Gottschalk's arrival. Strahl, however, is not satisfied with Käthchen's self-constructed submission and instead of seeks a means of codifying Käthchen's identity. Because he now remembers the dream, and believes he has privileged information about Käthchen's identity, he seeks out alternate means to ensure their foretold marriage: namely to have her identity declared for her. While Käthchen struggles to find footing and subject positions counter to those around her, she ultimately returns to a hybrid identity, where she is simultaneously defined by several discourses and is unable to place herself within or against any of them.

Finally, Käthchen's ability to define herself through obedience breaks down completely in the final scenes of the play. Increasingly defined by others, her identity is transformed by external forces and she is offered only two roles, princess and wife, both of which require a sort of submission that Käthchen has continuously resisted throughout the drama. Additionally, the law defining her identity has closed off the potential for her submission to be effective since she is now wholly constructed through the law. When submission was part of her self-constructed identity it was a source of resistance and critique, but now her station in society has changed. While Käthchen explores submissive power dynamics as a means of rejecting the identities socially imposed upon her, iteratively doing so in a way that convinces those around her to participate in her obedience and submission, in the end, she is once again "*ohne Macht*," (without power) before the social construction of female

identity through marriage and her new legally imposed identity. She is blocked from active submission, which offers the potential for critique. Instead, her new position is static, fixed, and without critical potential.

Throughout the drama Käthchen is able to determine her own identity. Her identities are not static and easily definable positions, but ones that shift and offer alternate means of identifying subjectivity through active obedience. Käthchen finds ways to submit that enable her to fulfill her socially assigned position as a submissive woman, while at the same time taking on new roles beyond those constructed for her by others and beyond biologically determined roles. While her masochistic position breaks down in places throughout the play, she is able to maintain control of the meanings of her submission in ways that are counter to traditionally female roles but fully in keeping with masochism's critical potential. Kleist's *Käthchen* is firmly rooted in a consciously performative subject creation and offers a subtle critique of social constructions of power. This interplay of power between dominant discourse and submissive subject goes beyond the focus on sexuality and love, which so often is the focus in scholarship on Kleist's drama. Instead it offers a more generalizable critique of the social construction of identity, and suggests that subversion of these discourses, through literature and theater, is possible from a subordinate position. Devotion and submission, therefore, need not destroy the subject or be seen as representations of normative social constructions of the subject, but can offer a performative critique of this social construction. When taken in this way, we can see Käthchen as fully in keeping with the political agenda identified in Kleist's works. Though she is ultimately defined by the "Hammer der Willkür" which values her submission as passive and offers her only the role of wife and daughter, Käthchen's position throughout the drama echoes what the definition of Kleist's political

aesthetic that Howe so adeptly outlined as being focused on "revolutionary discourses of freedom and tyranny, rebellion and assimilation, agency and conditioning."[84] Kleist develops a character who operates within all of these discourses, yet always from a submissive position, varying her submission in ways which expose the construction of her identity. If Käthchen is representative of a masochistic subject, it is in the way that her submission functions as a foil to social constructions of subjectivity.

Upending the Dynamics of Power in Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*

Wanda, the female protagonist in Sacher-Masoch's novella *Venus im Pelz*, has been read in a strikingly similar way to Kleist's *Käthchen*. Though the positions are diametrically opposed – Käthchen as submissive and doting and Wanda as dominant and cruel – both texts presumably depict women in their "natural" state, and both women are described in most critical literature as passive objects of men's fantasies.[85] This analysis will consider, counter to most analyses of the novella, how Wanda exhibits agency, and thereby is able to serve as an active participant in the construction of her identity counter her socially constructed nature. By identifying women as naturally cruel, but then allowing Wanda a degree of agency to value her dominance in ways counter to this discourse on cruelty, Sacher-Masoch's text offers the same critique of socially constructed subjectivity that we see in Kleist's work. Wanda shifts the meanings and motivations of her dominance in ways that break free of the roles available to her

[84]Howe, 41.

[85]Scholars like Deleuze and Koschorke describe Wanda as being a mere participant in the masochistic dynamic, led along passively into her position to dominate Severin. Though Koschorke gestures toward some form of religious or social critique in Sacher-Masoch's writing, he argues that this is just "window dressing" for his sadistic fantasies. See: Albrecht Koschorke, *Leopold von Sacher-Masoch: Die Inszenierung einer Perversion* (München: Piper, 1988).

in the novella similar to what Käthchen does with her submission. In this way, Sacher-Masoch complicates the hammer-anvil dichotomy he asserts is the moral to his tale.

While the novella has been classified as erotic fiction, there is very little in the way of overt eroticism in the text. Instead it wavers between lengthy discourses on the roles of men and women, explications of the way the protagonist desires to be dominated, and sumptuous descriptions of masochistic tableaux, rife with the anticipation of the pleasure associated with being whipped at the hands of a fur-clad woman. In the narrative frame, we encounter the dominant, masculine figure of our protagonist, a nobleman named Severin, through an unnamed character who has come to pay him a visit. Prior to arriving, the visitor has a dream where he discusses women's natural cruelty with a statue of Venus, who accuses him and men from the "north" of greater acts of cruelty by requiring women remain faithful without the promise of love. Upon telling Severin of his dream, the two discuss the cruelty of women until Severin gives his opinion of the guest's Venus in furs, offering his companion a first-hand account of the cruelties he experienced at the hands of a woman. The novella's framed narrative takes the form of a diary and tells of Severin's penchant for being dominated by women in furs, which he developed after a childhood encounter with his domineering aunt. He meets Wanda, a recent widow, signs a contract which obligates him to serve as her slave, and lives this relationship with her until she introduces a third party into their relationship. Thereafter, Severin breaks the contract and is apparently "cured" of his desire for dominant women in furs. The novella ends with the moral outlined in the introduction to this chapter: that as relationships stand, one is either a hammer or an anvil.

While attempts have been made to identify political motivations behind other of Sacher-Masoch's works, particularly his works on Jewish life in the Austrian region of Galicia,

or his early historical writings, *Venus im Pelz* has been almost universally depicted as representative of both Sacher-Masoch's sexual proclivities and a key document to understanding the late century crisis of masculinity.[86] Though the various statements claiming a sort of battle of the sexes can be read as Sacher-Masoch's own view on the state of gender relations in Europe, there are too many other references to the potential for gender equality, and general notions of political emancipation, to see this text as descriptive of simple personal erotic desires or the state of gender relations. My focus in this section is not to suggest that Sacher-Masoch is necessarily subscribing to a particular view of female emancipation or a particular political project. I am less interested in the specificity of the political project than I am in what seems to be the overall strategy undertaken to actualize the project. The strategy is to appropriate the terms of the dominant discourse and create a subcultural space of critique. Descriptions of the novella by most, if not all, scholars of sexual and erotic politics in the work identify Wanda as the passive object of Severin's desire.[87] By focusing entirely on Severin's masochistic desires, these scholars are only interested in the combination of pleasure and pain, and what that might tell readers about political power. However, if we see Wanda as active and distinct from Severin, just as we see Käthchen as active, then masochism may not about a crisis of masculinity, but instead about a general crisis in society with marginalized figures – including women. Gender is used as a point of departure for critiques of the social construction of subjectivity not necessarily as the primary object of critique.

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[86]See the introduction for a full discussion of the crisis of masculinity.

[87]For further discussions about the sexual politics in Sacher-Masoch's works, see: Michael Gratzke, *Liebesschmerz und Textlust: Figuren der Liebe und des Masochismus in der Literatur* (Konigshausen & Neumann, 2000); Barbara Hyams, "The Whip and the Lamp: Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, the Woman Question, and the Jewish Question," *Women in German Yearbook* 13 (January 1, 1997): 67–79; Barbara Caroline Mennel, *The Representation of Masochism and Queer Desire in Film and Literature*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Scholarship suggesting a political quality to Sacher-Masoch's writings is critical to this analysis. John Noyes takes a Foucauldian approach to his reading of *Venus im Pelz*, but from the perspective that sexual pleasure through pain and humiliation is the socially critical aspect of the work.[88] Noyes states: "Masochism takes control of the technologies the produce subjectivity as cultural stereotypes. It develops elaborate strategies for framing the collapse of socially sanctioned identities, and it performs this collapse as a pleasurable abandonment of identity."[89] The cultural stereotypes to which Noyes refers, however, are those that reference the construction of male identities. He is relatively silent on the female dominant, as he identifies her as a passive participant, who is only part of the story to act out the desires of the male masochist. Moreover, Noyes is entirely focused on the sexual domination and submission of the male masochist. By considering the female dominant as likewise constructed cultural stereotype, we are afforded a different view of social critique in the work.

Ulrich Bach's article on political utopianism in Sacher-Masoch's non-erotic work convincingly lays out the argument, that "Sacher-Masoch's novels suggest an inextricable link between private, inverted gender roles and public, ethnic conflicts in the paracolonial setting of Eastern Europe."[90] The intersection of his fictional, erotic, historical, and editorial work all point to a decidedly political project centered on issues of identity and subjectivity of marginalized groups. In considering Sacher-Masoch's political project, Ulrich Bach suggests it is the "enactment of gender reversals and sexual negotiation that allows the author and his readership to explore the boundaries of permissiveness within the social order at the borders of

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[88]John K. Noyes, *The Mastery of Submission: Inventions of Masochism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[89]Noyes, 4.

[90]Ulrich Bach, "Sacher-Masoch's Utopian Peripheries," *The German Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (April 2007): 201–219.

the Habsburg Empire."[91] Bach argues that Sacher-Masoch uses characters at the fringes of society in order to critique the social structure. As a widow, Wanda embodies this marginal position, enabling her to explore the boundaries of her social position and identity and to stand outside of the hammer-anvil dynamic. Whether it is Slavs, Africans, or widows, the characters in Sacher-Masoch's texts are able to impact our view of society from this marginal position. Why then should we continue to focus not either on a European crisis of masculinity or the erotic aspects of *Venus im Pelz*? Though Sacher-Masoch's novels are certainly grounded in the political and social reality of the Hapsburg Empire, when read in conjunction with Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, we see that they also participate in a longer tradition of using submission as a means of critique, and of inciting political and social change.

If masochism is no longer just about the erotic, and need not be imbued with the erotic baggage with which psychoanalysis and Krafft-Ebing have burdened it, then the negotiation of power between Severin and Wanda lies at the heart of their relationship. While at times they describe the love that they have for each other, their relationship is ultimately founded on negotiation of power, which exposes the roots of all social relationships. When Sacher-Masoch refers to the notions of hammer and anvil in his text, we may interpret this as a gesture to Goethe or Voltaire, but we may also see this as an explication of what his text is attempting to expose. It is not simply that he wants to take one position over the other, but rather that he wishes to show how the dichotomous system itself is broken. In order to change the social order, and to escape the notion of individuals, or classes, or races of people being defined by a specific nature, Sacher-Masoch shows that the only way out of these prescribed notions of nature is through a social order which no longer focuses on the natural and is instead focused

[91]Bach, 202.

on rights and away from the tyranny of inequality. He does this by showing, first, how the "nature" of women and love is a social construct, then he affords female characters the agency to resist this social construction by embracing their roles and shifting its significance.

The Social Construction of Feminine Cruelty

In the fictional world of *Venus im Pelz*, women are marked as naturally cruel and despotic. One can certainly make the argument that Sacher-Masoch seems specifically to be referring to Slavic women, particularly though his clear focus on the more rural areas of the Austrian Empire, the descriptions of the private spaces and belongings, including samovars, and the names of his characters.[92] This would also tie into the political project identified by Bach. Cruelty, however, is a socially constructed concept which is valued differently depending on the social context as is made clear in the beginning pages of the novella, in dreamed conversation between Venus and the unnamed visitor comprising the first part of the framing narrative.

The social construction of cruelty is marked as both a masculine and feminine trait at the beginning of the novel, when the narrative frame's unnamed protagonist dreams, he dreams of Venus, who wears furs because she is in the north. When he asks her why she is still cold since spring has been in full swing for two weeks, she answers that she has finally begun to understand German philosophy and notions of female virtue. In this context, she states: "Ich verstehe auf einmal die germanische Frauentugend und die deutsche Philosophie, und ich erstaune auch nicht mehr, daß ihr im Norden nicht lieben könnt, ja nicht einmal eine Ahnung

[92]Wanda was a common Slavic name – particularly in Poland as Princess Wanda was a vaunted figure who was the topic of literary attention throughout the nineteenth century – including Zacharias Werner's drama *Wanda* in 1809, several works by Slavic authors, and Antonin Dvorak's opera *Vanda* (1875), which is cast as the struggle between pagan Slavs and Christian Germans.

davon habt, was Liebe ist."[93] As she sneezes and gathers her furs around her to keep warm she reminds the protagonist of their first meeting and how he loved the beautiful clothes and the warmth in her appearance – while now she is strictly marble and her eyes empty. He says that she taught him how to love. When she begins to accuse him of treating her poorly, she mentions how loyal she has been to him and he takes exception to this stating; "Sie sind zwar ein göttliches Weib, aber doch ein Weib, und in der Liebe grausam wie jedes Weib."[94] She counters the accusation that all women are cruel when it comes to love, arguing that he calls cruelty "was eben das Element der Sinnlichkeit, der heiteren Liebe, die Natur des Weibes ist, sich hinzugeben, wo es liebt, und alles zu lieben, was ihm gefällt."[95] When he then points to the cruelty of women's infidelity, his fur-clad Venus states that women are loyal as long as they love, "ihr aber verlangt vom Weibe Treue ohne Liebe, und Hingebung ohne Genuß, wer ist da grausam, das Weib oder der Mann? – Ihr nehmt im Norden die Liebe überhaupt zu wichtig und zu ernst. Ihr sprecht von Pflichten, wo nur vom Vergnügen die Rede sein sollte."[96] Sacher-Masoch seems to suggest love and cruelty are both social constructs, and that within the "north" – and one can only presume he also means Christian north – social relations are cruel in their requirement that women stay in marriages without love. Though the visitor suggests that this is not the case, Venus expounds upon her criticism of gender relations.

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[93]*Venus*, 9. "I suddenly understand the Germanic woman's virtue and the German philosophy, and I am no longer surprised, that you who live in the north cannot love, that you don't have one clue what love is."

[94]*Venus*, 10. "You are a godlike woman, but still a woman and when it comes to love, cruel like every woman."

[95]*Venus*, 10. "That which has an element of sensuality, of light-hearted love, the nature of a woman is to give herself over, to be devoted where she loves, and to love that which she fancies."

[96]*Venus*, 10. "But you expect from a woman, loyalty without love, and devotion without enjoyment, who is then cruel, the woman or the man? – In the north you take love to seriously and for too important. You speak of responsibilities, where only enjoyment should be the topic of conversation."

The introductory dream may serve as a microcosm for the debates surrounding women's social position, or even the crisis of masculinity. However, she grounds her observations in thousands of years of experience with relationships - which as the goddess of love, she should be familiar. She points out:

> je hingebender das Weib sich zeigt, um so schneller wird der Mann nüchtern und herrisch werden; je grausamer und treuloser es aber ist, je mehr es ihn mißhandelt, je frevelhafter es mit ihm spielt, je weniger Erbarmen es zeigt, um so mehr wird es die Wollust des Mannes erregen, von ihm geliebt, angebetet werden. So war es zu allen Zeiten, seit Helena und Delila, bis zur zweiten Katharina und Lola Montez herauf.[97]

She claims that the cruelty of women and the attraction to this cruelty by men is a historical phenomenon. If this is the case, then the remarks by Severin at the end – that as things stand now men and women are either despots or slaves, but not companions – suggests that even though this is the historical position of men and women vis-à-vis each other, society can be changed in order to transform this relationship. The unnamed dreamer admits that he is drawn to a cruel woman, and Venus gets him to admit that he is particularly interested in one in furs. Before they can continue their conversation, he is awoken from his dream to meet with Severin. The Cossack who awakens him chastises him for falling asleep in his clothes while reading a book. The book he has been reading while he had this dream with Venus was no light novel or piece of *Unterhaltungsliteratur*, but was a work by Hegel.

The point of bringing up this scene is twofold. First as the introduction to the book it sets the tone for the events which follow. We are expecting a story about a Venus in furs, and from the first pages we literally see a Venus in furs. This Venus is the actual goddess in a marble statue form. In an almost reversal of the *Pygmalion* story, she becomes more stonelike,

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[97]*Venus*, 12. "The more devotion the woman shows, the faster the man will be sober and authoritative; however, the crueler and more disloyal she is, the more she mistreats him, the more outrageously she plays with him, the less compassion she shows, the more she will evoke lust in him, will be loved by him, and will be worshiped by him. So it has always been, since Helena and Delila, to Katharina II and Lola Montez."

the longer she is in the north with its cold attitude toward women and relationships. Second, this discussion of the role of women and the rejection of this role by female characters is carried through the entire novella particularly through the character of Wanda.

Performative Cruelty

There are two ways that Sacher-Masoch demonstrates resistance to the social construction of women's roles through his character of Wanda. The first is by making her a widow, who stands outside the social structures for women, and the second are her performative moments of cruelty, which are ambiguous in their support of cultural gender norms. Wanda varies her modes of domination and cruelty to break free of the roles available to her just as Käthchen does with her submission. We can complicate the hammer-anvil dichotomy by considering how her position is constructed counter to discursively generated cruelty and domination both through her "natural" identity of widow and her constructed identity of tyrant. Furthermore, rather than seeing Wanda as a simple reflection of Severin's fantasies, we note that she grounds her domination, cruelty, and longing for pleasure within the confines of the dichotomy between the Germans and the Greeks, Christians and Pagans. Her dominance and cruelty reject the Christian values and are grounded in an interest in hedonistic pleasure-seeking culture of the Greeks. Her agency and ability to shift the focus of her domination and cruelty are tied closely to her ideals of pleasure and lifestyle.

As a widow, Wanda stands as a figure on the margins of marital and familial structures central to nineteenth-century European society, and as such she is able to question the inequalities of marriage and the social construction of gender norms. She no longer belongs to a father, nor does she belong to her now-deceased husband and she is uninterested in marriage. However, she does agree to live with Severin as though in marriage for one year, in order to

allow him to prove himself as the man for her. Severin is permitted all of the rights "*eines Gatten, eines Anbeters, eines Freundes.*"[98] Though Wanda agrees to a relationship of equality, the masochistic contract they sign, establishes a distinctly unequal relationship. It takes on the same sort of social meaning as a marriage contract but whereas the marriage contract offers most rights and privileges to the husband, the masochistic contract privileges the woman, and establishes the man as her slave.[99] The first time Wanda mentions the possibility of Severin's intention of marrying her, it is coupled with a language and a gesture that marriage would turn Severin into a *Pantoffelheld* – an expression meaning henpecked husband.[100] Severin himself states "in der Liebe gibt es kein Nebeneinander,"[101] suggesting that Severin's perception of the social construction of love and marriage cannot represent a union of equals, but rather that one party must always be above the other. Wanda, however, does not seek the socially accepted relationship of husband and wife and the patriarchal power roles that it entails. Instead she enters into a relationship where she is able to receive all the benefits of a marriage without any of the restrictions to her agency. Furthermore, the independence her role as a widow affords here is highlighted by the lessons she is taught by her recently deceased husband. On his death bed he tells her that she should take up with other men because she is still young. She attributes her Greek (read: hedonistic) desires not only to her father, but also to her husband. Though she does not follow his advice, she nevertheless explains, "er erzog mich

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[98]*Venus*, 35. *"As a husband, a worshiper, a friend* "[emphasis in the original].

[99]The early to mid nineteenth-century legal and political discourse on marriage was certainly more complicated than is presented here, but as presented in the text, the masochistic and marriage contracts are constructed as opposites in order to emphasize the similarity between the two. For a more detailed account of the complicated field of relationships of marriage in nineteenth-century Germany and Austria, see Vick, "Liberalism, Nationalism, and Gender Dichotomy in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany."

[100]*Venus*, 32.

[101]*Venus*, 29. "In love there is no coexistence."

zu dem, was ich bin, zu einer Griechin."[102] While maintaining her fidelity to her husband, she points to her education at his hands and how it changed her attitude toward relationships. She considers herself a Greek as a result of her husband's suggestion that she take a lover. This association with the Greek enables her to assume a role wherein the taking of lovers is acceptable. This desire to maintain relationships outside the bounds of acceptability for her role as a widow, is, in her mind, focused on the escape from modern social constrains and an effort to self-identify as a Greek and pagan.

Perhaps the most critical departure in establishing Wanda's agency in *Venus im Pelz* is to show her as a willing participant with her own desires and views on relationships and pleasure. In her discussions with Severin on relationships at the beginning of the framed narrative, Wanda articulates a distaste for Christianity and establishes herself as a pagan with a desire to live a life more akin to that of the Greeks. "Durch das Christentum – dessen grausames Emblem – das Kreuz – etwas Entsetzliches für mich hat – wurde erst etwas Fremdes, Feindliches in die Natur und ihre unschuldigen Triebe hineingetragen. Der Kampf des Geistes mit der sinnlichen Welt ist das Evangelium der Modernen. Ich will keinen Teil daran."[103] She wants no part of either the modern world or Severin's Christian connection of pain and pleasure, but rather wishes to focus her efforts on living a life with more freedom. She pities modern women: "die moderne Frau, für jene armen, hysterischen Weiblein, welche im somnambulen Jagen nach einem erträumten männlichen Ideal den besten Mann nicht zu schätzen verstehen und unter Tränen und Krämpfen täglich ihre christlichen Pflichten

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[102]*Venus*, 28. "He raised me to be what I am, a Greek."

[103]*Venus*, 26. "Through Christianity, whose cruel emblem – the cross – has something disgusting for me – would be carried in something foreign and antagonistic in the nature and its innocent drives. The spirit's fight with the sensual world is the gospel of the modern. I don't want any part of it."

verletzen."[104] By describing the "modern" woman as a somnambulant chasing after a masculine ideal, she also highlights that these women are constructed and a product of acculturation through religion and social expectations. The description of a sleepwalking woman hunting her ideal man bears an interesting resemblance to the descriptions of Käthchen in both secondary literature and by the men who surround her in the drama. In Kleist's work, this is seen as a woman's "natural" demeanor, but, as we have seen, this a construction of Käthchen's character in the social discourse. Just as Käthchen's "natural" supposed subservience and passivity is a social construct, so too is Wanda's cruelty a social construction that she rejects.

Wanda seeks to create spaces where she can construct her identity outside of the social construction of submission and dominance which denies her agency. She does this by relating herself to Severin's dual ideal of a cruel woman and faithful wife. While *Venus im Pelz* appears to focus on the cold nature of women, we can just as easily see how Severin seeks out the compassion of his other warm natured ideal as well, thereby shifting back and forth between his desire to be a slave to a cruel woman and his longing for a faithful wife. Monika Treut outlines this discrepancy explaining that in his search for the ideal woman, Sacher-Masoch creates a situation where the character "swims" between the demonic cruel woman and the trinity of daughter-wife-mother.[105] This take on the angel/whore dichotomy is a fairly common literary trope and is central to the fluctuating densities of Severin's masochism. He

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[104]*Venus*, 26. "The modern woman ... for those poor, hysterical little women, who in their somnambulistic hunting for a dreamed up masculine ideal, fail to appreciate the best men and who in in tears and spasms are hurt by their Christian duties every day..." This discussion of the hysterical women corresponds to what Foucault describes as one of the "four great unities" developed in eighteenth-century as a means of controlling sexuality. By defining women and their bodies as hysterical, they were regulated and confined to the role of mother. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 103-04.

[105]Monika Treut, *Die grausame Frau: Zum Frauenbild bei de Sade und Sacher-Masoch* (Basel: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1984), 215.

attempts to create an ideal despotic woman and when he loses control of her he is comforted by the thought of his loving ideal:

> Ich habe zwei Frauenideale. Kann ich mein edles, sonniges, eine Frau, welche mir treu und gütig mein Schicksal teilt, nicht finden, nun dann nur nichts Halbes oder Laues! Dann will ich lieber einem Weibe ohne Tugend, ohne Treue, ohne Erbarmen hingegeben sein. Ein solches Weib in seiner selbstsüchtigen Größe ist auch ein Ideal. Kann ich nicht das Glück der Liebe voll und ganz genießen, dann will ich ihre Schmerzen, ihre Qualen auskosten bis zur Neige; dann will ich von dem Weibe, das ich liebe, mißhandelt, verraten werden, und je grausamer, um so besser. Auch das ist ein Genuß![106]

Though Severin believes that he has found a combination of both ideals in Wanda, he still offers her a choice of which one she will embody. She exclaims that it might be amusing to have someone in whom she is interested, and who loves her, completely under her control. And then tells Severin: "Ich wähle also, ich will, daß Sie mein Sklave sind, ich werde mein Spielzeug aus Ihnen machen!"[107] While at various points in the story Wanda embodies the roles of both loving companion and cruel dominant it is this desire to play with Severin, to make him her slave and then toy with the dynamics at play which is critical to her ability to revalue her dominance and cruelty as something counter to his discourse. Though we have focused a great deal on discursively constructed and critically performative submission in this chapter, *Venus im Pelz* requires us to shift our perspective to see dominance and cruelty as likewise constructed and open to performative critique. Wanda is constructed as dominant, and thereby uses that role to her advantage. As a figure who thrives outside of socially constructed

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[106]*Venus*, 37-8. "I have two ideal women. If I cannot find my precious, sunny ideal, a woman who will faithfully hare my fate with me then I want nothing halfway or lukewarm! Then I would prefer to be devoted to a woman without honor, without loyalty, without pity. Such a woman in her selfish greatness is also an ideal. If I cannot find the fortune to enjoy love fully and completely, then I want to savor its pain and suffering until I am destroyed, then I want to be mistreated and betrayed by a woman who I love – the crueler the better. That is also a pleasure."

[107]*Venus*, 38. "I will choose. I want you to be my slave. I will make you my plaything."

identities, Wanda is the perfect example of a woman who is able to break out and act as an independent agent.

She craves pleasure for herself and her partner. She explicitly states that she does not want to be cruel, but is often portrayed as enjoying the moments of Severin's diminished control and suffering. This is the paradox at the center of their relationship. Wanda is not interested in being cruel if it causes unhappiness, but for Severin, cruelty causes happiness. As long as both of them are still gaining pleasure from the relationship, she is willing to continue being cruel, but she often breaks these moments of performative cruelty by embodying Severin's other ideal. Through this personification of his dual ideal, the cruel woman and the warm nurturing woman, she attempts to renegotiate the bounds of the scene by changing her approach to Severin and continuously tests the boundaries between nature and social construction of her identity and the personal construction of her identity counter to them both. This is perhaps best seen though Wanda's ability to seize the fantasy from Severin.

The relationship is initially bounded by Severin's fantasy, but as Wanda begins to take control, Severin's ability to control Wanda wanes. He questions his own desires and tells Wanda that she is taking *his* fantasy too seriously. She responds with strength and furor: "Zu Ernst? Sobald ich sie ausführe, kann ich doch nicht beim Scherze stehen bleiben. […] [D]u weißt, wie verhaßt mir jedes Spiel, jede Komödie ist. Du hast es so gewollt. War es meine Idee oder die Deine? Habe ich dich dazu verführt oder hast du meine Einbildung erhitzt? Nun ist es mir allerdings Ernst."[108] Though Severin created the discursive cruelty, now Wanda has turned it into something of her own. While Severin was only interested in it as a form of play,

[108]*Venus*, 66. "Too seriously? As soon as I begin I can't simply continue with jokes. You know how I hate every game and every comedy. You wanted it this way. Was it my idea or yours? Did I lead you do this or did you enflame my imagination? Now it is serious for me."

Wanda has shifted the meaning to create cruelty which pushes the boundaries. She performatively constructs her identity until it becomes something real. Severin hopes that her cruelty is a performance that she will abandon at a later date, but she does not. Wanda in an act of performative speech declares him her slave. Most research on masochism points to the privileged position of the submissive masochist,[109] particularly with regard to entering into the relationship and claiming their identity as slaves, but by claiming Severin as her slave, Wanda takes control away from him and eventually pushes the bounds of his fantasies to the point that he abandons them, thus upending the masculine discourse defining women's "natural" cruelty.

Dissolving the Hammer and Anvil Roles

The "curative" ending of the story does not necessarily lead one to believe that Wanda has been successful in her performative reevaluation of dominance and her counter-discourse to women's "natural" cruelty. Though Severin still claims that one is either hammer or anvil, lamenting that he gave himself over to the whims of a woman, there are suggestions that the social construction of women as the dichotomous opposite of men must be reconsidered. Perhaps most interesting in this passage is Severin's indication that society might revise its definition of marriage into something of a partnership by educating and emancipating women.

> Daß das Weib, wie es die Natur geschaffen und wie es der Mann gegenwärtig heranzieht, sein Feind ist und nur seine Sklavin oder seine Despotin sein kann, nie aber seine Gefährtin. Dies wird sie erst dann sein können, wenn sie ihm gleich steht an Rechten, wenn sie ihm ebenbürtig ist durch Bildung und Arbeit.[110]

The ambiguity of the source of women's cruelty is central to the lesson to be learned from his story. Woman is created both by nature and by man as an enemy, but since the definition of

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[109]See Deleuze; Koschorke; Mennel; Silverman.

[110]*Venus*, 138. "That woman, as nature has made her and as man has currently raised her, is his enemy and can only be his slave of despot, but never his companion. She will only be his companion when she stands equal to him in rights and when she is his match through education and employment."

what is natural is also a social construct, society has wholly constructed an antagonistic position for women. He does not suggest that women are only meant to be seen as dominant and cruel, which might be evidence for a sort of masculine crisis wherein men are being socially constructed as weak against an increasingly dominant feminine force. Instead, women are offered two hostile positions contra men – dominant and submissive – and as such men and women, as they are constructed as social and natural beings, are never co-equals. This notion of the *Gefährtin* (female partner) then is only possible if reforms are undertaken which alter the dominant discourse surrounding women's position.

For her part, Wanda creates positions of dominance which shift between cruel and loving in order to bridge this divide between man and woman. Though her power and authority are socially constructed as cruel, she uses them as a means to force Severin to rethink his desires. The letter she writes to Severin three years following the encounters described in the framed narrative make this clear, by stating that she did love him but that his desire for cruelty suffocated her feelings.

> [D]arf ich Ihnen noch einmal gestehen, daß ich Sie sehr geliebt habe, Sie selbst aber haben mein Gefühl erstickt durch Ihre phantastische Hingebung, durch Ihre wahnsinnige Leidenschaft. Von dem Augenblicke an, wo Sie mein Sklave waren, fühlte ich, daß Sie nicht mehr mein Mann werden konnten, aber ich fand es pikant, Ihnen Ihr Ideal zu verwirklichen und Sie vielleicht – während ich mich köstlich amüsierte – zu heilen.[111]

Though Severin's desires change her mode of domination from one of love to one of self-interest, it is telling that Wanda believes that her actions had the potential to "heal" Severin, to convince him that he should no longer desire women in such a way. When she inquires about his current state, she hopes that he has been able to find happiness and reclaim

[111]*Venus*, 137. "[Now] I may confess to you, that I loved you very much, however you suffocated my feelings through your fantastical devotion, through your insane passions. From the moment when you were my slave, I felt that you could no longer be my husband, but I found it risqué to actualize your ideal, and perhaps to heal you while I deliciously amused myself."

the parts of himself that attracted her to him. "Ihrem Leben wird es gewiß nicht an Sonnenschein fehlen, wenn Ihre Phantasie die Herrschaft über Sie verloren hat und jene Eigenschaften bei Ihnen hervorgetreten sind, welche mich anfangs so sehr anzogen, die Klarheit des Gedankens, die Güte des Herzens und vor allem – *der sittliche Ernst*."[112] The clarity of his thoughts, goodness of his heart, and especially his moral gravity are what drew her to Severin. Wanda hopes that in becoming well, he will be able to recapture these qualities in himself.

Just as Severin maintains an ideal woman, so too does Wanda present her own ideal. As the two discussed marriage and love prior to signing their masochistic contract she states that her ideal man would be able to subdue her.

> [E]s müßte ein voller Mann sein, ein Mann, der mir imponiert, der mich durch die Gewalt seines Wesens unterwirft, verstehen Sie? und jeder Mann – ich kenne das – wird, sobald er verliebt ist – schwach, biegsam, lächerlich, wird sich in die Hand des Weibes geben, vor ihr auf den Knien liegen, während ich nur jenen dauernd lieben könnte, vor dem ich knien würde.[113]

We see in this passage that Wanda's ideal man is not weak and willing to give himself over to a woman, but instead he would be a man before whom she would be willing to kneel. Historian Gertrud Lenzer attributes these characteristics to the type of man Wanda would be willing to marry, but this conclusion, however, is not represented in the text.[114] In fact just a few lines earlier Wanda states that she is not interested in marrying again. She will not be with someone

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[112]*Venus*, 137. There will certainly be no lack of sunshine in your life, if your fantasies have lost their dominion over you and those qualities have emerged in you, which at the beginning drew me to you, the clarity of your thoughts, the goodness of your heart, and above all the your *moral seriousness*.

[113]*Venus*, 34. "He must be a complete man, a man, who would impress me, who would subdue me through the force of his being, do you understand? And I know this, as soon as he is in love, every man becomes, weak, pliant, ridiculous, will give himself over to a woman, will lay before her on his knees, while I could only love someone with consistency, before whom I would kneel."

[114]Gertrud Lenzer, "On Masochism: A Contribution to the History of a Phantasy and Its Theory," *Signs* 1, no. 2 (1975): 287.

whom she does not love, though she condescends to stay with Severin for a time because she finds him interesting – a sentiment reiterated in her letter at the end of the novella. She sees herself as potentially equal to her would be lover, and in this way represents a radical break from the hammer-anvil dichotomy by demonstrating how two dominant figures might be drawn to each other.

Moreover, by representing Severin's two ideals, she also rejects the construction of women as either dominant or submissive and instead becomes an embodiment of both and attempts to teach Severin how he might become both as well. Toward the end of the novella when Severin fears that Wanda will leave him, he threatens to kill her. It is at this point that she tells him that he is now a man that she can love because he has taken control. "So gefällst du mir…jetzt bist du ein Mann, und ich weiß in diesem Augenblicke, daß ich dich noch liebe."[115] Severin, it seems, is now able to embody Wanda's stated ideal, and yet Wanda from her position as dominant has forced him into a position of equality. She is not a dominated woman without power. Instead she stands equal to Severin and declares him to no longer be her slave and asks that they abandon the firm positions of dominant and submissive. Wanda's cruelty then serves a similar purpose to Käthchen's submission. Her varied attempts to dominate function in a way that counters the dominant discourse on women's cruelty and forms new modes of subjective experience for both Wanda and Severin. Though most analyses of *Venus im Pelz* point to Wanda as passively going along with Severin's fantasies, they ignore the potential for her agency in the relationship and thereby the construction of social dominance and submission as represented by the two characters. By approaching Sacher-Masoch through the lens of Kleist's *Käthchen*, we see a continuity between the two positions in the masochistic

[115]*Venus*, 128-9. "This is how I like you…now you are a man, and I know in this moment, that I still love you."

discourse. Whether dominant or submissive, male or female, the individual has the potential, within a dynamic that exposes the structures of power, to produce value to his or her position counter to the status-quo. Käthchen and Wanda much like Käthchen and Penthesilea, become opposite poles to each other on the borders of society. The two serve very similar functions in their respective texts, as a foil to masculine power, but they are shown doing so from socially constructed passivity, which they then subvert.

While we have been focused on the hammer-anvil dichotomy of the novella, there is a second, equally important moral, which Severin provides in his final assessment of the story. "Daher die Moral der Geschichte: Wer sich peitschen läßt, verdient, gepeitscht zu werden. Mir sind die Hiebe, wie du siehst, sehr gut bekommen, der rosige, übersinnliche Nebel ist zerronnen und mir wird niemand mehr die heiligen Affen von Benares oder den Hahn des Plato für ein Ebenbild Gottes ausgeben."[116] The first part of this "moral," if we can call it that, shows how Severin's opinion has been affected by Wanda. Cruelty and tyranny only have power if one allows them power over the individual. This is a dramatically different moral than the hammer-anvil dichotomy, but points back to the possibility of alternatives and modes of possibility for individual agency which we see in Goethe, Voltaire, and even Kleist. It requires that one be open to the formation of the despot, or that he be willing to reject its impact altogether. The beatings he received from Wanda, as well as those he took at the hands of others in the story, were enough to form him into an agent of his own destiny.

The second part of the moral specifically references Schopenhauer and Plato, respectively. In his essay "Über die Weiber" Schopenhauer criticizes the modern Christian

[116]*Venus*, 138. "Therefore, the moral of the story: He who lets himself be whipped, deserved to be whipped. As you see, I received my beatings well, the rosy, suprasensual Fog has melted away and no one will ever again convince me that the holy apes of Benares or the Hen of Plato is an image of God."

German assessment of women as worthy of veneration. He argues that the Christian-German adoration of women reminds him of the veneration of the holy apes in Benares, "welche, im Bewußtsein ihrer Heiligkeit und Unverletzlichkeit, sich Alles und Jedes erlaubt halten."[117] His reference to Plato's Hen is likely to found in his definition of man as a featherless biped, to which Diogenes replied by bringing a featherless hen and declaring it man, requiring Plato to revise his definition. By stating that he will no longer take these to be representations of God, Sacher-Masoch seems to end his novella with an indication that he may be sympathetic to Schopenhauer's well-documented misogyny, but also that may be critical of accepting definitions of man's primacy as well. I would question whether he is altogether supportive of Schopenhauer's position, but would instead argue that these two images, both equally absurd in their own right are meant to demonstrate the folly in venerating either man or woman as God-like. By refusing reverence for social constructions of both men's and women's identities he likewise rejects discursive power over subjectivity.

Conclusion

What we have seen in this chapter is an examination of the two masochistic tropes for women, both of which are attributed to their natural and essential character, though both have been shown to be equally socially constructed. On the one hand, Käthchen has been identified as representative of the natural passivity and submissiveness of women and on the other, Wanda embodies woman's dominant and capricious nature. By taking these two supposedly natural tropes and placing them at the core of these works, the authors have exposed identity as discursively generated and how this social construction of identity is potentially destructive.

[117]Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena: kleine philosophische Schriften*, vol. 2 (Berlin: A.W. Hayn, 1851), §369. "Who, in the consciousness of their holiness and inviolability, think they can do anything and everything they please."

Moreover, in both works we have women who have been analyzed in secondary literature as passive in their positions, but who, as we have seen, are agents of their own attempts at redefining their subjective positions within the social sphere. By revaluing submission and dominance in ways that call into question the prevailing meaning for these acts, Käthchen and Wanda expose the structures of power at play in what is typically considered a natural and essential part of a woman's character. I have not suggested that either author is intentionally and anachronistically feminist, but that both use women as a means of taking figures who stand at the borders of society to expose the power that constructs identity more generally. This is the heart of the masochistic project with regard to the social construction of subjectivity.

Sacher-Masoch's work, while at times erotically charged, makes greater non-erotic claims about social equality and subjectivity that we see in other works which are likewise deemed masochistic. But beyond the tropes of masochistic women, both texts try to expose the falseness hammer-anvil dichotomy by showing how it too is a social construct that might be escaped through critical reflection of its role in creating knowledge and meaning. It is necessary to break down the dynamics of power in this way, if only to disrupt the power of discourse that created these dynamics. Not until we interrogate the foundations of Krafft-Ebing defining the positions of the masochistic subject can we begin to consider an outside of the system of power that is the discourse on masochism. These readings have also called into question scholarship on both *Käthchen* and *Venus im Pelz* which do not reflect critically on the role of women in the masochistic dynamic. Just as masochistic literature exposes the structures of power at play in the construction of the subject, so too must we undertake a similar analysis of the structure of masochism: exploring its structures and the assumptions we have of the roles

of dominant and submissive, male and female. In doing so, we uncover the critique of social power and the formation of normative subject positions.

Chapter 2

Education through Submission: *Bildung* and the German *Bildungsroman* Tradition

> Nachdem er lange mit sich zu Rate gegangen war, nahm er sich vor, ihr von sich zu sagen, soviel er nur wusste. Sie sollte ihn kennen lernen, wie er sie kannte, und er fing nun an, seine eigene Geschichte durchzudenken; sie schien ihm an Begebenheiten so leer und im ganzen jedes Bekenntnis so wenig zu seinem Vorteil, dass er mehr als einmal von dem Vorsatz abzustehn im Begriff war. Endlich entschloss er sich, die Rolle seiner Lehrjahre aus dem Turme von Jarno zu verlangen; dieser sagte: "Es ist eben zur rechten Zeit", und Wilhelm erhielt sie.[1]

Introduction

In the final book of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96), the title character resolves to tell everything about his life thus far to Theresa, his love interest and the eventual bride of his friend Lothario. He then sits down to write the story of his development, in essence his own *Bildungsroman*. As writing his own story proves difficult, he instead seeks out the story written about his life by the mysterious *Turmgesellschaft*, a secret society that appears to have influenced his decisions throughout the course of the novel and maintained a careful chronicle of his development. The *Gesellschaft*, it seems, concerns itself with the development, or *Bildung*, of all individuals, by cultivating the useful and the beautiful in each person. This cultivation represents a social construction of the individual based on the values

[1]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Vol. 5. *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*, Münchner Ausgabe (München: C. Hanser, 1985), 506. "After he had considered it for a while, he decided to tell her everything he knew. She should know him, as he knew her and he started to think through his own story. It seemed so void of any important events, and in general there was so little to distinguish him, that he gave up more than once. In the end, he decided to take the scroll with the description of his apprenticeship out of the tower from Jarno, who said to him: 'It is certainly the right time' and Wilhelm took the scroll."

and needs of the society. By choosing to let the story of his *Bildung* as written by the *Gesellschaft* stand in for his own story, Wilhelm thereby submits to the narrative constructed by others rather than relying on his own experiences. The *Gesellschaft's* text becomes an exemplar for the Bildungsroman genre, and can be seen as playing a central role in the system of power known as *Bildung*.

Bildung as elucidated in *Wilhelm Meister* is not simply concerned with individual self-development, but also with the social construction of the individual toward culturally useful ends. This control, however, is not overt, but rather the status quo for the social matrix of power and at the core of efforts to socialize subjects, as Friedrich Kittler explains at the core of the project of the Bildungsroman.[2] Individuals do not necessarily believe that they are being controlled. Instead it becomes clear that the detours they believe themselves to be making are in reality being controlled by an external force guiding the process of *Bildung*. Recognizing the matrix of power within the process of *Bildung* is the key to our understanding of the *Bildungsroman* as masochistic: the power of the individual to submit to a system that controls his/her actions; the power that the society has over the individual; the power that simultaneously causes pain and enjoyment in the individual; the power that the literature has over the readers in encouraging them to mimic the process of *Bildung* seen in the novel, even if that means rejecting or opposing that process. The intersection of these systems of power can all be found in the *Bildungsroman*, a genre that is aware of the power it wields, doing so consciously, and at the same time critiquing the selfsame systems of power it enacts and generates.

[2]Friedrich A. Kittler, "Über die Sozialisation Wilhelm Meisters," in *Dichtung als Sozialisationsspiel: Studien zu Goethe und Gottfried Keller* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978), 108.

Often referred to as the most "German" of all genres, the *Bildungsroman* is also one of the most disputed. Theories abound as to what constitutes the genre – from content and structure to social expediency – but common to all of these theories is that *Bildung*, or self-development, is at the core of the project undertaken in the genre of the *Bildungsroman*.[3] Rather than engaging in debates about the constitutive aspects of the *Bildungsroman*, this chapter will instead focus on the type of *Bildung* that these novels both promote and critique, and how they can be seen to fit within the conception of masochism as has been identified in the larger project. I argue that the notion of *Bildung*, developing in the eighteenth century and taking on even greater importance throughout the nineteenth, contains characteristics relating to what we have been referring to as the historical foundations of masochism, namely a sort of voluntary submission with critical potential. This chapter will primarily consider how *Bildung* is a masochistic project and how this is emphasized in the genre of the *Bildungsroman*. We will first examine *Bildung* as a concept and identify how the prevalent issues of power contribute to our understanding of masochism beyond the sexual. Central to my argument is how the genre of the *Bildungsroman* exhibits a sort of meta- and inter-textuality offering an example of *Bildung*, while simultaneously requiring submission to that process. Patricia Waugh has suggested that much metafiction is to be found in modernist and post-modernist literature, and as we see from the brief introduction to *Wilhelm Meister* above, the *Bildungsroman*, from its conception, was developed as a self-reflexive and self-critical genre.[4] We will establish a

[3]For discussions about the history of the genre and literary critiques thereof, see Marianne Hirsch Gottfried and David H. Miles, "Defining *Bildungroman* as a Genre," *PMLA* 91, no. 1 (January 1976): 122-123; Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature, The Case of Germany, 1830-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Todd Curtis Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre*, 1st ed. (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993).

[4]Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: the Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* (London; New York: Methuen 1984).

baseline through a brief analysis of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* to understand how aspects of the structure and content serve as a model for both *Bildungsromane* which succeed it and the masochistic ends of *Bildung*. The chapter will then turn to two novels, Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1799-1802) and Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* (1857), which I suggest show *Bildung* as a self-consciously masochistic project, striving towards a social or pedagogical ideal. It is my contention that though there are changes to the genre, the lasting impact of the *Bildungsroman* and the notion of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *Bildung* are central to the issues of power and submission that are complicit to masochism. At the same time, these works demonstrate the masochistic in their ability to reflect upon the power structures, to accept the power disparity in the intersection of power, and to critique from within and as a part of that same structure and matrix of power. As a genre, the *Bildungsroman* accepts the dominant nature of socialization, critiquing the structure, while still promoting the goals of the system it critiques.

Bildung and Masochism

There exists a wealth of scholarship defining the concept of *Bildung*, particularly with regard to the *Bildungsroman* and the development of active self-driven education promoted by the German *Spätaufklärung* of the late eighteenth century.[5] Aleida Assmann suggests that enlightenment *Bildung* was a social invention which brought together the most important aspects of enlightenment ideology.

> Bildung wird in der Aufklärung korreliert mit einem normativen Humanismus, zu dessen Grundwerten der freie und volle Gebrauch der Vernunft gehört, nicht etwa, um 'feiner und klüger, sondern um besser und weiser zu werden'. Bildung bedeutet

[5]See Jürgen Jacobs and Markus Krause, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman: Gattungsgeschichte vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Beck, 1989); James N. Hardin, *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature, The Case of Germany, 1830-1870*; Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman*.

> Erziehung zu reiner und vollständiger und das heisst in diesem Fall: natürlicher Menschlichkeit. Der natürliche Mensch ist eine Erfindung des Bürgertums. In dieser Erfindung überschneiden sich die wichtigsten Ideale der Aufklärung: Freiheit, Fortschritt und Universalität.[6]

Though Assmann points out that the project of *Bildung* is complicit in nationalization in the nineteenth century, she suggests that at its core *Bildung* is focused on socialization and integration.[7] In his history of the *Bildungsroman*, Todd Kontje suggests that in the late eighteenth century *Bildung* was redefined from a religious realm into a more secular humanist approach to education. Rather than passively receiving knowledge and education, "individuals now gradually develop their own innate potential through interaction with their environment."[8] This self-development was central to the theories of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and was characterized by Herder's conception of the social construction of the individual, Schiller's belief in the freedom of the individual to seek a balance between ethics and physical needs particularly through aesthetics, and Humboldt's suggestion that the true purpose of life is to cultivate one's talents into a balanced whole.

Humboldt's *Ideen zu einem Versuch die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staats zu bestimmen* (1792) emphasizes the freedom and the variety in possibilities as necessary to pursue one's own path in *Bildung*. Humboldt suggests: "Zu dieser *Bildung* ist Freiheit die erste, und unerlässliche Bedingung. Allein außer der Freiheit erfordert die Entwickelung der

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[6]Aleida Assmann, *Arbeit am nationalen Gedächtnis: eine kurze Geschichte der deutschen Bildungsidee* (Campus, 1993), 29. "In the Enlightenment *Bildung* is correlated with a normative humanism, to which the foundational ideals of free and complete use of reason belong, not "to become more refined or smarter, but rather to become better and wiser." *Bildung* means being raised into a purer and more complete Humanity, and that means, in this case more natural humanity. The natural man is an invention of the middle class in which the most important ideals of the Enlightenment intersect: Freedom, Progress and Universality."

[7]Assmann, 33.

[8]Kontje, 2.

menschlichen Kräfte noch etwas andres, obgleich mit der Freiheit eng Verbundenes: Mannigfaltigkeit der Situationen."[9] Schiller also shares in this belief that the individual must shape himself and argues that an individual's freedom transforms *Bildung* from a simple natural drive to a product of the will. He further elucidates his thoughts on *Bildung* in his 1795 work *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, in which he posits aesthetic education as a means of tempering one's desires in order to meet social expectations. Schiller states that aesthetic education leads to an aesthetic political state which thus leads man to sublimate his desires. This is brought to fulfillment through the individual: "der ästhetische Staat allein kann [die Gesellschaft] wirklich machen, weil er den Willen des Ganzen durch die Natur des Individuums vollzieht."[10] Assmann argues that this social construction of the individual involves a sort of internalization of culture.

> Neben Historisierung und Nationalisierung bedeutet Bildung auch, und das ist ihre dritte Dimension, Verinnerlichung der Kultur. Dieses Assoziationsvolumen klingt in der folgenden Formulierung an, mit der Humboldt seine Bestimmung der Bildung von der "Civilisation" absetzt. Unter Zivilisation versteht er "die Vermenschlichung der Völker in ihren äußern Einrichtungen und Gebräuchen."[11]

This sort of creation of civilization and nationalization of education is a critical feature of Herder's description of *Bildung*. Herder's essays *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-91) begin with a discussion of man's capacity for *Bildung* primarily located in genetic

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[9]Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7 (G. Reimer, 1852), 10. "For this education, freedom is the first and essential requirement. But aside from freedom the development of human abilities still requires something else, although closely connected with freedom: the diversity of situations."

[10]*ÄE*, 27th Letter. "…alone the aesthetic state can really create society, because it can fully realize the will of the whole through the nature of the individual."

[11]Assmann, 25. Along with historicization and nationalization, *Bildung* also means, and this is its third dimension, internalization of culture. This capacity for association comes through in the following formulation, with his analysis of *Bildung* as put forth in "Civilization" from Humboldt. With the term civilization Humboldt understand the term civilization as "the personification of the people in their external facilities and customs."

makeup with an understanding that all individuals endeavor to develop into their destined wholeness regardless of their individual capacity. Simultaneously, culturally specific external forces act on an individual's development, such that within a specific culture, one can only hope to mature to a specific level of development, which may differ from that possible in another. Though Herder's specific discussion of the social construction of the individual deals primarily with the capacities of cultures to achieve higher levels of education and development, his ideas are still important to our understanding of the impact that the society has on the individual. The notions of personal development and freedom are very much connected to social expectations, and thus *Bildung* becomes a way for one to become a fully cultivated member of society through submission to the cultural norms while still maintaining one's freedom – in fact achieving freedom through socialization.

Based on the writings of these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars, the individual cannot be defined outside his/her social context and is created through his/her reestablishment of cultural norms. More than a century later, the work of Michel Foucault paints the image of a society in which the social pressures exerted are virtually undetectable and inescapable.[12] Individuals believe themselves to have the freedom to make their own decisions, but are in fact controlled by external, societal forces. The individual is wholly constructed by society:

> This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence [verb], and tied

[12]See Foucault's *History of Madness*, *Discipline and Punish*, and *History of Sexuality*.

> to his own identity by conscience or self knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to.[13]

There is a tension between the individual and society. The individual is only a subject when seen in opposition to the forms of power which control him, but only by submitting to these processes of construction and being subjugated by them, can the individual become a subject. In her Foucaldian reading of eighteenth-century literature, Dorothea von Mücke shows a shift in the signifier from a veiled to a transparent form of subjectivity. In her focus on Wieland's *Geschichte des Agathons* (1766-1793) as the first *Bildungsroman*, she argues that "whereas the disciplinary function of the epistolary novel is concerned with the transparent relation between subjectivity and representations, the *Bildungroman* explores the subject's representation of himself as a process."[14] Her identification of the start of this process is important to this project, but even more important is the recognition that *Bildungsromane* after *Agathon*, particularly Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, represent a means of transforming the process of *Bildung* into something that is beyond the individual by showing the institutions of power, and further unveiling the process.

Wilhelm's acceptance of the social narrative as his own story, and his desire then to use this version of his story as a means of imposing *Bildung* on others shows the importance of the genre to the process of *Bildung*. Kittler explains that Wilhelm becomes both reader and writer and thereby a mode of literature is created within the novel that reveals the power of the system, and simultaneously embraces it.[15] *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is thereby a novel which explicitly represents the Foucauldian power matrix and of particular importance to the

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[13] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 331.

[14]Dorothea von Mücke, *Virtue and the Veil of Illusion: Generic Innovation and the Pedagogical Project in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 269.

[15]Kittler, "Wilhelm Meister," 107.

idea of *Bildung*, which we can now see as submission to the system of power. At the same time, the *Bildungsroman* critiques this system and creates an almost subcultural space, which places *Bildung* under a microscope, dissecting it and showing the inner workings of the matrix of power, coopting the subject into becoming complicit in his/her own submission. In this way, perceiving masochism in the work entails viewing Wilhelm as an active participant in his own *Bildung* and not merely as a marionette pulled along his path by the *Turmgesellschaft*. Certainly, there is guidance along his path by characters who push the narrative along both in terms of content and structure, but as educational scholar Jinx Roosevelt argues in her 1980 article on *Wilhelm Meister*, Wilhelm plays an active role in the story, even if his attempts to resist have been anticipated by the *Turmgesellschaft*.[16] By the end of the story, Wilhelm replaces his recollection of events with interpretation of those events written by the *Gesellschaft.* He voluntarily submits to their process of *Bildung*, while he was previously unaware of the power they held.

This Foucauldian matrix of systems of power, and continual reconstruction of the subject is, however, not unproblematic. In her critique of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, historian Lynn Hunt examines the social construction of the subject in Foucault's system in order to both understand the function of social power and subjectivity. She suggests, as do many scholars of Foucault, that the power he describes is all-pervasive and unanchored, and as such, it constitutes an inescapable system, whereby it is nearly impossible to identify oneself as an independent subject outside this system of power.[17] Foucault does not, however, see power and freedom as mutually exclusive, but rather as forces engaged in a complicated and dynamic

[16]Jinx Roosevelt, "'Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship': The Paradox of a Liberating Pedagogy," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 114.

[17]Lynn Hunt, "Foucault's Subject in the History of Sexuality," in *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*, ed. Domna C. Stanton (University of Michigan Press, 1992), 78-93.

relationship.[18] In her historiography of the Foucauldian subject, Carolyn Dean suggests that it is the continual formation of the subject which never allows this power to completely gain control since it must always seek out these new desires and subjects to regulate. "Power is thus never fully in control, never totalitarian, and it is in the pleasure of always being one step ahead of power that Foucault locates resistance: in the invisible but felt, tangible relation of power and pleasure."[19] The resistance, whether intended as a means of overturning the system, or simply as an opportunity for the subject to establish himself as such, develops into a back and forth similar to the detours we see in the *Bildungsroman*.

Returning to the theories of masochism, particularly those of Gilles Deleuze, which are so vital to this project, we can see that his discussion of the delayed gratification of the subject and the fluidity of power in the masochistic scene fall in line with the sort of resistance and pleasure that Dean describes. The *Bildungsroman,* particularly beginning with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister,* demonstrates the pleasure in resistance and assertions of a subject positions while never achieving the goal of complete fully formed subjectivity, *Bildung*, or power. The subjects or protagonists are continuously in the process of becoming, but never achieving the end state of being wholly cultivated (*gebildet*). Jürgen Jacobs suggests that in the Bildungsroman it is critical that the protagonist be aware of the fact that they are seeking and becoming, and not just undergoing a standard process of growing up. This marks the protagonist as engaged in a sort of metatextual *Bildung* in that he is aware of his role in his own development.[20] From the perspective of the literary genre, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* also

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[18]Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 432.

[19]Carolyn J. Dean, "The Productive Hypothesis: Foucault, Gender, and the History of Sexuality," *History and Theory* 33, no. 3 (October 1994): 271.

[20]Jürgen Jacobs, *Zwischenbilanzen des Lebens: Zu einem Grundmuster des Bildungsromans* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005).

becomes the new metatextual system of power, to which each subsequent author must respond. By self-consciously writing within the genre, they are submitting to Goethe's system of power and offering critiquing from within that system. In the process they also critique this process of becoming, the process of *Bildung*, offering both positive and negative examples *Bildung*. This continual process of *Bildung* is what we see in the *Bildungsroman* and what makes the *Bildungsroman* a masochistic genre by becoming aware of the process and still submitting to it.

A Masochistic Genre: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as Exemplar

In this section we will consider theories of the *Bildungsroman* alongside discussions of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* to show how the novel becomes a baseline for the genre, and as such its own system of power to be written against in subsequent *Bidungsromane*. The term *Bildungsroman* was established in the early nineteenth century by Karl Morgenstern in a series of essays responding to Christian Friedrich von Blanckenburg's *Versuch über den Roman* (1774). His was the earliest definition of the genre that was widely discussed throughout the nineteenth century.[21] Morgenstern admits his debt to Blanckenburg's text, but argues in his 1819 lecture "Über das Wesen des Bildungsromans" that in the intervening 45 years Blanckenburg's text no longer suffices, due to the developments in literature which have taken place. One of Morgenstern's most noteworthy observations about the *Bildungsroman* is that

[21]Karl Morgenstern, "Zur Geschichte des Bildungsromans," in *Neues Museum der teutschen Provinzen Russlands*, ed. Carl Eduard Raupach (Dorpat: Johann Joachim Christian Schünmann, 1824), 1–46; Karl Morgenstern, "Über das Wesen des Bildungsromans," in *Inländisches Museum*, ed. Carl Eduard Raupach (Dorpat: Johann Joachim Christian Schünmann, 1820), 46–61.

Morgenstern published two essays which are considered fundamental to understanding nineteenth-century thought on the *Bildungsroman*. The first, "Über das Wesen des Bildungsromans" draws heavily on Christian Gottfried Körner's letter to Schiller from October 28, 1796 in which he describes his impressions and reaction to *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. The second, "Zur Geschichte des Bildungsromans," published in 1824, is a significantly longer text describing the evolution of the *Bildungsroman* and respondsing quite directly to Blanckenburg's codification of the novel.

the works focus not only on the inner development of the protagonist, but also on the education of the reader. This point is central to his definition of the genre.

> Bildungroman wird er heißen dürfen, erstens und vorzüglich wegen seines Stoffs, weil er des Helden Bildung in ihrem Anfang und Fortgang bis zu einer gewissen Stufe der Vollendung darstellt; zweytens aber auch, weil er gerade durch diese Darstellung des Lesers Bildung, in weiterem Umfange als jede andere Art des Romans, fördert.[22]

We should note that the protagonists in *Bildungsromane* are shown at their beginnings and in the progress of development. While a certain level of development is attained, absolute perfection (*Vollendung*) is never achieved and the process of self-cultivation is a continual one.

Morgenstern suggests that in addition to structural and thematic markers of the genre, the *Bildungroman* fosters the development of the reader more than any other type of novel. This is not to suggest that *Bildungsromane* should be read through the lens of reader-response theory as an attempt to understand the purpose of the novel and its impact on the reader. Rather we must consider these novels as part of an intentionally metatextual process of education. Furthermore they participate in the matrix of systems of power which subjects in post-Enlightenment Europe confronted in order to become acculturated.[23] As Kontje argues, the discourse surrounding these works, and how they are to be read, becomes particularly important to understanding their impact and how they function on a broader level as a means of influencing the socially constructed process of *Bildung*.[24] And, I would argue, the modes of reading demonstrated by the protagonists in the novel offer an example of how to read and

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[22]Karl Morgenstern, "Zur Geschichte Des Bildungsromans," 2-3. "It shall be called the *Bildungsroman*, first and primarily because of its content, because it shows the hero at his beginnings and his progression, until he reaches a specific level of, but also because it is precisely through this representation that the readers' education is fostered more than in any other type of novel."

[23]Though reader-response theory does offer a means of connecting the reader of the text with characters in the novel and explains the identifications between the two, I would suggest instead of focusing on individual characters, we might be better served in our examination of the genre of the Bildungsroman by looking at the structure of the text itself and the functions of the characters in this self-reflexive and metatextual genre.

[24]Morgenstern qtd. in Kontje, 17.

become part of this system. Kittler has suggested: "Bildungsromane als Paradigma der Kunst, Bücher zu lesen, ist eine Sozializationstechnik.[25] It becomes about about all books, then, not just the Bildungroman. Morgenstern's earlier writings reiterate his critical stance toward popular literature or *Trivialliteratur* in juxtaposition to high literature in the creation of a German canon. The creation of the German canon as part of the process of social education in the nineteenth century allows us to see *Bildung* as a social project, which attempts to shape national culture and identity.[26] Individuals then submit to this project in their reading of "proper" literature and in order to develop as subjects inside this system of power.

Morgenstern, however, is not entirely positive in his assessment of the *Bildungsroman*. As Kontje suggests, his earlier writings express a critique of the genre suggesting that the aforementioned education of the reader "threatens to turn the reading of 'good' German novels [like *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*] into a form of self-imposed penance."[27] This idea of a self-imposed penance and the development of the individual in the novels through a submission to social order becomes particularly useful in the placement of the *Bildungsroman* within the constellation of masochistic texts.

Novels describing *Bildung* demonstrate the masochistic in two ways based on Morgenstern's identification of the genre. First, the idea of *Bildung* and the development of the individual through freedom of individual character is ultimately a voluntary, albeit subconscious, submission to social norms. In *Wilhelm Meister*, one sees this most clearly through Wilhelm's actions. The *Turmgesellschaft* offers Wilhelm choices at various points in his development. The *Gesellschaft* attempted to cultivate the best in him. Furthermore, the

[25]Kittler, 112. "The *Bildungsroman* as a paradigm of the art of learning to read is a socialization technique."

[26]Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature, The Case of Germany, 1830-1870*.

[27]Kontje, 17.

decisions he has made, even when they took him on a detour, have still been in the service of his socialization and development. Though at times his actions have conflicted with the social norms – participation in the theater troupe, his love for Mariane – these moments have been necessary for him to develop and become aware of the power which controls him. The second point of Morgenstern's description of the genre is that reading such novels in its own way performs *Bildung*, and therefore by voluntarily submitting, either actively or passively, to the reading of novels, one is submitting to the power of *Bildung*. This is not meant specifically that the works are didactic. Morgenstern suggests: "An sich gefallende, schöne und unterhaltende Darstellungen der Bildungsgeschichte von ausgezeichnet Bildungsfähigkeiten wird sein objectiver Zweck seyn; ursprünglich und zunächst also, wie bey jedem wahrhaft schönem Kunstwerk, nichts Didaktisches."[28] The act of reading also does not necessarily require one to agree with the ideas for social normativity that the work contains, however; even the opposition to such norms is considered part of the process of *Bildung* – of choosing one's own way and thereby becoming *gebildet*. In this way both the protagonist and the reader submit to the power of the genre: a self-conscious process of acculturation and socialization, and the reading within these novels can be seen as an ideal of *Bildung*.

We are faced, however, with the problematic notion that there may be no strictly voluntary submission on the part of the protagonist, since his *Bildung* is so carefully mapped out and constructed – particularly as it is presented in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. As mentioned in the introduction, Foucault suggests there is no "outside" to this system of control. Since everything is socially determined through a matrix of power, there is no possible way to make a choice that is not itself a product the power exerted by the system. He insists, however,

[28]Morgenstern, "*Zur Geschichte des Bildungsromans*," 3.

that there is freedom to exercise agency from within the system. Though the modes of behavior are social constructions, as free subjects, individuals are able to choose to submit to one particular system of power over another. In this way, the fact that Wilhelm believed himself to be making free decisions is enough to ensure that his submission to the system of power is voluntary. As mentioned in the introduction, the final book of *Wilhelm Meister* becomes a critical moment of masochistic submission. There can be no question as to whether Wilhelm can choose to submit to a system he is unaware of, because he is familiar with the power of the *Gesellschaft* at this point. But rather than fight against their power, he submits to it and thereby to the process of *Bildung* which they have lain out for him. Additionally, he allows for their version of his *Lehrjahre* to stand in for his own experience, and in doing so privileges the story of formation over his own experiences and in this way provides a model for the reader of the novel. In the same vein those authors who consciously write within the *Bildungsoman* genre submit to the power of the genre, while at the same time attempting to write against it. For this reason we shall focus descriptions of reading and story-telling in the genre, particularly the way it concerns itself in a metatextual way with power.

We proceed to look at two *Bildungsromane* subsequent to *Wilhelm Meister* that attempt to utilize the structure of mediated and layered storytelling laid out in Goethe's work as a means of either overcoming the excessive power of *Wilhelm Meister* as a text, or, at a minimum, exposing the constellations of power at play in social interaction. As we shall see in the remaining sections of this chapter these types of storytelling and reading are offered in subsequent *Bildungsromane* as a means of laying bare the process of acculturation through literature. Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* focuses not only on reading but also the act of (oral) storytelling as a means of development, relying on the *Bildung* of a poet to indicate the

importance of poetry and the written word. Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* shows how important the selection of texts is to the development of the protagonist. His commentary and development as a reader of both books and nature demonstrate his growth as a subject throughout the novel. As Kontje suggests, the acts of reading and writing stories are depicted as critical aspects to the character's *Bildung.* In this way, the novel exhibits a sort of intertextuality that allows the reader to see himself in the text as other characters read stories in order to become whole, healthy, or as a means of completing their process of education. Seeing the genre as masochistic acknowledges the importance of the written word to socialization and personal development of both the internal and external worlds of the protagonist.

Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen

Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is a fictional biography of the quasi-historical thirteenth-century German *Minnesänger* (medieval poet) of the same name. The text fragment, an exemplar of Romantic writing, is a mix of poetry, song, and storytelling. In an effort to help him escape what his parents have described as "unproductive dreams," his mother takes him on a journey to her family. Along the way, just as with most *Bildungsromane*, Heinrich encounters various individuals and hears various stories. Eventually they encounter a hermit in nearby caves and Heinrich finds a book telling the story of his future life. Upon arriving at his grandfather's home, he meets a young girl, whom he associates with images from his "unproductive dreams." Secondary literature on the work has typically concentrated on either the fairy tale in the middle of the story or on Heinrich's dreams, particularly the blue flower in those dreams as critical to understanding Romanticism in German literature.[29] There is little

[29]For discussions of the Klingsohr Märchen, see: Alice Kuzniar, "Hearing Woman's Voices in Heinrich von Ofterdingen," *PMLA* 107, no. 5 (October 1992): 1196–1207; James Hodkinson, "Genius Beyond Gender:

scholarship on the modes of reading in the story and how they contribute to the notion of Bildung and the masochistic nature of the genre, however there is considerable research on Novalis' relationship to Goethe and in particular his desire to write, what he considered to be a response to *Wilhelm Meister*.[30]

Heinrich von Ofterdingen was consciously conceived of as a response to *Wilhelm Meister*. In constructing an "anti-Meister," however, Novalis necessarily employed some of the tropes of the genre of *Bildungsroman* to construct his narrative. Just as in Goethe's novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* focuses on the intellectual and educational development of the title character, but whereas Wilhelm actively moves Goethe's novel along, Heinrich von Ofterdingen enables other characters to guide him. This passivity, however, is marked by a receptiveness to the stories that are told, which he then integrates into himself as a means of development. Of primary interested for this project are depictions of reading and story-telling in the novel, and how they expose the process of development, particularly within the genre of the *Bildungsroman* and as a counterpoint to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. To that end we will focus on Heinrich's experience with texts throughout the story and how this develops into his occupation as a poet.

Novalis, Women and the Art of Shapeshifting," *The Modern Language Review* 96, no. 1 (January 2001): 103–115; Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman*.

For discussions of dreams and the blue flower in Romanticism, see: Frederick Hiebel, "Zur Interpretation der 'Blauen Blume' des Novalis," *Monatshefte* 43, no. 7 (November 1951): 327–334; Gail Newman, "The Status of the Subject in Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...*," *The German Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (January 1989): 59–71; Martha B. Helfer, "The Male Muses of Romanticism: The Poetics of Gender in Novalis, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and Eichendorff," *The German Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (July 1, 2005): 299–319.

[30]Novalis explicitly addresses his issues with *Wilhelm Meister* in his series of fragments and thoughts entitled "Aufzeichnungen zu Auseinandersetzungen mit Wilhelm Meister." For research on the relationship between Novalis and Goethe and how it plays out in the literary field, see: Hans-Joachim Beck, *Friedrich von Hardenberg "Oeconomie des Styls": d. "Wilhelm-Meister-"Rezeption im "Heinrich von Ofterdingen"* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1976); Robert T. Ittner, "Novalis' Attitude Toward 'Wilhelm Meister' with Reference to the Conception of His 'Heinrich von Ofterdingen'," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 37, no. 4 (October 1938): 542–554; Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung: Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin*, 6. Aufl. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1919).

Structurally there are several ways, in which *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* both stand as complimentary and oppositional works. While both novels are told from the perspective of a third-person narrator, Goethe's narrator offer commentary and value judgments throughout the story, while Novalis' seems to intervene less. Wilhelm selects his own choice of profession, in opposition to what is socially acceptable, or desirable, whereas Heinrich, is born to be a poet and all of his experiences contribute toward that end. Heinrich's *Bildung*, therefore, is not the series of detours we see in *Wilhelm Meister*, but rather a string of coincidences which are somehow connected and all progress toward a specific goal. While we might see these as two completely different modes of development, both depend on the totality of one's experiences to serve as the content of the subject's *Bildung*. Finally, our reading of Heinrich von Ofterdingen as an anti-Meister hinges in part on Heinrich's ability to read and to be receptive to texts. Though Heinrich does not exhibit the same time of agency that we see with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, Heinrich's interpretation of the stories which mediate his *Bildung* and allow him to demonstrate his agency as a character.

Ultimately, it is Heinrich's desire and ability to subordinate himself and his will to the will of others which makes his actions masochistic. He engages in a sort of active submission which makes the work an example of masochistic *Bildung*. This is mimicked in the work as a whole as well such that the reader is also actively submissive to the process. It is not *Bildung* that is called into question. In fact, the Romantic ideal is very much reliant on the individual and the process of self-development and education. It is the notion of *who* or *what* is in control of that process which romantics like Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel point to in their critique of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Both works, however, expose the necessity to submit one's will to a more powerful force or individual in order to become *gebildet*. Though Novalis' *Heinrich von*

Ofterdingen may be seen as an "anti-Meister" – particularly in its focus on poetry and poetics – the works are very closely related in their conceptions of the development of the self which relies on a type of submission.

While we might perceive Heinrich as a passive character, in much the same way that we saw Käthchen described as passive, this interaction with books and other texts enables us to see agency as a subject in the story. If we are to suggest that Heinrich's education and development as a character is masochistic then his submission must be part of the process of self-creation. Heinrich submits to the stories and narration of others and in this submission he constructs his own story. His passivity becomes a type of agency, since he is encouraged to be passive as a means of obtaining freedom and selfhood. He receives stories, rather than actively seeking them out, but his interpretation of these stories enables them to become real. As we shall see, Heinrich, like Wilhelm Meister, also reads the book of his own story, but rather than serving as a grand reveal at the end of the novel, he encounters what he believes to be the story of his life early on, and thereby is actively engaged with cultivating himself in the image of this text this throughout the story. He primarily learns by listening and he gains his own voice by listening to and interpreting the stories of others. Whether the stories are orally delivered, written, or come to him in his dreams, Heinrich engages with these texts as a means of constructing his identity. By looking at Heinrich's interactions with texts, we can see the process of *Bildung* as a power to which Heinrich submits.

Storytelling and the Oral Tradition

In identifying Novalis' story itself as part of the genealogy of masochism, this section will focus on storytelling in the novel and how the protagonist's desire to submit to these stories reflects a sort of masochistic impulse while at the same time exposing the workings of

power in the genre. It is particularly interesting that Novalis juxtaposes oral traditions and written texts. We know that Heinrich has little experience with books based on the beginning of the second chapter of the first book where we are told how old he is and what experiences he has had: "Heinrich war eben zwanzig Jahr alt geworden. Er war nie über die umliegenden Gegenden seiner Vaterstadt hinausgekommen; die Welt war ihm nur aus Erzählungen bekannt. Wenig Bücher waren ihm zu Gesichte gekommen."[31] This is certainly in keeping with the medieval setting of the novel. However, the fact that the world was only known to him through stories, tells us that he has access to storytellers, beyond that of his mother, and that he has constructed his view of society based on these stories. These stories also progress the narrative of the novel, influence his dreams, and establish a connection with the stories of others. Moreover, as we shall see, they lead to an experience with written text which becomes something almost mystical, and holds an even greater power over Heinrich and his development than the oral tradition.

The plot of the novel is moved forward, not by Heinrich's actions but through the telling of stories. In fact, the novel begins with the telling of a story. "Der Jüngling lag unruhig auf seinem Lager, und gedachte des Fremden und seiner Erzählungen."[32] Though Heinrich is passive here, he is focused on a story which has led to disquieting thoughts and dreams. These dreams and the impact of this particular story thrust him forward through the novel and lead to his various interactions. In this way all of his subsequent stories are tied to this initial story, about which the reader knows nothing. Though this dream is where Heinrich first encounters the *blaue Blume*, which becomes a symbol of Romanticism and associated with his love

[31]*HvO*, 18-19. "Heinrich was just turned twenty. He had never been beyond the environs of his native city; the world was familiar to him only out of stories. Few books had come his way."

[32]*HvO*, 9. "The youth lay restless on his bed and thought about the stranger and his stories."

interest in the story, we might also see this as a metaphorical unattainable goal toward which Heinrich strives throughout the story. If we connect this back to the notion of *Bildung* as a process, but never an end state, the blue flower might also be the goal of his cultivation. Ultimately, the content of the story is not as important as the effect that it has on Heinrich, as it drives him to become like the storyteller. "Keiner von uns hat je einen ähnlichen Menschen gesehn; doch weiß ich nicht, warum nur ich von seinen Reden so ergriffen worden bin; die Andern haben ja das Nämliche gehört, und Keinem ist so etwas begegnet. Daß ich auch nicht einmal von meinem wunderlichen Zustande reden kann!"[33] His motivation to become a storyteller is based on his interested in moving others with his stories, the way that this storyteller has influenced him. Not only does this demonstrate the impact that literature has on his development, but also shows that he desires to part of the system of power that literature has in acculturation.

The telling of stories at the beginning of the novel provides him with an example toward which to strive and instills in him a desire to emulate. Heinrich, in fact, seems tied to various stories as a means of creating his own story. He explains: "Ich hörte einst von alten Zeiten reden; wie da die Thiere und Bäume und Felsen mit den Menschen gesprochen hätten."[34] To the early Romantic storyteller, these stories are indicative of the period's connection with the medieval and perhaps ancient sagas. However, given that the character Heinrich is already connected with the biography of a medieval poet, these *alte Zeiten* of which he speaks must be prior to the medieval period – almost ur-stories, which harken back to a more mystical time. Heinrich describes his longing to connect himself to these stories: "Mir ist

[33]Ibid. "None of us has ever seen a person like him. Still I can't understand why I was the only one to be so touched by his stories. The others experienced nothing like it even though the heard the same tales. And to think I can't even talk about my singular condition!"

[34]Ibid. "Once I heard tell of the days of old, how animals and trees and cliffs talked with people then."

grade so, als wollten sie allaugenblicklich anfangen, und als könnte ich es ihnen ansehen, was sie mir sagen wollten. Es muß noch viel Worte geben, die ich nicht weiß: wüßte ich mehr, so könnte ich viel besser alles begreifen."[35] His attempts to comprehend everything better and to become part of this universal story drive him to his educational goals throughout the novel, but also drive him to seek out the images that come to him in the dreams inspired by this story. These dreams are where he sees the image of the blue flower, which becomes the source of his striving. Though scholarship has often focused on Heinrich being pushed forward in his life through his seeking out the blue flower and the impact that it has on his imagination, I would instead suggest that the story-telling aspect of the dream and the inspiration for the dream are what is perhaps more important. Heinrich's impetus to move forward, while signified by the blue flower, is created by his own imagination, which was spurred on by the story of another. While the father has a similar dream, which involves a blue flower, it is perhaps an unintended detour for us to focus on the blue flower as the ultimate goal. Instead, we see that these dreams of the blue flower are both connected with storytelling. These dreams thereby become journeys of the imagination, symbolizing a desire to develop into a more complete subjects through *Bildung*.

When Heinrich is abruptly awoken by his mother and chastised by his father for his tardiness and sloth, Heinrich mentions his dream and the blue flower, and how it must hold meaning for him. His father counters this saying that there are no greater meanings in our dreams because they are no longer connected with a higher spirit. Instead, we must learn about history and the spiritual through books.

[35]Ibid. "I feel just as though they might start any moment now and I could tell by their looks what they wanted to say to me. There must be many words I do not know; if I knew more I could grasp everything much better."

> In dem Alter der Welt, wo wir leben, findet der unmittelbare Verkehr mit dem Himmel nicht mehr statt. Die alten Geschichten und Schriften sind jetzt die einzigen Quellen, durch die uns eine Kenntniß von der überirdischen Welt, so weit wir sie nöthig haben, zu Theil wird; und statt jener ausdrücklichen Offenbarungen redet jetzt der heilige Geist mittelbar durch den Verstand kluger und wohlgesinnter Männer und durch die Lebensweise und die Schicksale frommer Menschen zu uns.[36]

This sets up a division between Heinrich desire to learn from and connect to these ur-stories, and his father's belief that we no longer have a connection with the spiritual and can therefore only learn these lessons through books. Though Heinrich's father does not feel a special connection with the stories of his time, for Heinrich, these stories inspire dreams which lead to new stories, or at least have the capability of creating something new, without being divinely inspired. He asks his father:

> Ist nicht jeder, auch der verworrenste Traum, eine sonderliche Erscheinung, die auch ohne noch an göttliche Schickung dabey zu denken, ein bedeutsamer Riß in den geheimnissvollen Vorhang ist, der mit tausend Falten in unser Innereshereinfällt? In den weisesten Büchern findet man unzählige Traumgeschichten von glaubhaften Menschen, und erinnert Euch nur noch des Traums, den uns neulich der ehrwürdige Hofkaplan erzählte, und der Euch selbst so merkwürdig vorkam.[37]

The idea that dreams create a tear in the veil is a recurring theme in writing of the period, particularly with regard to the veil of Isis.[38] Peering behind the veil and experiencing the various dimensions of experience which fold back on each other is what dreams enable individuals to do. It is almost the opposite of Goethe's and Wilhelm Meister's idea of the

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[36]*HvO*, 13. "In the age we live in there is no longer any direct intercourse with heaven. The old stories and records form our only source of knowledge, in so far as we need it, of the supernatural world; and in place of those express revelations the Holy Ghost now speaks to us indirectly through the minds of wise and well-disposed men and through the way of life and the fortunes of the pious."

[37]Ibid. "Is not every dream, even the most confused one, a remarkable phenomenon, which apart from any notion of is being sent from God is a significant rent in the mysterious curtain that hangs a thousandfold about our inner life. In the wisest books we find countless authentic stories of dreams, and just call to mind the dream of venerable court chaplain told us lately; it seemed remarkable event to you."

[38]For further discussions of this metaphor, see: H.G. Cocks, "Modernity and the Self in the History of Sexuality," *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 4 (2006): 1211-1227; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and David Kuchta, "Sublime Truth (Part 1)," *Cultural Critique*, no. 18 (Spring 1991): 5-31.

Umwege necessary for *Bildung*. It is not the detour but the simultaneity of experience that is important in Heinrich's story. He explains his dream as follows: "Mich dünkt der Traum eine Schutzwehr gegen die Regelmäßigkeit und Gewöhnlichkeit des Lebens, eine freye Erholung der gebundenen Fantasie, wo sie alle Bilder des Lebens durcheinanderwirft, und die beständige Ernsthaftigkeit des erwachsenen Menschen durch ein fröhliches Kinderspiel unterbricht."[39] Dreams are able to offer individuals an outlet: a means of working through the mundane and to express themselves in fantasy. While Heinrich suggests that these dreams allow adults to be like children, what they really do is allow everyone to become their own storyteller, whether it is their calling or not. In this way, dreams become a means of telling stories and incorporating stories into the individual and by accepting these stories as their own, individuals submit to an external force which enables internal development.

Moreover, Heinrich feels as though the dream is not accidental, but rather something that will inspire him and push him forward. He explains to his father: "Gewiß ist der Traum, den ich heute Nacht träumte, kein unwirksamer Zufall in meinem Leben gewesen, denn ich fühle es, daß er in meine Seele wie ein weites Rad hineingreift, und sie in mächtigem Schwunge forttreibt."[40] His father, however rejects this notion, and instead counters by telling of his own dream which lead him to Heinrich's mother. The father's dream is likewise connected to an image of the blue flower, and though the father explains that this dream is what led him to his wife and is not connected at all to the storytelling Henirich sees as so critical, it becomes clear that storytelling and books do play a role in the father's development as well,

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[39]*HvO*, 13-14. Dreams seem to me to be a defense against the regularity and routine of life, a playground where the hobbled imagination is freed and revived and where it jumbles together all oft he pictures of life and interrupts the constant soberness of grown-ups by means of a merry child's play.

[40]*HvO*, 14. Certainly the dream I dreamed last night will not have been an ineffectual accident in my life, for I feel that it reaches into my soul as into a giant wheel, impelling it onward with a mighty swing.

even if it is a role he dos not recognize. In describing the dream, the father explains his encounters with a man who takes him in on the journey. “Die Stube war voll Bücher und Alterthümer. Wir geriethen in ein weitläufiges Gespräch; er erzählte mir viel von alten Zeiten, von Mahlern, Bildhauern und Dichtern. Noch nie hatte ich so davon reden hören. Es war mir, als sey ich in einer neuen Welt ans Land gestiegen.”[41] These stories and poems are what then lead the father – in the context of his dream – to seek out something even if he does not know what or why – essentially his own blue flower – but which also contributes to his own process of *Bildung*. This drive to seek out the unnamable is what his storyteller and guide calls “das Wunder der Welt.”[42] Though both stories are connected to the blue flower, they are similarly linked by the telling of stories which instills in both Heinrich and his father a longing and spark of inspiration. The father is unable to reflect on these stories and see that they are what motivate him, but Heinrich, as the protagonist, draws a clear connection between the two. This is precisely the self-reflexive moment in the text. Jacobs posits that the key identifying feature of the Bildungsroman can be found “in den Phasen der Reflexion, des resümierenden Innehaltens” and at those points in the story “in denen der Protagonist über sich selbst und seine Erfahrungen Klarheit zu gewinnen versucht.”[43] By reflecting on the dream in this way Heinrich exposes the power that the story has, as well as his desire to emulate it. Reading and submission thus are seen as central to *Bildung* and the characters in the *Bildungsroman*. By submitting to the reception of stories, whether written or oral, the individual submits to social

[41]*HvO*, 15. The room was full of books and antiquities. We got into a rather long conversation; he told me much about ancient times, about painters, sculptors, and poets. I had never heard anyone talk about them in this fashion. I felt as though I had landed in a new world.

[42]HvO, 17. The wonder of the world.

[43]Jacobs, 11. “in the phases of reflection, of the resumptive pause […] in which the protagonist tries to gain clarity over himself and his experiences."

acculturation and formation. Novalis takes this to another level by exposing the way that these stories work, and thereby revealing the means by which his *Bildungsroman* exhibits the masochistic dynamic of submission to and exposure of structures of power.

In response to the dreams and stories, which Heinrich's mother believes are corrupting his mind, she sets out in an effort to get him to experience the world, not through stories, but from personal experience. Just as Heinrich's story telling is advanced by the stories of others, so too is the journey with his mother. She tells the first set of stories in order to get Heinrich out away from the dreams influenced by the strange man:

> Heinrichs Mutter glaubte ihren Sohn aus den Träumereien reißen zu müssen, in denen sie ihn versunken sah, und fing an ihm von ihrem Vaterlande zu erzählen, von dem Hause ihres Vaters und dem fröhlichen Leben in Schwaben. Die Kaufleute stimmten mit ein, und bekräftigten die mütterlichen Erzählungen, rühmten die Gastfreyheit des alten Schwaning, und konnten nicht aufhören, die schönen Landsmänninnen ihrer Reisegefährtin zu preisen.[44]

It is at this point that the stories transfer from something passed on from mother to son and move into the realm of the *Bildungs*-role-models.[45] Though it is clear that Heinrich is not meant to become a merchant – as even the merchants note that he is a born poet – the merchants provide a masculine example for Heinrich. The *Kaufleute*, with whom he and his mother travel, tell stories of their experiences over the course of the ride. Chapter three begins: "'Eine andere Geschichte', fuhren die Kaufleute nach einer Pause fort, ‚die freylich nicht so wunderbar und auch aus späteren Zeiten ist, wird euch vielleicht doch gefallen, und euch mit

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[44]*HvO*, 21. "Heinrich's mother felt she ought to pull her son out of the reveries she saw him plunged in and began to tell him about Augsburg, her father's house, and the jolly life in Swabia. The merchants chimed in and corroborated her accounts, praised the hospitality of old Schwaning, and could not cease extolling the lovely girls of Augsburg, compatriots of their traveling companion."

[45]Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). Kittler describes this phenomenon in means by which both society and the family develop over the course of the nineteenth century. As education moves out of the home and becomes more formalized, so does the influence of the mother and her role in education shift.

den Wirkungen jener wunderbaren Kunst noch bekannter machen.'"[46] The stories again come from earlier times, but these stories are less fantastical, and therefore more appropriate in their influence on Heinrich's cultuvation. The stories told by disparate characters push the narrative forward until Heinrich encounters his first written story. Though he is inspired to become a storyteller by these spoken tales, the written story, provides him with the path he must take in order to complete his process of *Bildung*.

The Written Word and Heinrich's Occupation as *Dichter*

As we have noted, Heinrich is exposed to several stories outlining the path of his development early in the novel. Though he recognizes these texts as telling his own story – much as the *Gesellschaft's* story served as Wilhelm's story – Heinrich chooses to submit to these stories from the beginning without understanding the powers behind them. This stands in opposition to Wilhelm, who only became aware of the involvement of the *Gesellschaft* at his life at the end, and only then allows their story to stand in for his own. It is worth noting that Heinrich's submission to the stories he hears as a process of education enables him to develop into a poet, though he is told several times throughout the story that he is meant to become a poet. The narrator states: "Heinrich war von Natur zum Dichter geboren. Mannichfaltige Zufälle schienen sich zu seiner Bildung zu vereinigen, und noch hatte nichts seine innere Regsamkeit gestört. Alles was er sah und hörte schien nur neue Riegel in ihm wegzuschieben,

[46]*HvO*, 31. "Another story," the merchants continued after a pause, "which is admittedly not so marvelous and also out of a later period, might please you anyway and also make you more familiar with the effects of that wonderful art [of storytelling]."

und neue Fenster ihm zu öffnen."[47] Heinrich's seemingly predestined occupation of poet becomes even clearer when he finds a mysterious illuminated manuscript in a nearby cave

The turning point of the first book of the novel happens in the middle of chapter five, when Heinrich, along with an old miner and several others he has met at a local tavern, encounter the Count of Hohenzollern who has retreated to live in solitude and quiet contemplation as an *Einsiedler* (hermit). The hermit has very specific instructions for Heinrich about the role of the *Dichter* (poet). In particular, the hermit stresses the importance of the poet in the process of education. He first suggests that the writer of history must also be a storyteller or poet. "Wenn ich das alles recht bedenke, so scheint es mir, als wenn ein Geschichtschreiber nothwendig auch ein Dichter seyn müßte, denn nur die Dichter mögen sich auf jene Kunst, Begebenheiten schicklich zu verknüpfen, verstehn."[48] The term *Geschichtschreiber* is worth noting here, as it has the potential to simultaneously mean storyteller and writer of history. Certainly a *Dichter* in the context of the story is not simply a poet, though medieval stories were often told in verse, but might also be considered a general storyteller. Heinrich is called a *Dichter* regardless of whether he is telling fictional stories or stories of what has happened to him. These are not history, but the retelling of experience. Heinrich is the ultimate poet in the world of universal poetry, where there is little difference. In the next passage, *Erzählungen* (stories), *Märchen* (fairy tales), and *Fabeln* (fables) are compared with historical chronicles. "In ihren Erzählungen und Fabeln habe ich mit stillem Vergnügen ihr zartes Gefühl für den geheimnißvollen Geist des Lebens bemerkt. Es ist mehr Wahrheit in ihren Mährchen, als in

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[47]*HvO*, 94. "Heinrich was by nature born to be a poet. Diverse circumstances seemed to have united in his development, an as yet nothing had disturbed his inner activity. Everything he saw and heard seemed merely to push aside new door-bolts in him and to open new windows for him."

[48]*HvO*, 84. When I reflect earnestly upon these things, it seems to me a historian must necessarily also be a poet, for perhaps the poets alone master the art of skillfully organizing events.

gelehrten Chroniken. Sind auch ihre Personen und deren Schicksale erfunden: so ist doch der Sinn, in dem sie erfunden sind, wahrhaft und natürlich."[49] First, we see a connection here to the older stories, with which Heinrich has already mentioned. Fables, stories, and fairy tales are all linked with older cultural traditions. Second, there is a sense that even though these stories might be fictional that they offer a kind of truth which "real" stories are unable to provide. This truth comes from the way the stories are developed and the means through which one invents the stories. In this same way, the book that Heinrich encounters in the cave, whether fictional, prophetic, or historical goes beyond the truths offered by an academic chronicle. And in reality it does not matter whether the individuals from the stories are real or not.

> Es ist für unsern Genuß und unsere Belehrung gewissermaßen einerley, ob die Personen, in deren Schicksalen wir den unsrigen nachspüren, wirklich einmal lebten, oder nicht. Wir verlangen nach der Anschauung der großen einfachen Seele der Zeiterscheinungen, und finden wir diesen Wunsch gewährt, so kümmern wir uns nicht um die zufällige Existenz ihrer äußern Figuren.[50]

The lessons one gains from these stories do not depend on the truth of the stories, but rather the ways the stories are told, just as the content of the story he hears from the man at the beginning of the novel is not critical, but rather the inspiration he gains from it. To this end storytelling and writing are essential to the development of the individual, and it is the reading of these stories which offers the best means of education.

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[49]*HvO*, 84.In their stories and fables I have with quiet enjoyment observed their delicate feeling fort he mysterious spirit of life. There is more truth in their fairy tales than in learned chronicles. Even though the characters and their fates are invented, the spirit in which they are invented is nevertheless true and natural.

[50]*HvO*, 84. "To a certain extent it is all one, as far as our enjoyment and instructions are concerned, whether the characters in whose fates we trace out our own ever really lived or not. We long to contemplate the great simple soul in the events of an age; if we find this wish granted, we do not bother about the accidental existence of its external figures."

After the hermit tells his own story, he shows Heinrich the books which have been keeping him company. "Der Einsiedler zeigte ihnen seine Bücher. Es waren alte Historien und Gedichte. Heinrich blätterte in den großen schöngemahlten Schriften; die kurzen Zeilen der Verse, die Überschriften, einzelne Stellen, und die saubern Bilder, die hier und da, wie verkörperte Worte, zum Vorschein kamen, um die Einbildungskraft des Lesers zu unterstützen, reizten mächtig seine Neugierde."[51] The inclusion of images in the texts and the fact that these pictures help support the reader's *Einbildungskraft* is important. Though Novalis' text does not include images, he uses a reference to medieval illuminated manuscripts as a means of connecting the reader to an older tradition. Heinrich is intrigued by the books and the hermit explains to him about the importance of the books and their stories. "Der Einsiedler bemerkte seine innere Lust, und erklärte ihm die sonderbaren Vorstellungen. […] Heinrich konnte sich nicht satt sehen, und hätte nichts mehr gewünscht, als bey dem Einsiedler, der ihn unwiderstehlich anzog, zu bleiben, und von ihm über diese Bücher unterrichtet zu werden."[52] Heinrich is not only interested in reading the books but in being instructed by the hermit about these books. He seeks out a sort of *Bildung* which is intimately tied to the reading of texts. Up until this point most of his education had been through oral stories, but upon encountering books, Heinrich is drawn to them and the education that they provide. He has realized that he is destined to become a *Dichter* and is preparing himself for this role. In order to do so, he must submit to a process of *Bildung*, as described by the hermit in this encounter.

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[51]*HvO*, 90. "The hermit showed them his books. They were old chronicles and poems. Heinrich paged in the large and beautifully illuminated books, and his curiosity was greatly stimulated by the passages, and the neatly executed pictures which appeared here and there like embodied words to underprop the imagination of the reader."

[52]Ibid. "The hermit noticed his deep pleasure and explained the unusual pictures to him. […] Heinrich could not get his fill of looking and would have wished nothing more than to stay with the hermit, who had an irresistible attraction for him, and have him explain these books."

While the adventuring party proceeds further into the cave complex, Heinrich is left behind to read the books. "Der Alte war dazu bereit, und der Einsiedler, der die Freude merkte, die Heinrich an seinen Büchern hatte, veranlaßte ihn, zurückzubleiben, und sich während dieser Zeit weiter unter denselben umzusehn. Heinrich blieb mit Freuden bey den Büchern, und dankte ihm innig für seine Erlaubniß."[53] Though Heinrich does not ask to stay behind with the books, the hermit sees the joy, which Heinrich has had looking through the books and arranges it so that he can stay there with them. Heinrich models the educational process presented by Wilhelm Meister, instead of being supposedly self-guided, Heinrich is led to formative moments in his education. The books which he receives are only those of the highest quality. They are owned by royalty, and are clearly his treasured possessions, as they have been brought with him and remain with him in his cave. Heinrich, however, is experiencing these books for the first time, and does so with great enthusiasm. "Er blätterte mit unendlicher Lust umher. Endlich fiel ihm ein Buch in die Hände, das in einer fremden Sprache geschrieben war, die ihm einige Ähnlichkeit mit der Lateinischen und Italienischen zu haben schien. Er hätte sehnlichst gewünscht, die Sprache zu kennen, denn das Buch gefiel ihm vorzüglich ohne daß er eine Sylbe davon verstand."[54] Even though Heinrich cannot understand this particular book, he wants to understand it. That the book is written in another language serves both a metaphorical and an actual purpose. Without the ability to read the text, Heinrich must rely on the images. This means that Heinrich must project his own imagination on to the images in order for it to have meaning for him.

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[53]Ibid. "The miner was willing, and the hermit, who noticed the delight Heinrich was taking in the books, induced him to stay there and to continue looking through them during their absence. Heinrich was delighted to stay among the books and thanked him cordially for his permission. "

[54]Ibid. "He leaved through them with endless joy. At length he came across a volume written in a foreign language which seemed to him to have some similarity to Latin and Italian. He wished most fervently to know the language, for the book pleased him exceedingly without understanding a syllable."

His description of the text, and his awareness that the story is potentially his own shows the reader that their reaction to such realizations in reading are not only natural, but a part of the process of *Bildung*. "Es hatte keinen Titel, doch fand er noch beym Suchen einige Bilder. Sie dünkten ihm ganz wunderbar bekannt, und wie er recht zusah entdeckte er seine eigene Gestalt ziemlich kenntlich unter den Figuren."[55] The figures seem familiar to him and he is able to identify himself in the story. Heinrich, however, is terrified to find himself. What he at first thought was a similarity to himself, is now very clearly him. "Er erschrack und glaubte zu träumen, aber beym wiederhohlten Ansehn konnte er nicht mehr an der vollkommenen Ähnlichkeit zweifeln. Er traute kaum seinen Sinnen, als er bald auf einem Bilde die Höhle, den Einsiedler und den Alten neben sich entdeckte."[56] It is through this image that he sees that this is really his story. The timeline has caught up with itself and Heinrich is able to recognize his part in the process of his development. For Heinrich to fulfill the process of his *Bildung*, he must become part of this narrative and submit to this story. The result of which is for him to become a successful poet. In presenting the reading of this book as a pivotal moment for Heinrich, Novalis demonstrates the way that the text functions, possibly for the reader, but certainly for his own character. It is not the type of *Bildung* that Heinrich goes through that is important per se, but rather that he learns of his future and realizes his destiny through the process of reading and that the novel becomes a sort of acculturation for Heinrich. This process is also laid bare early on in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* in a way that it was not in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Whereas Wilhelm allows the written word to take over for his own story only at the end of the novel, Heinrich's encounter with the story of his life early in his development

[55]Ibid. "It had no title, but he found in searching a few images. They seemed to him to be wonderfully familiar, and as he peered through the book he discovered his own guise, relatively recognizable amongst the figures."

[56]*HvO*, 90-1. "He was frightened and thought he was dreaming, but in looking at it again he was sure of the complete similarity. He hardly believed his senses as he found an image of the cave, the hermit, and the old man."

provides him with a series of signposts. He may not be able to interpret them fully, he is still aware that there is some sort of story out there for him to be a part of and a direction in which to go. By opening up the system of *Bildung* to observation, Novalis creates a subject who actively chooses to seek out this type of *Bildung*, but also one which is aware of the process and who submits to it willingly. The text thereby also critiques the lack of transparency in the system of *Bildung* put forth in *Wilhelm Meister*.[57] Though Novalis' critique is not particularly didactic it still contributes to a discourse on reading, education, and self-reflexivity by explicitly exposing the power throughout the novel, rather than gesturing to it at the end with the Turmgesellschaft in *Wilhelm Meister.* Once Heinrich realizes that it is his destiny to become a poet, he finds purpose to his encounters with master poets, and Klingsohr becomes his mentor.

Klingsohr's *Märchen*

Klingsohr serves as more than just a mentor for Heinrich, but also connects to German medieval traditions. A similar character, named Klingsor, makes a brief appearance as magician and duke in Wolfram von Eschenbach's thirteenth-century epic romance *Parzival*. He is also found as a character in the description of the Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg (minstrel contest at Wartburg) described in various thirteenth-century poems and from which Novalis gets the character of Heinrich von Ofterdingen as well. Though these tales suggest that Heinrich goes to Klingsor to seek magical protection, Novalis revises this to have Klingsohr serve as a mentor and father figure. He likewise alters his name slightly to make it a play on words combining *klingen* (to sound, to ring) and *Ohr* (ear). As such Klingsohr is a model for Heinrich's own voice, described as an answering ear (*antwortendes Ohr*). Finally, the fairy tale

[57]Both Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel make note of this lack of transparency in their essays on *Wilhelm Meister* See Novalis' "Aufzeichnungen zu Auseinandersetzung mit *Wilhelm Meister*" and Schlegel's "Über Goethes Meister."

he tells relates to the comments by the hermit who suggest that these types of older stories – which connect one to a mystical tradition hold particular importance. Much has been written about the content of the fairy tale, which Klingsohr tells at the end of the first book. Beyond the content of the story, however, Klingsohr's *Märchen* can also be read as another example of the process of *Bildung* to which Heinrich submits. Klingsohr takes over the role of Heinrich's father – thus the mantle of older male figure has passed from father, to merchants, to miner, to hermit, to grandfather, and finally to Klingsohr. This completes his transition from the private sphere of the family, to the public sphere of poet and writer.

Once Heinrich meets Klingsohr, the man who we assume will be the Meister and under whom he will develop and learn, Heinrich tells the story of his trip. This self-reflexive storytelling is submitted for assessment by Klingsohr and is deemed worthy or at least adequate for his level of development. Klingsohr responds and tells him that it is clear that he is meant to be a poet. But he also explains the importance of the role of the poet.

> Der Stoff ist nicht der Zweck der Kunst, aber die Ausführung ist es. Du wirst selbst sehen, welche Gesänge dir am besten gerathen, gewiß die, deren Gegenstände dir am geläufigsten und gegenwärtigsten sind. Daher kann man sagen, daß die Poesie ganz auf Erfahrung beruht. Ich weiß selbst, daß mir in jungen Jahren ein Gegenstand nicht leicht zu entfernt und zu unbekannt seyn konnte, den ich nicht am liebsten besungen hätte. Was wurde es? ein leeres, armseliges Wortgeräusch, ohne einen Funken [287] wahrer Poesie. Daher ist auch ein Mährchen eine sehr schwierige Aufgabe, und selten wird ein junger Dichter sie gut lösen.[58]

Klingsohr's suggestion that experience gives one the ability to create a story that goes beyond the familiar is similar to the explanation of the role of the *Dichter* in telling stories we heard from the *Einsiedler* in the cave. The meaning of the story is dependent on a good storyteller,

[58]*HvO*, 116-17." The substance is not the purpose of art, but the presentation is. You will see for yourself, which songs will best advise you, certainly those, whose subject is most common and most present. In this way one can say that poetry touches entirely on experience. I know myself, that in my earliest years I was hard pressed to sing about a subject that was too far away or too unknown. What was it? An empty, poor sound of words, without a spark of real poetry. Therefore the fairy tale is also a difficult task, and seldom will a young poet complete her well."

and the storyteller is the one who controls the story, not the other way around. Therefore the recipient of the story is guided into a passive position, whereby the meanings they create from the story are only those which the author/poet wants them to gather. Completely fictional stories, like *Märchen*, Klingohr explains, are difficult for younger poets because they base their stories on their own experiences and have not yet achieved a level of skill which allows them to transcend the actual and manipulate it to serve their own ends through the imaginary. It is noteworthy that Klingsohr chooses to tell a *Märchen*, which he wrote as a youth, and which he claims shows the initial spark of brilliance that he was to gain with age. In doing so he demonstrates it is not simply age that provides a poet with the ability to produce depth in their poetry and stories, but rather the broader range of experiences. He also provides Heinrich with an example of what he, as a young poet can produce. The storytelling and Heinrich's desire to emulate Klingsohr lead to the next stage in his development. He submits to another story and allows it to advance his *Bildung*. It is not crucial that novel is a left fragmentary and without resolution, nor is it critical that readers identify with Heinrich. Novalis' attempt to write both within and against the genre of *Bildungsroman* is centered on the illusion of transparency within the genre. Whereas *Wihelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is a closed system which pretends to be transparent, Heinrich von Ofterdingen's exposes itself to the reader from the very beginning.

What we have seen with *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is that learning to read and tell stories are critical to *Bildung*. Whereas Heinrich's parents try to guide him away from stories of the fantastical toward the familiar, it is Heinrich's desire to connect with ur-stories and invoke in his listeners and readers the same emotions that he experiences that leads him forward in his development. The novel demonstrates that *Bildung* is only possible through a process of reading and that the stories that surround the individual mold and guide them. As a

Bildungsroman, the novel exposes the role of reading in one's development, but also the necessity of the individual to be open such lessons. In a metatextual way, it critiques the alleged transparency of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, by depicting scenes of reading similar to Goethe's but which expose the controlling nature of literature in the individual's formation. The novel still serves its ends of acculturation to Romantic ideals, but does not hide the fact that it does so and thus offers a masochistic critique of the genre by submitting to the tropes of the genre and simultaneously exposing its power.

Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer*

As we have discussed, the *Bildungsroman* is conceived of as a means of acculturation. This suggests that the authors of these works are attempting to create a standard of *Bildung* that is supposed to be attained by using the characters and the novels themselves as examples. Like Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* (1857) emphasizes a type of active submission to a process of education, which ultimately fits with what we have been describing as the masochistic nature of *Bildung* and the genre of the *Bildungsroman*. Though *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is a decidedly Romantic text, Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* belongs to the mid-century Realist tradition, which focuses more on descriptive narration rather than metaphorical gestures toward universal poetry. In *Der Nachsommer*, the protagonist, Heinrich, is an active participant in his education, while at the same time voluntarily submitting to the program of *Bildung* suggested by those around him – particularly in relation to learning how and what to read. *Der Nachsommer*, advocates a type of reading of nature, art, and texts which each contribute to the individual's development and the text shows how the protagonist, despite his uncertainty in the project, accepts the power of this system and is formed by it while simultaneously critiquing it and offering silent resistance.

Der Nachsommer is typical of the *Bildungsroman* genre. Just as we see in *Wilhelm Meister* the story begins with a description of the family and the son who has decided to undertake his education through a series of travels. He sets out on his own, encountering a villa and its owner while seeking shelter from a storm. He continues going back to the Asperhof, or Rosenhaus, as the villa is known, and Baron Risach, the elderly gentleman who owns the estate, explains the inner workings of the home, the proper means for raising both plants and a family and eventually becomes an ersatz-father for Heinrich. By the end of *Der Nachsommer*, Heinrich has been driven away from the life of the Austrian *Beamtentum*, which offers its own systems of submission, and instead is lead to what his master and teacher Risach suggests is the highest calling: the role of husband. The text is full of lengthy descriptions of nature, which seem constantly on the verge of a Romantic-style eruption, but which maintain their bucolic tranquility.[59] Raleigh Whitinger suggests that references to other texts – particularly the ominous scenes which seem to almost mimic Romantic poets – offer a sort of self-consciousness to the text. He asserts that the "references and allusions weave through *Der Nachsommer* to remind the reader that the story is but one possible artistic rendition of reality and to draw attention to its relatively limited scope and focus."[60] This self-consciousness, I will argue, is part of Stifters desire to show the inner workings of the mode of *Bildung* he promotes.

Stifter emphasizes his own goals for education through the characters in his work, their relationship to other works of literature, and the ways that they are taught to read. In his 1853 educational reader *Lesebuch zur Förderung humaner Bildung*, he argues that all students

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[59]Raleigh Whitinger, "Echoes of Early Romanticism in Adalbert Stifter's 'Der Nachsommer'," *Monatshefte* 82, no. 1 (April 1990): 62–72.

[60]Ibid., 63.

should "auch in die Welt des höhern allgemein menschlichen Denkens und Fühlens eingeführt werde[n]."[61] He goes on to suggest that the literary works in his pedagogical primer are meant to strengthen the emotions and thoughts of his students so that their private and internal developments advance their external and public actions. Stifter has often been criticized for retreating from the political to focus on the minutiae of nature, both by his contemporaries and by scholars of his work. The work has thus been labeled the epitome of *Biedermeier* sensibilities. There is, however, also a sense of humanistic education in his approach, which harkens back to the notion of *Bildung* established in the German *Aufklärung* and as part of the national regeneration projects of German Idealism. Contrary to most analyses of Stifter's work, Norbert Fuerst's largely ignored 1946 article on Stifter's *Der Nachsommer*, points out that this focus on the strength of the individual in the novel is not a simple retreat from the political into the world of the aesthetic, but rather an attempt to educate through literature along the lines of Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe*.[62] Stifter seems to argue against *Bildung* as a means of creating professional state administrators, and instead focuses on creating solid and well-rounded citizens. His educational primer, full of texts by Goethe, Schiller, Hebel, and Herder, offers not only a very consciously German-language perspective on *Bildung*, but also seeks to ground *Bildung* in the reading of texts which will offer students a common language, curriculum, and standard of cultural competence. Scholarship on the novel has focused on Stifter's political conservatism, *Biedermeier* sensibilities, and the realist aesthetic as related to his exposition of the "sanftes Gesetz" from the preface to his collection of short stories *Bunte*

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[61]Adalbert Stifter, *Lesebuch zur Förderung humaner Bildung: Faksimile-Druck, dazu die Briefe Stifters zum Lesebuch*, ed. J. (Johannes) Aprent (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1938), iv. Also be initiated into the world of high general human thoughts and feelings.

[62]Norbert Fuerst, "Three German Novels of Education II. Stifter's 'Nachsommer'," *Monatshefte* 38, no. 7 (November 1, 1946): 413-425.

Steine and the foreword to his education primer, published the same year reinforces this interpretation. [63] In his description of this "gentle law" he maintains that it is a power that is exerted over all of mankind:

> 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.[64]

Stifter argues that this law, which reaffirms the golden rule, is also something toward which one must strive, particularly in relations to other people and above all in marriage and families. This is one possible interpretation, but I suggest that in the context of Stifter's perspective on education, this is also meant to show his character how to read texts, nature, and people in a way which imposes social expectations. Fuerst suggests that rather than being wholly within the *Biedermeier* tradition, Stifter's text is more likely in the tradition of German Idealism and "the belief in a national culture through and above a national education."[65] If we take this as

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[63]For literature on Stifter's aesthetics and the "sanftes Gesetz" see: Barton W. Browning, "Stifter's 'Nachsommer' and the Fourth Commandment," *Colloquia Germanica* 7 (1973): 301–316; Eric Downing, "Common Ground: Conditions of Realism in Stifter's 'Vorrede'," *Colloquia Germanica* 28, no. 1 (1995): 35–53; Helena Ragg-Kirkby, "'Äußeres, Inneres, das ist alles eins': Stifter's Der Nachsommer and the Problem of Perspectives," *German Life and Letters* 50, no. 3 (1997): 323–338; Raleigh Whitinger, "Echoes of Early Romanticism."

For the discussions of politics or lack thereof in Stifter's novel see: Christoph Lorey, "'Alles ist so schön, daß es fast zu schön ist': Die sozialkritischen Motive in Adalbert Stifters Roman *Der Nachsommer*," *The German Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (October 1, 1993): 477–489; Kathrin Maurer, "Close-Ups of History: Photographic Description in the Works of Jacob Burckhardt and Adalbert Stifter," *Monatshefte* 97, no. 1 (April 1, 2005): 63–77; Raleigh Whitinger, "Elements of Self-Consciousness in Adalbert Stifter's Der Nachsommer," *Colloquia Germanica* 23 (1990): 240–252.

[64]Stifter, *Bunte Steine* (Philipp Reclam Jun Verlag GmbH, 1998), 10. "Therefore, there are forces that affect the existence of all humanity, and which may not be limited individual forces, but on the contrary which work to limit themselves. It is the law of these forces, the law of justice, the law of customs, the law which will which wants that everyone be respected and honored and exist without danger with their fellow man, that one farther on his path and acquire the love and admiration of his fellow man, that he would be guarded as a treasure, as every man is a gem for all other human beings."

[65]Fuerst, 415.

our understanding of Stifter's goals subsequent to the 1848 revolutions, then *Der Nachsommer* serves as a literary means of demonstrating his belief in the potential success of his pedagogical project. If, contrary to his fellow pedagogues, he is not interested in producing state administrators, but rather in constructing a cultural narrative, which in turn creates a system of pedagogical power, then his protagonist is meant to be the exemplar student of this system. To examine Stifter's promotion of submission to the system of Bildung as well as his exposure of that system, we will first look at the role of Risach in this system as a promoter of the goals of *Bildung*. We will then consider the way the protagonist learns to read and the role that proper reading plays in his development. Finally, we will look at the figure of Risach's "adopted" son Gustav, who learns to read under his tutelage to show how reading and text selection are properly undertaken.

Educator and Father

This desire to control individuals through education is represented through the character of Risach in the story. Individuals submit to Risach and his form of *Bildung* primarily through learning the proper way to read both books and their surroundings, but only insofar as they believe themselves free to read and act as they desire. Risach stands in, not only as the teacher, but also the voice of idealist notions of the state and education in the text – which further supports the suggestion that Stifter's pedagogical goal is far from a retreat into *Biedermeier* sensibilities. Risach states that the family is more important than all of the other aspects of society and indeed all knowledge. "Die Familie ist es, die unsern Zeiten not tut, sie tut mehr not als Kunst und Wissenschaft, als Verkehr, Handel, Aufschwung, Fortschritt, oder wie alles heißt, was begehrungswert erscheint. Auf der Familie ruht die Kunst, die

Wissenschaft, der menschliche Fortschritt, der Staat."[66] This echoes the writings of Hegel, who suggests that marriage or the marital bond is described as the ultimate sublimation of the self in order to gain greater liberties. In *Philosophie des Rechts*, Hegel contends that marriage's "der objektive Ausgangspunkt aber ist die freie Einwilligung der Personen, und zwar dazu, eine Person auszumachen, ihre natürliche und einzelne Persönlichkeit in jener Einheit aufzugeben, welche nach dieser Rücksicht eine Selbstbeschränkung, aber eben, indem sie in ihr ihr substantielles Selbstbewußtsein gewinnen, ihre Befreiung ist."[67] While Hegel's writings on marriage are explicated further, this note early in his discussion of the contract and society resonates in Stifter's work. Additionally, Hegel suggests that *Bildung* is critical to the development of free actors in the state: in order to be free to marry, one must be a free actor in the state, and must therefore be well-educated. Stifter's novel can be seen as a fictional representation of the pedagogical and social ideals offered by Hegel. The protagonist's various types of education throughout the novel thereby promote an idealist notion of *Bildung* which leaves our protagonist as an educated dilettante. In his examination of the dilettant, Paul Fleming points out Stifter's renunciation of the genius in favor of "an artist modeled on the researcher and collector."[68] This example of the educated dilettant is precisely what we find with Risach, and it is what Risach desires to develop Heinrich into.

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[66]*Nachsommer*, 840. "The family is what is sorely needed in our time. It is needed more than art and science, than transport, trade, prosperity, progress, or everything else that is known as , what appears worthy of desire. Everything rests on the family: the art, science, human progress, the state."

[67]Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts : die Vorlesung von 1819/20 in einer Nachschrift*, ed. Dieter Henrich, 1. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp,, 1983), §162. "objective source lies in the free consent of the persons, especially in their consent to make themselves *one person*, to renounce their natural and individual personality to this unity of one with the other. From this point of view, their union is a self-restriction, but in fact it is their liberation, because in it they attain their substantive self-consciousness."

[68]Paul Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 139.

Risach, as an ersatz-father, allows Heinrich as much freedom as possible, but through observing the community at the *Asperhof* he was provided an example of what his expectations were. Though some individuals in the story are allowed to specify their vocations – for example Eustach, the Gardener, the Jeweler – Heinrich is encouraged not to do this. At the end, Risach suggests that each person who is good at what they are good at should continue on their path, and not try to be something that they are not. For Heinrich this means that they may be destined for the life of a good citizen – ultimately submission to multiple systems of power which enable them the freedom to explore their pursuits. The real structural power of *Bildung* according to Stifter is the creation of a state of mutual respect and humanistic education, but also one which controls the vocational pursuits of individuals such that the society is able to function, maintain equilibrium, and which does not lead to revolution. If Stifter can be accused of retreat from the political in his works and his notion of *Bildung*, it is most likely to be found as a response to the trauma of the revolutions and his desire to create a social system which upheld the values of the revolution without violence through education, an opinion which seems to echo Schiller's response to the French Revolution in *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*.

The freedom to choose one's own path is one of the more masochistic aspects of Risach's system of education. Though the characters are free to pass their own judgments in opposition to Risach, they ultimately choose to submit to the system. With Heinrich we see that his uncertainty about Risach's lessons are represented by silence, and an internal dialog to which the reader is privy. Helena Ragg-Kirkby has argued, the silences on the part of the characters in the novel are not in fact an indication of their passivity, but instead a

internalization of the process of *Bildung* which they undergo. [69] I might go so far as to suggest that these silences may also represent moments of resistance. Heinrich is constantly questioning the decisions and the thoughts of his friend Risach, but he keeps these doubts to himself rather than expressing them. Partially this is out of politeness, partially because he doesn't want to expose himself as a uneducated. These internalized detours demonstrate a separation of the inner and outer spheres which is eventually restored only to be called into question again and again as Heinrich learns new lessons. Heinrich, however, in conforming to the social script retreats to his mind in order to process the education he receives from Risach. This is where the lack of transparency is evident in Stifter's novel. While it appears as though the education that Risach provides is complete and totalizing, the self-reflexive moments do not break through until Heinrich has arrived at Risach's methods himself. His silences in the face of Risach and others, and his focus on observation and letting the opinions of others have their effect on him are all part of his development as a character and as a man.

Books and Reading

Though the proper means of reading and canon of literature is one important part of learning to read in *Der Nachsommer*, equally important is learning the value of books as objects and in their role of tools of acculturation. One of the first descriptions of any room is his father's reading room. As described it is not terribly different from the room of stories housed by the *Turmgesellschaft* in *Wilhelm Meister*. That this description is at the opening of the book, rather than at its close, denotes that from the very beginning these stories and the references to them are a means of shaping the lives and actions of the characters in the story.

[69]Berman, *The Rise of the Modern German Novel: Crisis and Charisma* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 119; Helena Ragg-Kirkby, "*Der Nachsommer* and the Problem of Perspectives."

Heinrich first describes the room without referring to it as either library or a book room. "In der Wohnung war ein Zimmer, welches ziemlich groß war. In demselben standen breite flache Kästen von feinem Glanze und eingelegter Arbeit. Sie hatten vorne Glastafeln, hinter den Glastafeln grünen Seidenstoff, und waren mit Büchern angefüllt."[70] We see from this initial description that the room itself is large and that there are beautiful glassed-in hutches throughout the room. Behind the glass is green silk, and behind the green silk are books. From this initial description, one would think that the books are to be hidden away from view, and not to be read, but as the description continues it is clear that this is not the case. "Der Vater hatte darum die grünen Seidenvorhänge, weil er es nicht leiden konnte, daß die Aufschriften der Bücher, die gewöhnlich mit goldenen Buchstaben auf dem Rücken derselben standen, hinter dem Glase von allen Leuten gelesen werden konnten, gleichsam als wolle er mit den Büchern prahlen, die er habe."[71] The books are meant to be protected both from other people reading them and also from people thinking that he was somehow boastful about the books that he has. The commentary on social position is of note here. Certainly with the rising importance of the *Bildungsbürgertum* in the mid-nineteenth century, education and learnedness were also gaining in value; equally important to Heinrich's father, however, is the appearance of propriety. Propriety, in this sense, means not seeming as though one is too proud of one's accomplishments, but maintaining a sort of quiet inner contentment. One must maintain control over education, one's possessions, and one's reputation in the social sphere and books provide an important mode of control. There is a sense that education and social respectability

[70]*Nachsommer*, 6. "In the house there was a room, which was relatively large. There stood, in this room, large flat shelves with a fine sparkle and embedded work. In front they had plates of glass and behind the glass plates green silk fabric, and they were filled with books."

[71]Ibid. "Father had the green silk curtains because he couldn't stand that the titles behind the glass, which often stood on the spines of the books in gold letters, would be read by everyone as though he wanted to brag about the books that he had."

are both tied to an awareness that one is being watched and judged by one's actions, and that one desires to submit to this judgment in order to be part of the system of control. This is also where we become aware of the fact that Heinrich's inner development is not transparent. He only reveals the internalization of his lessons after he has already considered the lessons of his master.

When Heinrich describes the way his father interacts with the books, it is with this same sort of reverence and pleasure. "Vor diesen Kästen stand er gerne und öfter, wenn er sich nach Tische oder zu einer andern Zeit einen Augenblick abkargen konnte, machte die Flügel eines Kastens auf, sah die Bücher an, nahm eines oder das andere her aus, blickte hinein, und stellte es wieder an seinen Platz."[72] Any spare moment that the father gets he spends amongst his books. He looks at them, reads them, and reveres them. There is almost a sense of fetishization of the books. They are at once a source of pleasure both through reading, but also through observation and voyeurism.

> An Abenden, von denen er selten einen außer Hause zubrachte, außer wenn er in Stadtgeschäften abwesend war, oder mit der Mutter ein Schauspiel besuchte, was er zuweilen und gerne tat, saß er häufig eine Stunde, öfter aber auch zwei oder gar darüber, an einem kunstreich geschnitzten alten Tische, der im Bücherzimmer auf einem ebenfalls altertümlichen Teppiche stand, und las. Da durfte man ihn nicht stören, und niemand durfte durch das Bücherzimmer gehen. [73]

For Heinrich, who at this point in the story does not understand the importance of books for his future, it is the trappings which surround the reading which are most important. Heinrich sees the library itself as primary to the father's pleasure and though it resembles a holy place,

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[72]Ibid. "He stood in front of these shelves often and with pleasure, when he went to his table, or at other times when he could scrape together a moment, he opened the doors of the cabinet and looked at the books, he took one or another and looked at it then but it back in its place."

[73]Ibid. "In the evenings, which he seldom spent outside the home, except for when he had business in the city or when he went to the theater with mother, which he did every once in a while and with joy, he often sat an hour, but often two or more at a beautifully carved old table, which sat on a similarly old rug, and read. There one was not permitted to disturb him and no one was allowed to go through the book room."

Heinrich does not really understand why. His father appreciates that he has created a space where he can focus entirely on his desire to learn, to read, and to submit to the process of education. The space does not create the pleasure, but rather reading his books and his art allow him a sort of pleasure only possible through submission. Heinrich must learn why the books and the act of reading are so important to someone of his class.

His host at the *Asperhof* also establishes a sort of ritual around the books in his home, but one that is markedly different from that of Heinrich's father. When he first encounters what he initially calls the *Ausruhezimmer* he notes that there is nothing lying around.

> Es befaßte nichts als lauter Tische und Sitze. Auf den Tischen lagen aber nicht, wie es häufig in unsern Besuchzimmern vorkömmt, Bücher oder Zeichnungen und dergleichen Dinge, sondern die Tafeln derselben waren unbedeckt, und waren ausnehmend gut geglättet und gereinigt. Sie waren von dunklem Mahagoniholze, das in der Zeit noch mehr nachgedunkelt war. Ein einziges Geräte war da, welches kein Tisch und kein Sitz war, ein Gestelle mit mehreren Fächern, welches Bücher enthielt. An den Wänden hingen Kupferstiche.[74]

Again, he pays close attention to the furniture in the room, but as there are no books lying about, he is unable to judge the man by his books – similar to how his father keeps his books behind green silk curtains. Instead, the room, though it contains books, is meant as a place to relax. Risach says: "Hier könnt Ihr ausruhen, wenn Ihr vom Gehen müde seid, oder überhaupt ruhen wollt."[75] Then he offers the use of his books, saying: "Auf dem Gestelle liegen Bücher, wenn Ihr etwa ein wenig in dieselben blicken wollet."[76] Heinrich sees the books on the shelf, and is offered his choice of any of the books, but the fact that there is an order to the books, and

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[74]*Nachsommer*, 54. "It was comprised of nothing but tables and chairs. Unlike as is often the case in our book rooms, there was nothing laying on the tables. Rather the tables were uncovered and were well polished and cleaned. They were made of dark mahogany that had gotten darker in the course of time. Just one piece of furniture was there, that was neither a table nor a chair, a wardrobe with many small compartments, which held books. There were copperplates hanging on the walls."

[75]Ibid. "Here you can relax if you are tired from walking."

[76]Ibid. "On racks there are books, if you would like to browse them a bit."

that they are not simply lying about is what draws his attention. His father's library is also kept in such order. Though Risach reads the books, they are not scattered about his room. Additionally, the books in this room are not hidden away, but there for all to see.

Though this seems like a fine point it is perhaps the first of many lessons which Heinrich learns regarding his education. As he gets ready to join Risach and Gustav for dinner he leaves his book behind – even though as he noted, there were no books lying about. "Ich legte das Buch neben mich auf den Sitz, und schickte mich an zu gehen." However, Risach quickly corrects his behavior:

> Er aber nahm das Buch, und legte es auf seinen Platz in dem Büchergestelle. "Verzeiht," sagte er, "es ist bei uns Sitte, daß die Bücher, die auf dem Gestelle sind, damit jemand, der in dem Zimmer wartet oder sich sonst aufhält, bei Gelegenheit und nach Wohlgefallen etwas lesen kann, nach dem Gebrauche wieder auf das Gestelle gelegt werden, damit das Zimmer die ihm zugehörige Gestalt behalte.[77]

It is the customs of *Asperhof*, Sternenhof, and indeed even in his family's home, to which he submits over and over again as he becomes more completely acculturated. While Heinrich learns these customs through his interactions with books, and with reading in general, the reader of *Der Nachsommer* learns, along with Heinrich, the proper response to social situations. Moreover, an individual's interactions with books seems to serve as a means by which he can be judged. While Heinrich was originally critical of the division between the library and the reading room, after many visits to the *Asperhof* he understands why such a system is necessary. Heinrich states:

> In dem Lesezimmer aber wird dann der wirkliche und der freundliche Gebrauch dieses Geistes vermittelt, und seine Erhabenheit wird in unser unmittelbares und irdisches Bedürfnis gezogen. Das Zimmer ist auch recht lieblich zum Lesen. Da scheint die freundliche Sonne herein, da sind die grünen Vorhänge, da sind die einladenden Sitze

[77] *Nachsommer*, 184. "But he took the book and put it back in its place on the bookshelf. "Excuse me" he said, "it is the custom here, that the in order to keep the room in order, that the books on the shelves should be placed back on the shelf after their use, so that someone, who is waiting in the room, or who is otherwise staying here, should they need or desire to do so, can read the books."

> und Vorrichtungen zum Lesen und Schreiben. Selbst daß man jedes Buch nach dem zeitlichen Gebrauche wieder in das Bücherzimmer an seinen Platz tragen muß, erschien mir jetzt gut; es vermittelt den Geist der Ordnung und Reinheit, und ist gerade bei Büchern wie der Körper der Wissenschaft, das System.[78]

This order and cleanliness that should be part of one's spirit, and therefore books as well, has become ingrained in Heinrich. He has used his new abilities to read and understand the training he receives, and desires the sort of submission which he only blindly followed before. This submission and inner development exhibit an agency that they did not before. Though he already had an inclination toward order through his interest in the hard sciences, he comes to see that this same type of order should be part of other aspects of one's life. In fact, Heinrich suggests: "Wenn ich mich jetzt an Bücherzimmer erinnerte, die ich schon sah, in welchen Leitern, Tische, Sessel, Bänke waren, auf denen allen etwas lag, seien es Bücher, Papiere, Schreibzeuge oder gar Geräte zum Abfegen; so erschienen mir solche Büchersäle wie Kirchen, in denen man mit Trödel wirtschaftet."[79] With repeated visits to the *Asperhof* Heinrich realizes that the particularities of the house are well thought out and what he first judged to be mistakes were really mistaken judgments on his own part, though his host knows nothing explicit of Heinrich's skepticism and the cultivation he undergoes. He also begins to realize the importance of separating out the location of the books from where one reads them, as the book room, or library, becomes a holy place for him, much as his father's library was for him:

> Dadurch, daß in dem Bücherzimmer nichts geschah, als daß dort nur die Bücher waren, wurde es gewissermaßen eingeweiht, die Bücher bekamen eine Wichtigkeit und

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[78]*Nachsommer*, 223. "In the reading room the friendly and real use of the spirit is conveyed, and his majesty is dragged into our immediate and earthly needs. The room is quite pleasant to read. Here shines the friendly sun, there are green curtains, there, over there are the inviting seats and other furnishings for reading and writing. Even that] one has to carry every book by the time re-use in the book room at his place, now seemed good to me, it conveys the spirit of order and cleanliness, and is just with books the same as in the body of science, the system."

[79]Ibid. "When I now think about the book rooms, that I have seen, in which one had ladders, tables, chairs and benches, on which laid books, paper, and writing implements. Such bookrooms now seem to me like churches, in which one leaves around junk."

> Würde, das Zimmer ist ihr Tempel, und in einem Tempel wird nicht gearbeitet. Diese Einrichtung ist auch eine Huldigung für den Geist, der so mannigfaltig in diesen gedruckten und beschriebenen Papieren und Pergamentblättern enthalten ist. [80]

The temple-like bookroom then offers a new source of inspiration and the fact that churches, reconstruction, and the importance of education are all tied together in *Der Nachsommer* is no accident. The books become like holy relics, to which Heinrich goes to find clarity. Though they are certainly works to be revered, we cannot argue, as Russell Berman suggests, that they have "nothing to do with public sociability" and "very little to do with reading" and are rather part of a "cult of art," instead they are critical to the development of the subject.[81] While the books are important and housed in their temple, they are certainly meant to be read, and are in fact offered as one of the key features of the home. Moreover, what is particularly important with regard to his changing opinions of both books and the purpose of libraries is that he is now fully accepting of Risach's judgments. The societal expectations have become fully ingrained in him and with the freedom provided him at the *Asperhof*, he is allowed to make judgments on his own. He has also gained the confidence to pass these judgments, and therefore is in the process of becoming part of the system of power which instructs others. Additionally, as Heinrich tells his own story through the novel, we see that this novel has the potential to take on a similar importance for others who might read it in the future. Thus learning to read specific books, and developing an interest in reading works of literature as well as nature, become critical to Heinrich's *Bildung*.

To understand the lessons in reading which Heinrich gains at the *Asperhof*, it is important for us to see how his reading develops over the course of the novel. Lynne Tatlock

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[80]Ibid. "As a result, that in the book room nothing happened except that the books were there, it was a sense of consecration. The books took on an importance and a dignity, the room is their temple, and one does not work in a temple."

[81]Berman, 118.

has suggested that reading was an essential part of *Bildung* in that "every individual had the possibility of improving himself or herself through 'reading up' and thus participating in the nation's cultural traditions." Her analysis points to the "reading of culturally sanctioned texts" which could "render the masses less vulnerable to the influences of mass commercial culture."[82] Though Heinrich is already of a class which values reading and is literate – in the sense that he knows how to read –throughout the story he learns a new type of reading. Reading people, reading books, reading nature, reading art all become part of his education in the novel. In the *Asperhof*, when Heinrich does decide to select a book from the library, he describes its holdings which sound like the holdings of most elite German libraries in the nineteenth century. "Es waren aber bloß beinahe lauter Dichter. Ich fand Bände von Herder, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Übersetzungen Shakespeares von Schlegel und Tieck, einen griechischen Odysseus, dann aber auch etwas aus Ritters Erdbeschreibung, aus Johannes Müllers Geschichte der Menschheit und aus Alexander und Wilhelm Humboldt."[83] The catalog is telling for the authors and types of books which Risach values, and certainly for those books which Heinrich notices. While Berman has posited that the literature in the novel is "presented only as statements with no consequences for the subsequent development of the recipients or for the unfolding of the novel," I would instead suggest that the literature is meant as a meta- or intertextual signpost which indicate the effect that *Bildung* has on him over the course of the novel, and that the choices Heinrich makes have a significant impact on how he is

[82]Lynne Tatlock, *Publishing Culture and the "Reading Nation": German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 15.

[83]*Nachsommer*, 55. "There were basically only poets. I found books by Herder, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, translations of Shakespeare from Schlegel and Tieck, a Greek version of the *Odyssey*, then there were also some of Ritter's descriptions of the earth, the *History of Mankind* by Johannes Müller, and texts from Alexander und Wilhelm Humboldt."

viewed by other characters in the novel. Moreover, the way that he reads both books and his surroundings likewise develops as he spends more time with Risach.

Since the story is told in the first person, Heinrich's observations develop over the course of the novel, just as his personality and education develop. What he notices at first glance, the opinions he holds which may be contrary to Risach's, and the works he is interested in reading at the beginning of the story, are those of a less developed individual. His book choice indicates where his interest lies. "Ich tat die Dichter bei Seite, und nahm Alexander Humboldts Reise in die Äquinoktialländer, die ich zwar schon kannte, in der ich aber immer gerne las."[84] His lack of interest in Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Lessing, Schlegel, and Tieck's translation of the works of Shakespeare and Homer's *Odyssey* show first that his education has not taught him an appreciation for such works, but also that these are the books which one needs to develop into a proper nineteenth-century individual. Instead he chooses a book of non-fiction, a travelogue, with which he is already familiar. Given that this is his first encounter at the *Asperhof*, he is not yet prepared to take on the possibilities of *Bildung* which are being offered to him. Instead he stays within his comfort zone by selecting Humboldt's book. Later in the story he learns to appreciate the beauty of poetry, and uses the texts that he sees in this first encounter as his guide for what texts he should read. He must return to the lessons he is presented with, submit to them, and develop into a new subject through this submission. It is as though Risach is testing Heinrich's responses. His choices help determine the path of his education and provide cues to his *Erzieher* as to what he needs to further develop.

[84]*Nachsommer*, 183–4. "I set the poets aside and took Alexander Humoldt's *Travels in the Equatorial Lands*, with which I was familiar, but which I always enjoy reading."

On his return home from the first excursion to tell his father about the *Asperhof* and his host there, he initially attempts to discover who the man is based on information he gathered. Then his father asks about the various parts of the home to determine what type of person he is. Identity is not important here – hence why we do not actually get the name of the host and Heinrich's name until the end of the story. What is extremely important is the type of person he is and the objects in his home will show this. "Der Vater erkundigte sich im Laufe des Gespräches genauer nach manchen Gegenständen in dem Hause des alten Mannes, deren ich Erwähnung getan hatte, besonders fragte er nach den Marmoren, nach den alten Geräten, nach den Schnitzarbeiten, nach den Bildsäulen, nach den Gemälden und den Büchern."[85] Of this list of items, it is interesting that we start from marble – an aspect of nature – to more specific man-made handwork, like the carpentry and the statues, finally arriving at art and texts. It is as though we go from least to most refined forms of aesthetics. Heinrich's response to his father's questions shows the lack of education on his part and the areas in which he must be educated in the future. "Die Marmore konnte ich ihm fast ganz genau beschreiben, die alten Geräte beinahe auch. […] Über Schnitzarbeiten konnte ich schon weniger sagen, über die Bücher auch nicht viel, und das wenigste, beinahe gar nichts, über Bildsäulen und Gemälde."[86] This show's Heinrich's lack of attention and inability to read certain things in the house, particularly those things which will lead to his ability to fit into society and integrate him into the *Bildungsbürgertum*. The list itself reads like an aesthetic education from Kant or Schiller. He is familiar with those things in nature, the most naïve of all forms of aesthetics. From there he is

[85]*Nachsommer*, 222. "In the course of the conversation, father inquired about specific items I had mentioned from the old man's house. Especially he asked about the marble, the old furnishings, the carvings, the sculptures, the paintings and the books."

[86]*Nachsommer*, 250. "I could describe the marble almost exactly, the furnishings as well. […] I couldn't tell him as much about the carvings or about the books. I knew the least about the sculptures and the paintings."

able to look at the furniture and instruments. The furniture could belong to the sort of art which is used as decoration – not real art, and the instruments are clearly meant as a gesture toward scientific exploration which Heinrich is most familiar with at this point. *Dichtkunst* (the art of poetry) and reading are not Heinrich's strong suit, either in the sense of reading books, or reading his surroundings. Finally, Heinrich knows nothing about sculpture or painting, both of which are considered to be two of the highest forms of art by some writers of aesthetics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This being the case it is clear that if Heinrich desires to be fully accepted and considered educated, he must learn to read such pieces.

The best example of how Risach educates him as to how to read such works of art is when he realizes the beauty of the statue in the stairwell during the storm. He says that the impression that it gave him was unlike any before, even those he had encountered through poetry. It was:

> allgemeiner, geheimer, unenträtselbarer, er wirkte eindringlicher und gewaltiger; aber seine Ursache lag auch in höheren Fernen, und mir wurde begreiflich, ein welch hohes Ding die Schönheit sei, wie schwerer sie zu erfassen und zu bringen sei, als einzelne Dinge, die die Menschen erfreuen, und wie sie in dem großen Gemüte liege, und von da auf die Menschen hinausgehe, um Großes zu stiften und zu erzeugen.[87]

This description of the statue is quite similar to Schiller's description of the sublime sensation one has when viewing the head of Juno.[88] Schiller's description, however, almost has sexual overtones, while Stifter leaves this sort of attraction out of his story. The exchange between Heinrich and Risach over the statue shows Risach's style of education. Heinrich asks: "Warum habt Ihr mir denn nicht gesagt […] daß die Bildsäule, welche auf Eurer Marmortreppe steht, so

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[87]*Nachsommer*, 400. "More general, secret, unsolvable, he seemed forceful and powerful, but his cause lay at a greater distance and made me understand what a high one thing the beauty is, how difficult to capture and bring it, whether as individual things that the people enjoy, and as she lay in the great mind, and from there to the people go out to stir up and generate something great."

[88]*ÄE*, 15th Letter.

schön ist?" To which Risach responds, "Wer hat es Euch denn jetzt gesagt? Heinrich then admits "Ich habe es selber gesehen." Finally we hear Risach's pedagogical reasoning for not telling Heinrich about the beauty of the statue. "Nun, dann werdet Ihr es um so sicherer wissen und mit desto größerer Festigkeit glauben […] als wenn Euch jemand eine Behauptung darüber gesagt hätte."[89] His focus on personal experience as the primary means of determining the beauty of something, rather than being told that something is beautiful is then emphasized later when Heinrich expresses how foolish Risach must have thought him for not seeing the beauty of the statue sooner. "Aber was müßt Ihr denn die Zeit her über mich gedacht haben, daß ich diese Bildsäule sehen konnte, und über sie geschwiegen habe?" But Risach explains that he knew that he would come to it in time. "Ich habe gedacht, daß Ihr wahrhaftig seid […] und ich habe Euch höher geachtet als die, welche ohne Überzeugung von dem Werke reden, oder als die, welche es darum loben, weil sie hören, daß es von andern gelobt wird."[90] It is critical that Heinrich has come to this assessment himself and has an investment in the statements that one makes, rather than parroting what others say, or praising something for being beautiful without really knowing anything about it, just because others have commented on it. Risach leads individuals to opportunities, in order to see them perform socially. Heinrich, who is open to the process of *Bildung* struggles against his instincts to perform and instead learns to become the model student. This is a voluntary process, as he could have left the tutelage of Risach at any time, but instead he continues to return to the *Asperhof* and his educator again and again.

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[89]*Nachsommer*, 380. "Why didn't you tell me that the sculpture, which stands on your marble stairs, is so beautiful? […] Who told you that it was beautiful now? […] I saw it myself […] Then you know it with more certitude and believed with greater strength than if someone had suggested it."

[90]Ibid. "But what must you have thought about while I've been here, that I saw this sculpture and remained silent about it. […] I thought that you were honest and I held you in higher regard than those, who talk about works without conviction, or than those, who praise a work because they have heard that it is praised by others."

The Next Generation

The education that one receives through the reading of books and the interaction with objects that are to be read like books, requires a submission to the process of reading and the process of text selection. Truly it is the selection of texts or the selection of objects to be read to which one submits. Therein lies another aspect of the power dynamics of the book. Though Heinrich receives an education in reading nature, the aesthetic, and works of literature from Risach, it is midway through his *Bildung* process that he encounters the lessons of the *Asperhof*. Heinrich has been allowed to choose that which pleases him, upon his arrival in the *Asperhof*, his host begins to steer him in a particular direction with regard to his reading. However, Gustav, Risach's adopted son is the exemplar for how such *Bildung* functions in a sort of *tabula rasa* and perhaps the best example of the type of reading the book advocates if one is to become a fully formed member of society. Heinrich observes that: "Für Gustav waren nach der Wahl seines Lehrers die Bücher, die er lesen durfte, bestimmt. Er benutzte sie fleißig, ich sah aber nie, daß er nach einem anderen langte. Eustach und die anderen Leute hatten freie Auswahl, und natürlich ich auch."[91] Risach says to Heinrich that he may read anything that pleases him, and that the books will be placed in his room for him. In the same conversation, however, he remarks that all, except Gustav, are allowed this freedom. Though Gustav has many other liberties around the *Asperhof*, his book selection is seriously limited by Risach.

Whereas Heinrich is given a great deal of freedom to choose what he wants to do – Gustav must be guided on his path.

> In diesem Hause war jeder unabhängig und konnte seinem Ziele zustreben. Nur durch die gemeinsame Hausordnung war man gewissermaßen zu einem Bande verbunden.

[91]*Nachsommer*, 222. "For Gustav the choice of books that he could read was made by his instructor. He read them diligently, but I never saw that he sought out any others. Eustach and the other people, and I, of course, had a free choice of books."

> Selbst Gustav erschien völlig frei. Das Gesetz, welches seine Arbeiten regelte, war nur einmal gegeben, es war sehr einfach, der Jüngling hatte es zu dem seinigen gemacht, er hatte es dazu machen müssen, weil er verständig war, und so lebte er darnach.[92]

It is important that in this passage Gustav appears to be completely free. This appearance of freedom is what Foucault talks about when he differentiates between slavery and the normal power of the state. It is this freedom to choose between various opportunities, but within a specific set of options. This is the power that the process of proper *Bildung* exerts over those who submit to it and what makes the process of *Bildung* masochistic. If *Bildung* is undertaken properly it is capable of excising the negative and creating a wholly good man. This is also represented in popular literature later in the century. In Friedrich Friedrich's 1874 story *Die Macht der Bildung*, he describes the consequences of both strong, positive *Bildung*, as well as the negative consequences of those who receive no education.[93] In this story, as with *Der Nachsommer*, the primary mode of *Bildung* and therefore control is through reading. Therefore, the Gustav's relationship to books are critical to his proper development.

One aspect of his education is learning to read the way that others read and under the direction of Risach. When his mother gives him a collection of Goethe's works, they are both as a means of binding him closer to his family, but also of teaching him the proper way to read – specifically how to read Goethe. In describing her books, Matilde apologizes that they are not the new books that Gustav had perhaps expected, but explains the emotions that these books evoked in her:

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[92]*Nachsommer*, 219. "In this house everyone was independent and could strive toward his own goals. Only when it came to the common activities of the house, was one relatively tied to others. Even Gustav seemed to be completely free. The law, which ruled his work, was only given once and it was very simple, and the boy made it his own, he had to, because he was mature, and thus he lived by the rules."

[93]Friedrich Friedrich, *Die Macht Der Bildung: Eine Erzählung* (Berlin: B. Brigl, 1874). The moral of this story, and it is indeed the type of tract which one might expect a moral to come out of, is that through the proper course *Bildung* one can become successful, but without it one will stagnate or turn to a life of crime, extortion, or some other non-*bürgerlich* characteristics.

> Es sind dieselben Bücher Goethes, in welchen ich in so mancher Nachtstunde und in so mancher Tagesstunde mit Freude und mit Schmerzen gelesen habe, und die mir oft Trost und Ruhe zuzuführen geeignet waren. Es sind meine Bücher Goethes, die ich dir gebe. Ich dachte, sie könnten dir lieber sein, wenn du außer dem Inhalte die Hand deiner Mutter daran fändest, als etwa nur die des Buchbinders und Druckers.[94]

The fact that Goethe plays such a large role in the education of this young boy – mediated by his mother and his foster-father – shows the importance which Stifter places on the reading of Goethe – and namely the proper reading of Goethe. The books to be read from the collection will be selected by Risach, and Matilde, though not physically present, will be there to guide his reading through her eyes:

> Wenn du in den Büchern liesest, so liesest du das Herz des Dichters und das Herz deiner Mutter, welches, wenn es auch an Werte tief unter dem des Dichters steht, für dich den unvergleichlichen Vorzug hat, daß es dein Mutterherz ist. Wenn ich an Stellen lesen werde, die ich unterstrichen habe, werde ich denken, hier erinnert er sich an seine Mutter, und wenn meine Augen über Blätter gehen werden, auf welche ich Randbemerkungen niedergeschrieben habe, wird mir dein Auge vorschweben, welches hier von dem Gedruckten zu dem Geschriebenen sehen und die Schriftzüge von einer vor sich haben wird, die deine beste Freundin auf der Erde ist. So werden die Bücher immer ein Band zwischen uns sein, wo wir uns auch befinden.[95]

The books are therefore meant not only to impose the power of the family on Gustav, but also the power of education on him. However, the notations of his mother are not enough. As Risach selects the first book for him to read, *Hermann und Dorothea*, he tells Gustav, "er solle das Werk so genau und sorgfältig lesen, daß er jeden Vers völlig verstehe, und wo ihm etwas

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[94]*Nachsommer*, 250. "These are the same books of Goethe, which I have spent hours day and night reading with joy and pain, and where I often found comfort and peace. There are my books of Goethe, which I give to you. I thought that you might prefer them when you saw, in addition to the content of the bookbinder and printer, the notes from your mother's hand."

[95]*Nachsommer*, 251. "When you read the books, you read the poet's heart and the heart of your mother, which though it is less valuable than that of the poet, for you, might provide the advantage that it is your mother's heart. When I read passages that I underlined, I will think, here he will remember his mother, and when I see pages where I wrote notes in the margin, your eyes will hover before me. Your eyes which will go from the printed to the hand-written, and you will have the handwriting of someone, who is your best friend on earth. Thus, the books will always be a bond between us, and we will find each other through them."

dunkel sei, dort solle er fragen."[96] In this way he will be exposed to his Mother's emotion, but should he not understand something based on his own reading or the notes of his mother, he is instructed to ask and obtain further direction. One might wonder why Risach chooses *Hermann und Dorothea* as the first of Goethe's books for Gustav to read.[97] That work's setting – around the time of the French Revolution – could be seen as having symbolic significance, particularly in the wake of the 1848 revolutions in Europe. The issues of gender and class also offer interesting lessons for Gustav. *Hermann and Dorothea* is a very similar story to that of Risach and Matilde, with the genders reversed. As such, Risach may be allowing Goethe's story to stand in for his own – similar to how Wilhelm Meister allows the story of his *Bildung* written by the *Turmgesellschaft* to stand in for his own at the end of the story and how Heinrich's story becomes a new, updated, and ultimately more successful version of Risach's own story.

Structurally, Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* works similarly to other *Bildungsromane*, with the protagonist's various journeys in support of his education. However, the metatextual *Binnenerzählung* (framed story) in the third book seems to be a recapitulation of the story from the first two books. Entitled "Der Rückblick" (The Look Back), this book tells the story of Risach's development, his relationship with Gustav's mother Matilde, and his life in public service. Risach becomes the first-person narrator of the novel, taking over the story from Heinrich. Though the stories seem similar, it shows the *Umwege* (detours) that have been avoided by Heinrich throughout the story, because he has been properly educated by Risach. It offers a look back, not only at the decisions that Heinrich has made, but also those decisions

[96]*Nachsommer*, 265. "He will read the work so carefully and precisely that he will completely understand every verse, and in those places where it is dark, there he shall ask."

[97]Interestingly, *Hermann und Dorothea* is one of the works included in Stifter's *Lesebuch*.

which have been made for him. It is akin to the final books of *Wilhelm Meister*, where Wilhelm becomes aware of the *Turmgesellschaft*. Risach, then, becomes the ultimate figuration of the *Turmgesellschaft*, in that he allows Heinrich to make his own decisions, but ultimately guides him in such a way that his *Umwege* are not really detours, but instead carefully orchestrated steps on a very specific path.

First we see that the missteps by Risach and Matilde offer a means of explanation for the decisions made by Risach and Matilde to see their relationship and love come to fruition through others – their story is then the *Umweg* through which a new generation can learn and become successful. This is echoed in the conversation that Heinrich hears as he passes by a rose-covered window at *Asperhof*. "In diesem Augenblicke ertönte durch das geöffnete Fenster klar und deutlich Mathildens Stimme, die sagte: 'Wie diese Rosen abgeblüht sind, so ist unser Glück abgeblüht.'"[98] Mathilde expresses that she believes that their happiness is passed and beyond its prime. Risach, however responds: "Es ist nicht abgeblüht, es hat nur eine andere Gestalt."[99] This "andere Gestalt," will be the relationship between Heinrich and Natalie. They embody the form that the happiness, which was unavailable to Risach and Matilde, can take in the future. But as Risach explains, this happiness has been carefully constructed, both in the *Bildung* of Heinrich, but also in the way that the relationship should develop. For the reader, however, this means that the story can change – the missteps can be avoided. By reading the story of these missteps and how they have been avoided by others, one can mimic this same system in one's own life through a careful process of *Bildung*. The type of *Bildung* we see in this story, however, goes beyond marriage and love. Heinrich suggests that "was ich in diesem

[98]*Nachsommer*, 427. "Just as these roses have faded, so has our happiness."

[99]Ibid. "Our luck has not faded, it has just taken on another form."

Hause geworden bin; denn wenn ich irgend etwas bin, so bin ich es hier geworden."[100] With this he acknowledges the role that Risach has played in his Bildung exposing the power that he has exerted over Heinrich.

However, this is not the end of the story. In an almost ominous turn, after Natalie and Heinrich are married, Risach takes a tone with the two of them which is almost too familiar. He starts by using the informal "du" with Heinrich and begins calling Natalie by a nick-name both of which he has done until this point in the book. He turns to Natalie and says: "Habe ich es gut gemacht, Natta, […] daß ich dir den rechten Mann ausgesucht habe? Du meintest immer, ich verstände mich nicht auf diese Dinge, aber ich habe ihn auf den ersten Blick erkannt. Nicht bloß die Liebe ist so schnell wie die Elektrizität, sondern auch der Geschäftsblick."[101] This conversation is peculiar because it makes it appear like everything that Risach has done up until this point in the book with regard to Heinrich has been an attempt to find a husband for Natalie, a husband who was to his liking and who was amenable to his program of *Bildung*. In some sense this is similar to the revelation in the final books of *Wilhelm Meister* where the *Turmgesellschaft* is made known to Wilhelm. It exposes the systems of power and calls into question the freedoms afforded to Heinrich throughout the story. Certainly even if Risach served as a sort of Jarno-esque figure throughout the story, guiding even the Heinrich's detours, Heinrich submitted to this program of education willingly and took on the role of masochistic subject. In the end, he forms the foundation of the state, entering into another

[100]*Nachsommer*, 806. "That which I have become in this house, if I have become, anything, I have become it here."

[101]*Nachsommer*, 806. "Did I do well Natta, in that I sought out the right man for you? You always think that I don't understand these things, but I recognized him at first sight. Love isn't the only thing that is as quick as electricity but also the glance of business."

masochistic power dynamic where he will be given the opportunity to submit and take on a new identity.

Conclusion

While Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* becomes a literary power to which authors respond through the genre of the *Bildungroman*, it is clear that the partial submission to this system offers a means of critiquing the methods of *Bildung* through the selfsame structures. Novalis' own ideas about *Bildung* and the Romantic impulse in literature become critical to the *Bildung* in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Though Novalis submits to some of the same structures of *Wilhelm Meister*, he ultimately chooses to demonstrate the masochistic impulse to strive for perfection and universal poetry in his work. Novalis' text, therefore, offers the reader an example of the ideal poet, who from the beginning is aware that his story has already been written, and who chooses to submit to the story he is meant to embody, even though he is incapable of understanding the importance of the actual text. Books and the reference for poetry are clear in his story, and are certainly an important aspect of his notion of *Bildung*. Heinrich is meant to develop into a poet, but because of the unfinished and therefore fragmentary nature of the novel, we as readers can only imagine the ending of his development as represented in the unintelligible books, which Heinrich reads early in the story. The imagination of the reader then must create the poetry and tap into the universal poetry, which Novalis sees as central to *Bildung*.

Stifter's text also pays homage to Goethe through metatextual references to his texts as well as the many journeys of his protagonist, Heinrich. Though many critics have suggested that Stifter's work represents a unified whole, there is still a sense of detour or at a minimum of questioning the system of power, the messages of the *Vorbild*, Risach, and a notion that

Heinrich must learn through his own experiences. He develops into a more complete member of society through his encounters with reading books and reading his surroundings. His observations of the education of others in comparison to his own education show that there are various paths to the proper development of the individual, but that ultimately promoting the positive and eliminating the negative are central to this process. We see this reflected in the development of the national canon as well, an issue which was critical to Stifter's pedagogical projects. Though Stifter is often seen as an apolitical author, his interest in pedagogy in post-revolutionary Austria suggests that he was deeply concerned with the impact of education and *Bildung* on the development of the individual and the state.

What I have shown in the course of this chapter is how these texts demonstrate the masochistic impulse not only in *Bildung*, but also in the *Bildungroman* as a genre. On a metatextual level these texts become a means of simultaneously submitting to and rejecting the structure of the *Bildungroman* as established by Goethe and Wieland, by revealing the structures of power which are inescapable and which offer various means of subject creation. When seen in light of Foucauldian discussions of power and critique, we can see that ultimately there is no outside the system of *Bildung*, one is always a part of it, one is never fully developed, and one never fully completes the process of *Bildung*. The only means of asserting agency and critique within the system of *Bildung* is to use the tools of *Bildung* against the system. The intersections between the agency of the subject and the power of the system show how the delayed gratification and the submission to the power of system validate the subject and his own development. This process demonstrates how both the reading of these texts and the texts themselves are masochistic. The *Bildungsroman* is an exemplary genre for understanding the masochistic function of *Bildung* in that it focuses on the processes and

systems of power, bringing them to the fore and building a narrative focused entirely on these structures. It is self-reflexive on the level of narrative, but also exhibits the self-reflexivity necessary for a subject to accept a submissive position and create alternative values for his submission. The genre foregrounds the necessity of voluntary and active submission to a matrix of power, rather than obscuring that submission. Finally, reading becomes representative of this submission and *Bildung*, thereby marking the genre as a power to which one must submit, and which has the potential to open a space of critique of the system.

Chapter 3

Suffering for Art: Towards an Alternate Genealogy of the Artistic Masochist in Sacher-Masoch, Wackenroder, and Keller

> But if we have admired those most celebrated artists who, inspired by excessive reward and great happiness, have given life to their works, how much more should we admire and praise to the skies those even rarer geniuses who, living not only without rewards but in a miserable state of poverty, produced such precious fruits? It may be believed and therefore affirmed that if just remuneration existed in our century, even greater and better works than the ancients ever executed would, without a doubt, he [sic] created. But being forced to struggle more with Hunger than with Fame, impoverished geniuses are buried and unable to earn a reputation (which is a shame and a disgrace for those who might be able to help them but take no care to do so).[1]

Introduction

The figure of the suffering artist is as commonplace in our cultural vocabulary as our association of masochism with a man at the feet of a leather- or fur-clad woman. In his description of the lives of artists, Georgio Vasari (1511-1574) venerates the suffering of artists who go unrecognized by society. In an almost throwaway line at the end of the preface to the final book in *The Lives of the Artists* (1550-1568), Vasari points to the notion of suffering, particularly starvation, as a part of artistic production. Vasari points out that the artistic production of artists who are suffering is potentially greater than others, going so far as to call them "rarer geniuses." That these types of artists are to be considered as somehow better than those who have not had to suffer reinforces the notion that artists who suffer on behalf of their

[1]Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter E. Bondanella (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 282-3.

work, particularly through poverty and lack of acknowledgement, are somehow better than those who do not have to suffer. While the majority of the artists he chronicles struggled to produce art, they are well recognized for their artistic abilities. The "rarer genius" of Vasari's text is, therefore, the artist who is both talented and unrecognized, but who continues to produce inspiring art, in spite of, or perhaps because of his suffering. In analyzing Vasari's biographies, Andrew Steptoe has suggested that Vasari was "interested in establishing a status for artists that placed the most successful in the higher echelons of Renaissance society."[2] Steptoe finds little in Vasari's text to suggest an "artistic temperament" arguing instead that Vasari desired to promote artists capable of contributing to the upper classes, who served as the bulk of their benefactors, rather than pained, suffering artists, instead positing that this artistic temperament may be a modern invention.[3] Though Vasari spends the bulk of his text exploring the lives of successful artists, his discussion of the starving artist indicates that this trope is not a modern invention.

Much scholarly literature points to psychological suffering on the part of artists, placing particular emphasis on the lived experience of artists and the pathologization of their emotional turmoil. Psychologists have indicated a connection between creativity and mental illness, feeding into this stereotype.[4] That this is a stereotype that has established itself in our

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[2]Andrew Steptoe, *Genius and the Mind: Studies of Creativity and Temperament* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 259.

[3]Ibid., 264.

[4]For recent scholarship on the connection between artistic creativity and mental illness see: Jonathan A. Plucker, Ronald A. Beghetto, and Gayle T. Dow, "Why Isn't Creativity More Important to Educational Psychologists? Potentials, Pitfalls, and Future Directions in Creativity Research," *Educational Psychologist* 39, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 83–96; Kay Redfield Jamison, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*, New edition (Free Press, 1996); James Kaufman, Melanie Bromley, and Jason Cole, "Insane, Poetic, Lovable: Creativity and Endorsement of the 'Mad Genius' Stereotype," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 26, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 149–161; Zorana Ivcevic and John Mayer, "Creative Types and Personality," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 26, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 65–86; Christopher Zara,

cultural vocabulary suggests that the image of the starving or tortured artist is a social construct bearing further interrogation. Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow have hypothesized that these tropes may stem from a desire for society to create an "other" as a means of comforting itself in its own lack of creative impulse. Whether a real phenomenon or a socially constructed one, it continually comes to the fore in literature.

As literary figures, the suffering artist trope extends back to the classical period. In Greece, muses were thought to seize control of one's thoughts in order to provide artistic inspiration.[5] In the German context, poet laureate Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664) is one of the most personified examples of this trope. While Gryphius' poetry earned him accolades, his experiences in the Thirty Years' War are reflected by the themes of pain and suffering prevalent in his writings. While in Gryphius' case, it is a matter of art imitating life, we also have literary characters who represent this connection of emotional and physical suffering and artistic production.[6] In Goethe's *Torquato Tasso*, the title character is inspired by suffering and writes despite, or perhaps because of, his emotional anguish.[7] From the medieval to the modern period there are numerous other examples of artists who suffer as a result of their artistic endeavors.[8]

Tortured Artists: From Picasso and Monroe to Warhol and Winehouse, the Twisted Secrets of the World's Most Creative Minds (Adams Media, 2012).

[5]Robert Weisberg, *Creativity: Understanding Innovation in Problem Solving, Science, Invention, and the Arts* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2006).

[6]Marian Szyrocki, *Andreas Gryphius, sein Leben und Werk.* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1964).

[7]See: Michael Ossar, "Die Künstlergestalt in Goethes Tasso und Grillparzers Sappho," *The German Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (November 1972): 645–661; Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, "'Tasso: ein gesteigerter Werther' in the Light of Goethe's Principle of 'Steigerung': An Inquiry into Critical Method," *The Modern Language Review* 44, no. 3 (July 1949): 305–328.

[8]Nadja Wick, *Apotheosen Narzisstischer Individualität : Dilettantismus Bei Karl Philipp Moritz, Gottfried Keller Und Robert Gernhardt* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2008), 37-47. Wick has outlined a lengthy history of the cult of the artist genius ranging from medieval art and literature to the modern day, though the artistic genius The artistic genius is perhaps an important precursor to the tortured artist.

Throughout the nineteenth century there are several strains of disenchanted, tortured, and starving artists. The term *poète maudit,* coined by Alfred de Vigny in his 1832 drama *Stello*, refers to an artist whose works stand in opposition to aesthetic norms.[9] *Maudit* translates to cursed or damned, relating to the misfortune of the poet or artist. The Oxford English Dictionary also defines the term as a poet "rejected by the literary establishment or who writes outside the mainstream of poetry."[10] As such, the *poète maudit* may either actively work against the system, be rejected by the establishment as part of this tradition, or both. Futhermore, this has the potential to become a self-fulfilling phenomenon in that those who write outside the mainstream are then not accepted by the literary mainstream, though they might be accepted by a fringe group of other *poètes maudits*.

The artistic temperament has been linked by several scholars to psychological disorders which include the tropes of both the tortured and starving artists. While the lived experience of the artist is not my main focus, Jamison's and Ellmann's identification of an artistic temperament with psychological disorders shows that contemporary medical discourses have noted a potential link between the suffering and longing that we often see in the figure of the artist. In her book *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*, Kay Redfield Jamison points to a possible manic-depressive strain in the temperament of the tortured artist.[11] The tortured artist is one trope that fits into these same modes of longing for recognition or success while experiencing varying degrees of pain or disappointment in one's personal or professional life. Additionally, the starving artist can be

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[9]"poète maudit, n." OED Online. December 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/146526

[10]Ibid.

[11]Jamison, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*.

seen to starve either by choice or because of the insecure financial nature of his chosen profession. He is likewise associated with psychological problems like anorexia, and many scholarly works attempting to associate the two. One such example, Maud Ellmann's *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing, and Imprisonment*, looks at starvation as a mode of protest and artists using starvation as a means of rejecting the status quo.[12]

While different in their presentation, all of these tropes are in some ways related, being associated with artistic endeavors and a degree of suffering, typically self-imposed, but often due to lack of recognition or success. Few of these named tropes point to suffering as a mode of inspiration, but rather suggest that this suffering is simply part of being an artist, particularly for those artists at the beginning their artistic endeavors. Though we often associate all of these tropes with the modern artist, they seem to begin in continental Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Romantic authors and artists are well known for focusing on their suffering – looking for means of either embracing it or moving beyond it – and this trope continues into the modern period. Moreover, the intersection of suffering and inspiration can be located in the artistic and poetic spheres, as well as in aesthetic discourses, particularly in theories of the sublime.

The similarities between the sublime experience and that of the suffering artist are remarkable. Also notable is the desire for these experiences that we associate with masochism. The suffering artist cannot rely on the sublime to produce its inspiration, as the sublime moment is always conceived of as something that happens unexpectedly and cannot be consciously created.[13] Those artists who seek out these sublime moments as a means of

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[12]Maud Ellmann, *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing, and Imprisonment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[13]Ibid., 84

pushing the boundaries of their subjective experience are engaged in a form of artistic masochism that may be obscured by focusing on the pathological tortured artist and the erotics of masochism. The purpose of tying the sublime to the masochistic is not to equate the two, but to see that there is something about the sublime moment, particularly as it is expressed in stories of artists, related to the masochistic. The masochistic is not the sublime, but rather a longing for something like the sublime. While the sublime object is often described as fundamentally threatening to the subject, the triumph over this threat can lead to a subject affirming moment of suprasensuality. If moment that the subject to affirms and asserts himself against something more powerful and potentially destructive can be equated to moment of inspiration or imagination, then the masochistic can be identified the *desire* to experience these moments and the belief that these moments are in fact necessary for artistic inspiration. It is a yearning to achieve the *übersinnlich* realization of one's limitations and, perhaps, to push beyond them.

This chapter will begin by looking at similarities in theories of the sublime and artistic inspiration. It will then consider these theories in the context of Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*, and how we might relate them with a genealogy of masochism and the artist. This will serve as a departure from analyses that use Sacher-Masoch's texts as a sort of prescriptive basis for understanding masochism as a purely erotic phenomenon. Instead we will compare the protagonist, Severin, with a minor character, the German artist, to show how the artist can be read alongside the other artists in this chapter and thereby connect the text to discourses on the sublime and artistic inspiration. We seek to understand how nineteenth-century literature depicting artistic inspiration and production, particularly in its depiction of the suffering artist, was focused on a longing for the sublime. Throughout the course of this chapter, we will see

how the pursuits of the sublime can be located in literature as representations of artistic inspiration. While the means of resolving the conflict at the heart of the sublime change, but the longing and deferred satisfaction seem to be common elements pointing to masochistic desire critical to the sublime experience. This chapter will show how literary representations of artistic longing and inspiration bear resemblance to literary descriptions of the sublime, and that both are similar to depictions of a particular strain of masochism found in Sacher-Masoch's novella *Venus im Pelz*. This is not to suggest that Sacher-Masoch is making direct reference to these authors, but that he is tapping into a well-grounded discourse on inspiration, artistic production, and the sublime.

We will then look at two additional texts and the notions of longing and inspiration that they depict. The first section will consider Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1796), an early piece of Romantic literature that elevates aesthetics to the level of religion. The text describes a series of artists, drawing, in part, on Vasari's text. Just as Vasari draws a connection between suffering and artistic ability, so too does Wackenroder make explicit reference to this through an intersection between religion, art, and the sublime. The sublime moment figures prominently in the text both as a source of inspiration for artists, as well as a confrontation with the limits of subjective experience. Though the text certainly has religious overtones, I will instead consider how the emphasis on artistic creation is deeply connected to the notion of the sublime and how longing for the sublime becomes essential to artistic production. This text is critical to my analysis because it includes descriptions of artistic inspiration in juxtaposition to artistic criticism as well as reflecting on the limits of subjectivity. Moreover, when read in concert with Sacher-Masoch's work, we see a common visceral reaction to stimuli which then leads to

moments of artistic production. Though the types of stimuli – sexual, religious, or imaginary – vary, the responses are described similarly, including trembling, speechlessness, and sometimes a loss of consciousness all representing the point of being overwhelmed. At the same time, the artists are also led to moments of inspiration through these encounters.

We will then turn to Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* (1854-1880), a *Bildungsroman* depicting the titular character's development both as an artist and as an individual. As with the *Bildungsromane* we saw in the previous chapter, this novel describes the development of the titular character. While Heinrich attains a degree of artistic ability through careful study, his continual longing toward his goal of becoming an artist is ultimately unsuccessful. Though the text seems to obscure and displace the sublime, there is still a sense of artistic longing throughout the novel that eventually comes to a head in its final books. Heinrich, though not an accomplished artist, identifies and replicates the suffering of his fellow artists in a desire to become successful. We will particularly consider the Web painting, in the third book of the novel, as the moment when Heinrich comes closest in his longings for artistic accomplishment and inspiration through the sublime. The final portion of the book shows us Heinrich's desire to experience something like the sublime while maintaining control over it, demonstrating the connection between Wackenroder's description of artists and Heinrich's development as an artist. Unlike what we see in Wackenroder, the text no longer sees the sublime as something external to Heinrich, but instead as part of his subconscious imagination, which he must internalize in order to mimic the suffering of the sublime inspiration.

The Sublime, the Suprasensual, and the Artistic

Scholars have suggested a variety of potential connections between aesthetics and masochism. Gilles Deleuze defines a specifically masochistic aesthetic focused on the tableau

and the delay of gratification, whereas Kaja Silverman extends this, arguing that the masochistic gaze not only produces the tableau, but includes the viewer in the masochistic scene as voyeur.[14] These theories are based primarily on establishing the aesthetic scene between the dominant and submissive in erotic masochism. This project, however, is less about identifying an aesthetic of masochism than about identifying what it is about artistic production and its representation in literature that requires an artist to experience suffering and torture for the artist's art to be considered extraordinary. I argue for a connection between the culturally constructed image of the suffering, tortured artist and discourses on the sublime and masochism. What we mean by "the sublime," however, is complicated, for just as we have seen that there are many theories of masochism, so too are there many theories of the sublime. Philosopher Tsang Lap-Chuen explains that because theories of the sublime have changed over time that there is no widely accepted definition of the term, but rather many theories of the sublime, which, to paraphrase Wittgenstein, "share only family resemblances."[15] Considering the similarities in this "family resemblance" offers us a sense of the importance of the sublime in its role in artistic production for this project.

The desire to transcend the known is a theme that philosopher Guy Sircello argues runs through all theories of the sublime.[16] Whether through a connection with the divine, or achieving a state beyond the sensual to something more cerebral, Sircello suggests that the sublime is focused primarily on pushing the bounds of knowledge. His argument centers on the issue of how we might interpret this "'epistemological transcendence' revealed in a certain

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[14]Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty,"; Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins.* For a further discussion of the notion of tableau and the references to aesthetics and art in Sacher-Masoch's work, see MacLeod, "Still Alive."

[15]Lap-Chuen Tsang, *The Sublime: Groundwork Towards a Theory* (University Rochester Press, 1998), 8.

[16]Guy Sircello, "How Is a Theory of the Sublime Possible?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51, no. 4 (Fall 1993): 541–550.

kind of experience."[17] While denying that any true theory of the sublime is possible, he posits that the limits of subjective experience and the desire to get beyond them is critical for all theories provides us with a foundation. Beginning with Longinus, Sircello argues this "is a constant theme of sublime discourse; for it is perfectly clear that to claim to see into the limitations of human powers of knowledge and description is *somehow* to transcend those limitations."[18] Pointing to other cultural traditions and disparate time periods, Sircello traces this theme through all theories of the sublime from Longinus to Burke; from Schopenhauer to Hegel; and from Bataille to Lacan. His emphasis on the sublime object as the source of the transcendence, however, implies that the impetus for experiencing the limits of subjectivity must be external to the subject.

Jane Forsey questions the existence of a plausible theory of the sublime. Calling Sircello's analysis into question, specifically with regard to the problem of the knowable yet unknowable sublime object, she rightly points out Sircello's focus on the object leaves out the Kantian sublime, which instead of focusing on a sort of sublime object locates sublimity in the individual.[19] In Forsey's description of the Kantian sublime she focuses on his explication of the suprasensual, *das Übersinnliche*, something beyond sensory experience, as critical to our understanding of the sublime concluding: "What is truly sublime, then, is not an object of experience: it is an object of thought."[20] Instead of gesturing, as Sircello does, at a hopeful and unnamable transcendence, Forsey ultimately suggests the sublime leaves an individual with a

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[17]Ibid., 544

[18]Ibid., 543.

[19]Jane Forsey, "Is a Theory of the Sublime Possible?," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 381–389.

[20]Ibid., 384.

feeling of inadequacy and negative pleasure as one approaches the limits of cognition.[21] In the final page of her analysis Forsey abandons any potential for a theory of the sublime, suggesting that the sublime is perhaps only capable of being described in literature.[22] Though, as a philosopher, Forsey is unsatisfied with this conclusion; she states, "If this is what we are left with, it is so philosophically limited as to amount to nothing in the way of a theory of the sublime."[23] For the purposes of this analysis, this is precisely where we must ground our discussion of artistic inspiration and production and its relationship to the sublime. Literary descriptions of the sublime, while not theories, are consistently similar in their language and almost universally focus on moments of transcendence and the suprasensual.

It is worth noting that the definition of *übersinnlich*, or suprasensual, in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* of 1856 is specifically related to Kant. It states that the suprasensual is "was sinnlich nicht erfaßbar ist, geistig, transzendent, metaphysisch."[24] With particular reference to Kant, the entry continues: "bei Kant für Transzendent: das Praktische, welches uns über die Sinnenwelt hinaushilft und Erkenntnisse von einer übersinnlichen Ordnung und Verknüpfung verschafft […] seit Kant in allgemeiner Verwendung: Menschen können von Gott und übersinnlichen Dingen doch immer nur menschlich sprechen."[25] In Kant's *Critiques*, it is the practical which helps an individual transcend the sensual world and gives him an

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[21]Ibid., 386.

[22]Ibid., 388.

[23]Ibid., 388.

[24]"übersinnlich, adj. u. adv.," *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm* (Leipzig, 1971), http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/?bookref=23,559,40. „That which is not graspable through the senses, spiritual, transcendent, metaphysical."

[25]Ibid. "By Kant for transcendent: the practical, that helps us to get up out of the sensual world and creates an understanding of a suprasensual order and connection […]; Since Kant in general use: people can only speak of God and suprasensual things as humans."

understanding of something beyond the sensual. Only when one is able to get beyond the sensual experience, and overcome one's fear thereof, is one truly capable of experiencing the sublime. To attain this sublime moment, however, one must first confront both nature and the limits of the imagination and the potential for destruction one encounters with the sublime. Kant leaves no room for an individual to seek out the sublime, but insists this experience occurs on its own without provocation.[26] Furthermore, his focus is not on the physical experience of pleasure and pain, but the intellectual experience of pleasure gained by overcoming pain and the limits of the mind. When we couple this with the inspirational sufferings of the artist – particularly the artist who confronts nature, the divine, or any other source of overwhelming emotional or physical reaction – we see that in a post-Kantian world, the sufferings and productive capacity of the artist can be elided, not with Kant's theories, but as Forsey suggests, through descriptions of such moments in literature. The suffering of the artist, while not intended by Kant, bears a resemblance to encounters with the sublime. As such, the sublime moment can be seen as comparable the moment of inspiration for the artist. The *übersinnlich* and the pain of confronting the limits of the imagination as represented by the suprasensual is thus the starting point of my analysis for the connection between the sublime and the masochistic in aesthetics.

Artistic inspiration and creativity are often been associated with transcendence and the power of the imagination. In his work on artistic inspiration in the Spanish poet Frederico Garcia Lorca and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Hirsch states: "Art is born from struggle and touches an anonymous center. Art is inexplicable and has a dream-power that radiates from the night mind. It unleashes something ancient, dark and mysterious into the world. It conducts a

[26]Philip Shaw, *The Sublime* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 84.

fresh light."[27] He points specifically to Lorca's notion of the *duende*, a Spanish word which might best be translated to pixie or goblin which serves as an "undefinable force which animates different creators and infuses their deepest efforts."[28] The term has a morphological kinship with the term demon, but it just as easily relates to the relationship within the artist "between reason and unreason between rational and irrational elements in works of art."[29] Through his readings of various texts, Hirsch points to the connection of suffering and creativity in literary artists and how these come to be expressed through their texts. Ultimately, he argues, these writers must submit to the *duende* of their inspiration to achieve a greater level of creativity, which seems as though it has been given to them from on high. While the *duende* is personified as something beyond the individual, it may just as easily be a force of inspiration to reach beyond and transcend subjective experience achieving something potentially suprasensual.

In his monograph on creativity, *Artists All: Creativity, the University, and the World*, Burton Raffel takes an interdisciplinary approach to notions of creativity in the arts and sciences, suggesting that the artist, whether he be a scientist or a painter, must overcome himself and his own fears in order to become successful. "In every art, technique alone is sterile. In every art, any reasonably dedicated practitioner can fairly easily acquire all the technique that is needed."[30] In Raffel's eyes, this is not enough, and one must take a risk and venture into uncharted territories in order to create something "beautiful" and worthy of the

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[27]Edward Hirsch, *The Demon and the Angel: Searching for the Source of Artistic Inspiration* (New York: Harcourt, 2002), ix.

[28]Ibid., x.

[29]Ibid., xii.

[30]Burton Raffel, *Artists All : Creativity, the University, and the World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1991), 19.

term "art."[31] He summarizes his argument by suggesting that "what we choose to call artistic creativity is nothing more or less than the heightened engagement of human beings with themselves, their fellows, and their environment."[32] Though he dismisses this engagement as simple interaction, I would propose that the "heightened engagement" has been theorized by a variety of scholars as a moment of overcoming the encounter with themselves and their environment, and has a kinship with the sublime. At the same time, we will see that there is also a certain "familial resemblance" with masochism as well.

The German Artist in Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*

In Sacher-Masoch's novella, we see longing linked with artistic inspiration through two characters: the protagonist and a character known simply as the "German Artist." Before looking at the difference between the two, we must consider the narrative which connects us with Kantian sublime. Sacher-Masoch's text makes direct reference to the *übersinnlich* mediated by Goethe's *Faust*. The framed narrative of Sacher-Masoch's novella, *Venus im Pelz*, is presented as a piece of confessional literature, entitled "Die Bekenntnisse eines Übersinnlichen." As a subscript to the confession, the protagonist includes a quotation taken from Goethe's *Faust* (1828–29) when Mephistopheles calls Faust an "übersinnlicher sinnlicher Freier" who allows a woman to lead him around by the nose.[33] Contemporary analyses have read this phrase with a connotation of sexuality, likely in part because of the phrase "sinnlicher Freier" – which we can read as sensual suitor – but also because

[31]Ibid., 21.

[32]Ibid., 133.

[33]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Faust I," in *Weimarer Klassik 1798-1806*, vol. 6.1, Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens, Münchner Ausgabe (München: C. Hanser, 1985), line numbers 3535-36. "supersensual sensual suitor" Freier is also used to describe the client of a prostitute, but at the time of Faust's publication it was understood more as a suitor.

übersinnlich has been defined as as a sort of hypersexuality. As mentioned previously, however, the definition of *übersinnlich* at the time of both Goethe and Sacher-Masoch's writing was not hypersexualty, but was related directly to Kant's theories of the sublime.

In the context of Goethe's drama, the quotation emphasizes Faust's dual nature and his connection to both the sensory world and the world beyond. Though this particular passage from *Faust* is a reference to Faust's desires for Gretchen and his longing for knowledge, Robert Anchor has tied to Goethe's interest in Kant and his theory of artistic genius from *Das Kritik der Urteilskraft*.[34] Anchor argues that Goethe was particularly interested in the notion that the artistic imagination might be able to produce something that surpasses nature, and suggests that we might read the Kantian overtones in *Faust* as an exercise in how aesthetic and teleological judgments mutually illuminate each other."[35] While Faust has two disparate desires –to seek out knowledge and thereby push the bounds of his and subjective experience (*übersinnlich*) and his sensual (*sinnlich*) interest in Gretchen – Mephistopheles implies that his pursuit of transcendence takes a similar form to that of a man pursuing physical attraction. In Goethe's text, it is the *sinnlich* aspect of Faust that is related to sexuality. His *übersinnlich* nature is directly connected to his desire to experience knowledge and become godlike. Similarly, Sacher-Masoch's focus on the *übersinnlich* should shift our focus away from the erotic to something metaphysical. The *übersinnlich* of Sacher-Masoch is deeply indebted to the *übersinnlich* of Goethe, which is ambivalently related to the erotic through its juxtaposition with the *sinnlicher Freier*. While most writings on masochism might identify the *übersinnlich*

[34]Robert Anchor, "Kant and Philosophy of History in Goethe's 'Faust'," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 26, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 498. Anchor references §49 of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft.*

[35]Ibid., 498-99.

of Sacher-Masoch as a sort of hypersexuality, through the lens of the Kantian suprasensual, the reader sees a new dimension to masochism that connects it directly to the sublime.

The protagonist in the novella, Severin, whose confessions make up the framing narrative, tries to enact his fantasies by creating tableaux and participating in a relationship with a dominant woman as her submissive slave. One way he does this is through reenactments of scenes from art. Sacher-Masoch's text is full of paintings and statues which represent ideals toward which the protagonist Severin strives. Whether it is a desire to submit to a woman like the one pictured in Titian's *Venus in Furs*, or the image of Sampson and Delilah that taunts him while he is cuckolded by his dominatrix Wanda, Severin repeatedly encounters images that he attempts to recreate through a sort of submission which he controls. In a sense, while he is copying the works of art, he is also he is replicating the memories and impressions the works have made on his imagination.

Though we are often focused on the protagonist Severin because he signs a contract and obediently submits to his mistress Wanda, there are other characters in the text who are similarly submissive but who represent different types of submission. One such character is the German artist hired to paint Wanda's portrait who appears and just as quickly disappears mid-way through the novella.[36] At first he begins painting Wanda as the Madonna. "Der junge Maler hat in ihrer Villa sein Atelier aufgeschlagen, sie hat ihn vollkommen im Netz. Er hat eben eine Madonna angefangen, eine Madonna mit rotem Haare und grünen Augen!"[37] By describing the painter as a captive in her net, from Severin's perspective, the painter is fully submissive to Wanda's power. Wanda is amused by the painting, but ultimately tells him

[36]We are never told the painter's name – he is referred to only as "Der Maler," "der deutsche Maler," or "der junge Maler."

[37]*Venus*, 107. "The young painter set up his Atelier in her Villa, she had him completely under her control. He had even started a Madonna, a Madonna with red hair and with green eyes."

"warten Sie nur, ich will Ihnen ein anderes Bild von mir zeigen, ein Bild, das ich selbst gemalt habe, Sie sollen es mir kopieren."[38] Wanda takes control and forces an image upon him. As Wanda creates a tableau in which she reclines on a chaise with a whip while Severin sits at her feet, the artist reacts with the same sense of awe that others use to describe the sublime: "Der Maler war entsetzlich bleich geworden, er verschlang die Szene mit seinen schönen, schwärmerischen, blauen Augen, seine Lippen öffneten sich, aber blieben stumm."[39] He responds: "'so will ich Sie malen', sprach der Deutsche, aber es war eigentlich keine Sprache, es war ein beredtes Stöhnen, das Weinen einer kranken, sterbenskranken Seele."[40] He is overcome by emotion and by the image laid out before him. In this scene, the artist continue to paint, and he submits to Wanda's desires that he paint, as well as his desire to capture Wanda through art, but he does not arrange the scene. Wanda has created a scene for her own amusement, and as such steps beyond what he is able to conceive of – beyond his imagination and his senses – to what we might call the suprasensual.

Later when he is painting Wanda and requires additional inspiration, he tells her that he does not have the inspiration he needs for his painting, explaining, "aber Ihr Gesicht hat ganz jenen Ausdruck verloren, den ich zu meinem Bilde brauche."[41] Rather than controlling Wanda and telling her what type of expression he requires, Wanda is left to find an acceptable expression. He seeks out additional inspiration, and like a muse, she provides it. Severin explains that Wanda "richtet sich auf und versetzt mir einen Hieb mit der Peitsche; der Maler

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[38]*Venus*, 108. "Just wait, I will show you a different picture of me, a picture that I have painted myself and you will copy it from me."

[39]Ibid. "The painter became terribly pale, he took in the scene with his beautiful, dreamy blue eyes, his lips opened but remained silent."

[40]Ibid. "This is how I want to paint you, said the German, but it wasn't really even a language, it was a speaking stutter, the crying of a sick, dying sick soul."

[41]*Venus*, 109. "But your face has lost the expression that I need for my image."

blickt sie starr an, in seinem Antlitz malt sich ein kindliches Staunen, mischt sich Abscheu und Bewunderung. Während sie mich peitscht, gewinnt Wandas Antlitz immer mehr jenen grausamen, höhnischen Charakter, der mich so unheimlich entzückt."[42] She asks the painter: "Ist das jetzt jener Ausdruck, den Sie zu Ihrem Bilde brauchen?"[43] In response, the painter "senkt verwirrt den Blick vor dem kalten Strahl ihres Auges"[44] and stutters in response, "es ist der Ausdruck […] aber ich kann jetzt nicht malen –."[45] The German masochistic artist is overcome by the scene placed before him, and though he seeks it out it disrupts his ability to produce art. Sacher-Masoch's German painter co-constructs the image with his inspiration, but then is overwhelmed when she meets or exceeds his fantasy. However, discontented with this passive reception of the image, he seeks out further stimulation in the form of physical submission and asks Wanda to whip him as well. In this way, he takes the place of Severin and steps into the scene that Wanda has developed. After receiving a whipping at Wanda's hands, he returns to his painting, in silence.

Severin's description of the painting "des deutschen Malers" tells us that, "es ist wunderbar gelungen, es ist ein Porträt, das an Ähnlichkeit seinesgleichen sucht, und scheint zugleich ein Ideal, so glühend, so übernatürlich, so teuflisch, möchte ich sagen, sind die Farben. Der Maler hat eben alle seine Qualen, seine Anbetung und seinen Fluch in das Bild

[42]Ibid. "Wanda sat up straight and gave me a strike with the whip; the painter looked at her star, and in his expression was painted a childlike surprise mixed with fear and wonder. While she whipped me, Wanda's face took on an even more cruel, character that delighted me uncannily."

[43]*Venus*, 110. "Is this that expression that you need for your image?"

[44]Ibid. "Lowered his gaze confused before the cold beam of her eyes."

[45]Ibid. "That is the expression […] but now I cannot paint."

hineingemalt."[46] This is the description of the masochistic artist in Sacher-Masoch's work. The artist puts his agonies, his worship, and his curse into the work: the agony with which one confronts the limits of the imagination; the worship which recognizes the awesome qualities of the sublime object or the sublime moment; and the curse which leads one to seek out the sublime moment. When the German painter departs, he does so with a copy of his painting, so that he may find inspiration through his past suffering.

Artists in Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*

The role of the artist, or at a minimum, the subject in texts of the Romantic period, is one of creation and almost godlike power. Works like Novalis' *Hymnen an die Nacht* (1800) and Eichendorff's *Das Marmorbild* (1819) privilege the moments of near psychic destruction as opportunities for individual triumph. Thomas Weiskel has suggested a sublime of Romantic literature that favors the individual and his experience beyond all else. This egotistical sublime is dynamic yet perpetual, "restless but repetitive, habit forming."[47] The habit that is formed by ever increasing needs to push beyond the boundaries and imagine new ways of doing so, is precisely at the heart of what we have been describing as masochism in this chapter. As we shall see, in *Herzensergießungen* Wackenroder goes beyond suggesting that this sort of drive toward the sublime is necessarily a romantic mode of longing, and instead shows how it is an attribute of artistic production which can be seen in the biographies of many artists.

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[46]*Venus*, 111. "It turned out wonderfully. It is a portrait , that looks for its similarity, and also seems at the same time to be an ideal, so glowing, so supernatural, so devilish, I want to say are the colors. The painter simply painted of his suffering and his worship and his curse into the image."

[47]Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 64.

Written collaboratively with Ludwig Tieck and published anonymously in 1796, *Herzensergießungen* is a mixture of fictional letters, history, biography, and other fragments. Lilian Furst has suggested that the work articulates an artistic manifesto of the early Romantic period by imagining a religion of original artistic production rather than focusing on the repetition and imitation which had so permeated German art.[48] Wackenroder's fictional monk, who fails in his own attempts to become an artist, presents the reader with a series of historical "found" texts, offering what seem to be biographical accounts of the lives of artists both real and fictional, based in part on Vasari's work. Like many fragmentary Romantic texts, the structure of the work is complex. Furst suggests that "the technique of multiple frames opening out from each other, which was to become a salient feature of German Romantic narrative, lends depth and texture" to the work.[49] Other than the introduction to the stories, and a short intervention in the middle, the reader hears very little from the titular friar, though his presence as the collector and editor of the works is unambiguous, and his interventions in the text are so seamlessly integrated that the reader is rarely aware that they are not part of the found letters. The work, typical of many works of the *Frühromantik* period, venerates the text, its production, and the emotion of the friar as represented through these various fragments. The assembler of the texts, similar to the artist of the work of art, is visible through the texts he compiles, and thereby demonstrates a privileging of artistic production.

Wackenroder suggests that in order to produce a sort of sublime art, the artist must go beyond producing technically proficient painting or music and be inspired by a transformative experience in which he or she faces the limits of his subjectivity. Furst argues: "The invocation

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[48]Lilian Furst, "In Other Voices: Wackenroder's Herzensergiessungen and the Creation of a Romantic Mythology," in *The Romantic Imagination: Literature and Art in England and Germany*, ed. Frederick Burwick and Jürgen Klein (Rodopi, 1996), 276-77.

[49]Ibid., 278.

of the lives of the painters is thus directed towards the creation of a mythology. This ulterior aim accounts for the inordinate elaboration on the actual lives, specially [sic] the moments of inspiration, of ecstatic trance in the act of creation."[50] This also mimics the stories of the lives of the saints, in which experiences of ecstatic trance or encounters with the spiritual. Niklaus Largier suggests these hagiographies show "the highly experimental character of the scenes of surrender and the elaborate rhetorical structure of their presentation in religious and devotional texts" and that this testifies "to the cultivation of an art of desire and arousal" that involves submission (or *Unterwerfung*) through ascetic life, in order to explore new means of identification.[51] He maintains that this type of masochism is a striving toward an ideal that one cannot reach, except through the ecstatic moment that intervenes in the life of the ascetic.

This type of discourse is important to our approach to Wackenroder's text in part because of the religious frame of the text. It is not coincidental that Wackenroder's story concerns a Catholic monk. The monastic life of the monk, in which he must give up sensual experiences for the pursuits of the mind and the spirit, aligns well with the notion of the artistic longing that Wackenroder espouses. There is also a certain degree of mysticism associated with Catholicism that may be critical to the connections Wackenroder is attempting to make between the divine and the imagination.[52] The aesthetic religion posited by the text is taken on

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[50]Ibid., 284.

[51]Niklaus Largier, "Divine Suffering – Divine Pleasure: Martyrdom, Sensuality, and the Art of Delay," *Figurationen* 1 (2011): 95.

[52]The Romantics venerated the Catholicism of the Middle Ages as a unified church, which also served as a representation of the unity of the individual, poetry, and the spirit. For example: "Novalis praised the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, of the days when all Christianity was one, had one great common spiritual interest, and was united under one head. For Novalis the old Catholic faith was applied Christianity which had become living; its omnipresence in life, its love for art, its profound humanitarianism, its joy in poverty, obedience, and fidelity stamp it as genuine religion. Romanticism's penchant for medieval Catholicism was rooted in the aesthetic element, mysticism, and the fondness for unity." John C. Blankenagel, "The Dominant Characteristics of German Romanticism." *PMLA* 55, no. 1 (March 1, 1940): 4.

by a Catholic friar who has given up on the possibility of creating art and experiencing such rapturous inspiration as an artist. Instead, he is content to approach art as a spectator: to experience the artistic inspiration, and potentially suffering, from the perspective of the observer. He offers up the artists in the narrative as the saints of this religion of art.

Beyond the types of artistic production proffered in the text, one of the most important features of this work is the way it describes the process of artistic creation. Though there are many artists mentioned, there is a distinction drawn between those artists whose production should be mimicked and those who are simply interested in the art of mimicry, and are therefore not inspired artists. This inspiration in the process of artistic creation is, to the mind of the friar, essential for the true artist. Additionally, the inspiration is almost always described as an internal transformation, which, as Kertz-Welzel points out, involves active reflection and an ecstatic transformative experience.[53] Not all of Wackenroder's artists are created equal however. John Ellis suggests there are three different types of artists represented in the text. Artists like Raphael and Dürer who embody the perfect unity of divine inspiration and artistic ability are considered to be "ideal artists."[54] Ambivalent artists, like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, have innate artistic ability but must seek out divine inspiration as they do not have the same connection with the divine as those "ideal artists." Finally, the remaining artists are considered "problematic" in that their search for both artistic ability and divinity lead them to a place beyond the limits of their subjective experience and therefore have the potential to be destructive. By looking at what Ellis describes as the three different types of

[53]Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, "The 'Magic' of Music: Archaic Dreams in Romantic Aesthetics and an Education in Aesthetics," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 13, no. 1 (April 1, 2005): 90.

[54]John Ellis, *Joseph Berglinger in Perspective: a Contribution to the Understanding of the Problematic Modern Artist in Wackenroder-Tieck's "Herzensergiessungen Eines Kunstliebenden Klosterbruders," European University Studies* (Bern, New York: P. Lang, 1985).

artists we can draw a comparison between the varieties of their encounters with inspiration. Wackenroder's descriptions of the pain, terror, or simple disruption that these artists experience – whether it be from external, divine inspiration; doubt at being able to achieve their ultimate perfection; or the striving for the perfection in art that one seeks in religion – characterize a longing to experience these physical and psychic confrontations with the limits of their subjectivity which we might identify as having an affinity with both the masochistic and the sublime.

Raphael: Divine Inspiration and the Sublime

In order to demonstrate the artistic inspiration of the ideal artist, the friar follows his introduction to the collection with a discussion of the life of Raphael entitled "Raffaels Erscheinung." This section starts with a narrative frame, in which the friar critiques art critics and instructors who pretend to know what inspires artists. "Sie reden von der Künstlerbegeisterung, als von einem Dinge, das sie vor Augen hätten; sie erklären es, und erzählen viel davon; und sie sollten billig das heilige Wort auszusprechen erröten, denn sie wissen nicht, was sie damit aussprechen."[55] He indicates that unless one has attempted to create art, and has experienced this *Künstlerbegeisterung* that inspires art, one cannot possibly understand or explain the phenomenon. He goes so far as to say that he refuses to associate with those who deny that such a feeling exists and explains that in letters from Raphael, the inspiration for his images of women comes, not from his surroundings (i.e., not from nature) but rather from within his spirit. "Da man so wenig schöne weibliche Bildungen sieht, so halte

[55]*Herzensergiessungen*, 143. "They speak of the excitement of an artist as if it were a thing that they have before their eyes; they explain it and tell much about it; and they should be ashamed to utter so plainly the holy word, since they don't know what they are saying."

ich mich an ein gewisses Bild im Geiste, welches in meine Seele kommt."[56] This image in his mind comes into his soul from without – meaning that there is some sort of divine inspiration, which touches on the boundaries of his experience – and even goes beyond the boundary to enter his soul. The friar footnotes the text in Italian, and remarks that "Über diese bedeutungsvollen Worte nun ist mir neulich ganz unerwartet, zu einer innigen Freude, ein helles Licht aufgesteckt worden."[57] After framing the letter from Raphael in this way, the friar's voice falls to the background, replaced not with Raphael's own words, but rather with a letter that provides an account of Raphael's explanation of the artistic inspiration for his paintings of the Holy Mother.

The letter, supposedly written by Italian architect and friend of Raphael's, Donato Bramante, reads like a hagiography. It explains how Raphael, who had been sworn to secrecy about particular events in his life, revealed his special connection with the Virgin Mary. Bramante writes: "Er erzählte mir, wie er von seiner zarten Kindheit an, immer ein besondres heiliges Gefühl für die Mutter Gottes in sich getragen habe, so daß ihm zuweilen schon beim lauten Aussprechen ihres Namens ganz wehmütig zumute geworden sei."[58] Since childhood Raphael is unable to say her name without becoming *wehmütig* (melancholic, wistful). As he grows older and begins painting, Bramante explains, "sei es immer sein höchster Wunsch gewesen, die Jungfrau Maria recht in ihrer himmlischen Vollkommenheit zu malen,"[59] but he never trusted himself to paint her. He holds the image of her in his mind and begins painting,

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[56]Ibid., 144. "Since one sees so few beautiful feminine forms, I had to hold a specific image in my spirit, which came into my soul."

[57]Ibid. "Quite unexpectedly and to great inner joy, regarding these meaningful words a great light has been attached."

[58]Ibid., 145. "He explained to me how, from his youth, he carried a special holy feeling for the Mother of God, so that even when he spoke her name aloud he became very wistful."

[59]Ibid. "It became his greatest wish to paint the Virgin Mary in her heavenly perfection."

but is never able to complete his work "als wenn seine Phantasie im Finstern arbeitete."[60] He continues to strive and long for the perfect image of the Virgin Mary, and receives it through divine inspiration:

> Und doch wäre es zuweilen wie ein himmlischer Lichtstrahl in seine Seele gefallen, so daß er die Bildung in hellen Zügen, wie er sie gewollt, vor sich gesehen hätte; und doch wäre das immer nur ein Augenblick gewesen, und er habe die Bildung in seinem Gemüte nicht festhalten können. So sei seine Seele in beständiger Unruhe herumgetrieben; er habe die Züge immer nur umher- schweifend erblickt, und seine dunkle Ahndung hätte sich nie in ein klares Bild auflösen wollen. Endlich habe er sich nicht mehr halten können, und mit zitternder Hand ein Gemälde der heiligen Jungfrau angefangen; und während der Arbeit sei sein Inneres immer mehr erhitzt worden.[61]

Raphael requires this ray of heavenly light falls upon his soul in order to see the image that he seeks. However, it is only for a short time and he cannot grasp the image; it overwhelms him. It is only when his soul is in constant agitation and he can no longer take the fact that the image never emerges fully, that his shaking hands begin painting the Holy Virgin. The shaking and appearance of the Virgin in his consciousness are a moment of the divine intervention, in which he must overcome himself and grasp what up until this point has eluded him. He must experience this type of overwhelming encounter, which may or may not have always been a part of his consciousness, in order to produce his art.

This reaction is similar to that mentioned by Schiller in the fifteenth letter of his *Ästhetische Briefe* (1793-1801). When confronted by a larger than life bust of the goddess Juno, Schiller argues that the statue has a significant both positive and negative effects on the individual who views it. "Indem der weibliche Gott unsre Anbetung heischt, entzündet das

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[60]Ibid. "As if his fantasy worked in darkness."

[61]Ibid. "And yet sometimes it was as though a heavenly beam of light fell into his soul, so that he might have seen the image before him in luminous strokes as he desired it to be. And yet it was only a moment, and he could not hold onto the image in his disposition. So his soul was in constant distress. He had the form always around him - briefly seen, his dark idea would never develop into a clear image. Eventually he could not state it anymore, and with a trembling Hand he started a painting of the Holy Virgin, and during his work his inside became more and more heated."

gottgleiche Weib unsere Liebe; aber, indem wir uns der himmlischen Holdseligkeit aufgelöst hingeben, schreckt die himmlische Selbstgenügsamkeit uns zurück."[62] The goddess demands the observer's prayers, as though she were an active participant in the gaze between subject and object. She ignites the observer's love, clearly a passionate love if it is being associated by a burning sensation in the heart of the observer. The active voice used in describing the goddess' actions implies that the statue serves with some degree of agency in the exchange. Schiller, however, then moves from a physical object that serves as the active subject to the observer as the subject. In addition, she is at once beautiful and terrifying within herself, not because of any external force. At the end of the letter, Schiller explains that the feelings evoked by the statue are nameless: "Durch jenes unwiderstehlich ergriffen und angezogen, durch dieses in der Ferne gehalten, befinden wir uns zugleich in dem Zustand der höchsten Ruhe und der höchsten Bewegung, und es entsteht jene wunderbare Rührung, für welche der Verstand keinen Begriff und die Sprache keinen Namen hat."[63] The fact that Schiller insists these feelings are nameless only links this simultaneous desire and fear more directly to eighteenth-century discourses on the sublime as well as what we have been describing as masochism.

The two accounts stem from encounters with divine women. While Raphael experiences divine inspiration from the Virgin Mary, Schiller's encounter with the sublime is connected with the disembodied head of the goddess of home and family. While we might mark this as a shift from the aesthetic objects of the Romantic to the Classical – the Catholic to

[62]*ÄE*, 15th Letter. "While the female God challenges our venerations, the godlike woman ignites our love, but while we devote ourselves to the heavenly beauty, the heavenly repose scares us away."

[63]Ibid. "Through that we are irresistibly captured and attracted, through this we are held at a distance, we find ourselves simultaneously in the position of the greatest repose and the greatest movement, and there develops a wonderful emotion, for which our reason has no understanding and language has no name."

the Pagan – there is a remarkable continuity between the two.[64] We might also draw a connection between the two based on sexual attraction, as Schiller's discussions of the sublime, indebted to Kant as they are, may be seen as associated with moral education as well as aesthetic education. Finally, I would also suggest that the divine and sublime inspiration are both tied to the artist's production and observation of art, and that suffering for art, and the *desire* to submit to thus suffering are what I describe as masochistic, and what one sees again and again with Wackenroder's artists, even when their inspiration does not stem from encounters with the divine.

Leonardo da Vinci: Creating Divinity for the Sublime

Whereas Raphael serves as the image of the "ideal artist" who has access to the divine and is able to productively direct that inspiration into art, Leonardo da Vinci is described by Ellis as an "ambivalent" artist – not because of he is unsure of his abilities, but because his inspiration and ability to mobilize his imagination are not tied to the divine, but rather to artistic skill both innate and learned. The section entitled, "Das Muster eines kunstreichen und dabei tiefgelehrten Malers, vorgestellt in dem Leben des Leonardo da Vinci, berühmten Stammvaters der Florentinischen Schule," deals with both the innate and learned artistic abilities of Leonardo da Vinci. His innate abilities are not, as with Raphael, a result of a connection with the divine, but rather his artistic talents. Leonardo must create a connection with the divine, and thus the sublime, either through his art, or using his own imagination as a source of inspiration.

[64]Many suggestions regarding the veneration of the Virgin Mary relate her to pagan worship and her inclusion in Catholic teachings are often described as a placation of pagan goddess worship. See: Henry Adelbert Thompson, "The Catholic Cultus of the Virgin Mary," *The American Journal of Theology* 10, no. 3 (July 1906): 475–495

The section of the text begins by lauding not da Vinci's innate talents, nor his inspiration, but "als das Muster in einem wahrhaft gelehrten und gründlichen Studium der Kunst und als das Bild eines unermüdlichen und dabei geistreichen Fleißes darzustellen."[65] Leonardo, however, is not just a learned artist, but his natural talents are also emphasized. His talent as a child was compared to a small stream that eventually gains power and threatens to break through any attempt to rein it in: "Dies ist wie das erste Sprudeln einer kleinen, muntern Quelle, welche nachher zum mächtigen und bewunderten Strome wird. Wer es kennt, hält das Gewässer in seinem Laufe nicht zurück, weil es sonst durch Wall und Dämme bricht; sondern läßt ihm seinen freien Willen."[66] Da Vinci is thus described as representative oft he perfect harmony diligent hard work and talent.

He is inspired, not by images of religious figures, but by that which he finds around him. He is described as constantly searching for these inspirational stimuli. "Leonardo ging nie, ohne seine Schreibtafeln bei sich zu tragen; sein begieriges Auge fand überall ein Opfer für seine Muse."[67] By describing his imagination as his muse, Wackenroder's monk both personifies it and connects it to the classical world. Moreover, da Vinci's eye must offer these inspirational objects as sacrifices to his muse so that his muse might provide him with the ability to create art. While Leonardo is not the one who must be suffer or be sacrificed there is a sense that he must continually seek out these sacrifices to his muse. He subdues everything that he sees to his desire for artistic inspiration and is thereby enflamed by his artistry. "Dann

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[65]*Herzensergiessungen,* 163 "As the exemplar in a truly scholarly and throughout study of art and as the image of atireless and thereby spirited diligence."

[66]Ibid. "This is like the first bubbling of a small and lively well that later becomes a powerful and revered current. He who knows it, does not hold the water back from its course, because otherwise it breaks through banks and dams, but rather it leaves him to his free will."

[67]*Herzensergiessungen*, 164. "Leonardo never went out without carrying his tablet with him; his zealous Eye found Leonardo ging nie, ohne seine Schreibtafeln bei sich zu tragen; sein begieriges Auge fand sacrifices for his muse everywhere."

kann man sagen, daß man vom Kunstsinne ganz durchglüht und durchdrungen sei, wenn man so alles um sich her seiner Hauptneigung untertänig macht."[68] Though Leonardo is not a suffering, starving, or torutured artist in the strictest sense, he is consumed by his need to find sacrificial subjects for his imagination to subdue and turn into art.

After discussing Leonardo's talent and his most famous works, the section ends with a final thought about fantasy, art, and the senses. First the narrator addresses the beholder of his art: "Wer bei meinem zwiefachen Bilde, wie ich, an den Geist des Mannes, den wir eben geschildert haben, und an den Geist desjenigen, den ich den Göttlichen zu nennen pflege, gedenkt, wird in dieser Gleichnisrede vielleicht Stoff zum Nachsinnen finden."[69] By telling the person viewing the piece that he will hopefully find something to think about from both the descriptions of the works, as well as his discussions of the works themselves, it becomes apparent that it is not necessary to view the works of art for inspiration or moments of transcendence. Instead, one only has to have read the descriptions of them, privileging the text and the process of description rather than the completed work of art as a source of inspiration. He then continues to briefly explain the interplay of fantasy and knowledge to understanding the works and to get beyond the work. "Dergleichen Phantaseien, die uns in den Sinn kommen, verbreiten oftmals auf wunderbare Weise ein helleres Licht über einen Gegenstand, als die Schlußreden der Vernunft; und es liegt neben den sogenannten höheren Erkenntniskräften ein Zauberspiegel in unsrer Seele, der uns die Dinge manchmal vielleicht am kräftigsten

[68]Ibid. "Then one can say, when one subordinates everything around himself to his primary tastes, that one is said to be completely enflamed and penetrated by artistry."

[69]Ibid., 173. "Who by my twofold image, as I, on the soul of man, which we just described, and on the soul of this, that I have come to call the Godlike, thought, will in this find something to think about in this comparison."

dargestellt zeigt."[70] The narrator makes an argument in favor of allowing fantasy to take hold. The notion that fantasy might lead to the limits of one's experience in a more complete way than reason runs counter to Kant's focus on the need for reason to show us that we can overcome threats to the limits of our subjectivity in order to experience the sublime. Instead, Wackenroder suggests that the limits of our subjectivity must be reached through the lens of fantasy. Rather than allowing reason to limit our fantasy, the fantasy should be allowed to take over at times in order to push the boundaries even farther and to show us what is capable striving for ever more fantastic moments of the imagination. If successful, this continual yearning for the sublime and use of the imagination to achieve a sublime moment reaffirms the subject. If unsuccessful, it can potentially be destructive.

Spinello and Destructive Inspiration

Finally, we might compare Wackenroder's commentary on observations of art and Raphael's sublime encounter with the Virgin Mary with another painting equally divinely inspired, and equally terrifying for the painter. In the section of the text entitled "Die Malerchronik" the frame focuses on the stories told to a group of monks about various painters. While many have criticized Wackenroder's *Malerchronik* for being historically inaccurate, this accuracy is less important to the text expressing an aesthetic vision, which he does through fictionalized painters.[71] After depicting the lives of the painters already mentioned in other contexts throughout the text, the "Pater" who is instructing the monks, concludes his lesson with a story about "einer der frühesten Maler" by the name of Spinello Aretino. Spinello, an

[70]Ibid. "The same fantasies that come into our senses, often spread a brighter light in a wonderful way over an object, than the conclusions of reason; and next to the so called higher powers of knowledge lies a magical mirror in our soul, which perhaps sometimes shows things to us in the most powerful way."

[71]Maria M. Tatar, "The Art of Biography in Wackenroder's 'Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders and Phantasien über die Kunst'," *Studies in Romanticism* 19, no. 2 (July 1980): 233–248.

Italian artist from the thirteenth century, was known for his frescoes and other religious art in region of Tuscany.[72] In his writings on Spinello, biographer and fellow painter Giorgio Vasari relates that while he painted the Archangel Michael battling a seven-headed Dragon, he was so overcome by the figure of Lucifer he depicted that it gave him nightmares and led to his death. Wackenroder's art-loving Friar describes the figure of Lucifer as a disgusting "Ungeheuer." The fresco itself is less important, however, than the role played by Spinello's imagination. In this case rather than appearing to him prior to the painting of the piece, as with Raphael and the Madonna, the devil appears to him afterward in precisely the form he painted. "Von dieser greulichen Teufelsgestalt war nun sein Kopf so eingenommen, daß, wie erzählt wird, der böse Geist ihm grade so gestaltet im Traume erschien und ihn fürchterlich fragte: warum ihn in dieser schändlichen, bestialischen Bildung vorgestellt, und an welchem Ort er ihn in dieser Unform gesehn habe?"[73] The artist's imagination creates the devil who comes to him in his dreams. The devil first asks Spinello why he was depicted such a way, implying that he is somehow upset by the form Spinello chose. The devil then inquires when Spinello saw him in this form, implying that at one point the devil might have taken that form. Spinello either has a connection with something otherworldly, which enables him to see the forms the devil has taken and thereby be inspired by these forms just as Raphael was inspired by the appearance of the Madonna, or his imagination is somehow beyond the imaginable; an unconscious connection with the beyond.

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[72]Joseph Archer Crowe et al., *A History of Painting in Italy, Umbria, Florence and Siena, from the Second to the Sixteenth Century: Giotto and the Giottesques* (New York: Scribner's, 1903), 254.

[73]*Herzensergiessungen*, 227. "His mind was so overtaken by this terrible image of the devil, that it has been said that the terrible spirit appeared to him exactly as he had been depicted and asked him terrifyingly: why he imagined him in this vile and bestial image, and where he had seen him in this 'Unform.'"

The dream and the image of the devil (the artist's own creation) terrify him as he is confronted the bounds of his imagination. "Der Maler erwachte aus dem Traum an allen Gliedern zitternd, – er wollte um Hülfe rufen und konnte vor Schrecken keinen Laut hervor-bringen. Von der Zeit an war er immer halb von sich und behielt einen stieren Blick; auch starb er nicht lange darauf. Das wunderbare Gemälde aber ist noch heutigestages an seiner alten Stelle zu sehen."[74] This experience of trembling terror, often accompanying experiences with the sublime, is the moment at which the subject has confronted the bounds of his imagination and from which Kant suggests he must rescue himself through his use of reason. Wackenroder likewise suggests that one risks destruction from the experience. In this case, it is the painter's own imagination that constructs the otherworldly being and in submitting to his own imagination, is unable to overcome it. If it does come to him through some sort of divine inspiration, it does so unconsciously. Spinello's dream state also presents a situation in which the artist is incapable of using his faculties of reason. His mind wanders and seeks out the sublime without limits. Though Spinello does not survive such an encounter with his own imagination, his painting lives on for others to experience as a confrontation with the limits of imagination. Spinello does not recognize that this image is only his imagination and therefore he has control of it. Instead it takes over and becomes otherworldly as he imagines it to be inspired by the devil. Because he believes that this image is both divine and external to him, he allows it to destroy him.

Though viewers cannot be destroyed by it, as it was not their imaginations that created the image, they experience the sublime by confronting their fear and being able to get beyond

[74]Ibid. "The painter awoke out of the dream with all of his limbs trembling, — he wanted to call out for help but his fear kept him from producing a sound. From that point on he was always only half the man he had been and he had a stare. He also died not long thereafter. That wonderful painting is however to be seen at its old location."

it.[75] It is unclear whether the fresco was intact at the time of Wackenroder's writing, but his readers are unlikely to have seen the fresco, opening the possibility that Wackenroder is further interested in pushing the boundaries of the imagination for the viewer as well. If the viewers are unable to see the fresco, they must imagine what it might have looked like – what something so horrible to cause someone's death would look like – and in doing so, risk their own encounter with the devil. This addresses an additional aspect of the artistic imagination and longing for the sublime in Wackenroder: the connection of the viewer of a work of art with the sublime and the fear that a work of art can enact. The reader who learns about this fresco even without seeing the work of art is forced to confront the limits of their imagination as well even without being artists themselves. The viewer, however, is never able to achieve the same moment of artistic productivity as the painter. Instead they are in a constant state of imagining.

What we see from these examples in Wackenroder's text is a multi-layered approach to the ideas of fantasy, the sublime, and the intersection of the two. From a "godlike" vision of the Madonna to an ultimately destructive encounter with the devil, we are presented with a range of encounters with the sublime and the effect they have on the subject, either productive or destructive. The reader is also made aware of the longing for the sublime that is critical to the Wackenroder's project. In terms of its connection to masochism, the masochistic impulse to seek out the limits of subjective experience and to go beyond them can be either productive or destructive. On the one hand it can help the subject to push the boundaries of his subjectivity in a way that is not threatening; on the other, those experiences with the sublime that completely overwhelm the subject and become all-consuming are portrayed as negative, and ultimately destructive. It is not the sublime that causes the destruction, but rather the individual who seeks

[75]Crowe et al., 256. Ironically this fresco has since been destroyed and by 1886 had been removed and portions of it added to the British National Gallery.

the experience. If he has not prepared his psyche for the encounter then he may not be prepared to withstand it. The role fantasy plays in this psychic development cannot be understated. When one recognizes the fantasy as something of his own creation he is safe, when the fantasy begins to take on a life of its own and is seen as external to the subject then, the subject is at risk for disruption.

Striving for the sublime is also not in and of itself destructive. Instead the individual who is unable to achieve the moment of sublime inspiration, the artist who is unable to be inspired, or the individual who is unprepared to encounter the limits of their imagination runs the risk of being unable to utilize the suprasensual inspiration to a productive end. What we have seen with both Sacher-Masoch and Wackenroder are primarily successful artists. But what of the dilettante artist, who is not successful? Is he simply unable to find such inspiration, even though he strives for it? If he struggles, and suffers, yet fails to produce art that is considered worthy of renown, where does he fit into Vasari's image of the starving artist. What we will see with Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* is an artistic dilettante who continues to longs to become an artist. In his attempts to simulate the artistic inspiration of others, eventually to become an example of the socially constructed suffering artist, he continually fails to find a subject position of his own.

Delayed and Displaced Inspiration in Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*

As we have seen in the works of Sacher-Masoch and Wackenroder, while the true inspiration may be denied the artists in their works, artistic inspiration is generated through the powers of the artist's imagination and their construction of moments that mimic the suffering of the sublime. In Gottfried Keller's *Bildungsroman*, *Der grüne Heinrich*, his protagonist Heinrich Lee, struggles to become an artist, ultimately abandoning his chosen profession by

the end of the novel. Keller's artist struggles in all aspects of his artistic life: to find inspiration; to be recognized as an artist; and eventually to make a living following his artistic aspirations. While Heinrich's aesthetic life is full of struggle, what is conspicuously absent from most of Keller's work, is any description of the moment of artistic inspiration and suffering akin to what we find in other works.

Keller's text belongs to the *Bildungsroman* genre and as such includes all of the tropes one would expect to find in such a work. The title character, Heinrich, whose father died when he was young, decides at an early age to become an artist, and spends most of his life in various pursuits of artistic success. The story is punctuated by travels in the countryside, explanations of his training, and romantic pursuits either by himself or by others. In the end, Heinrich fails at his artistic endeavors, and following the death of his mother who had supported him financially throughout his *Bildung*, he becomes a Swiss bureaucrat, abandoning art forever. With the explicit focus on the artistic training of the protagonist, the novel borders on being seen as a *Künstlerroman.* However, its various digressions and lack of explicit focus on his artistic inspiration situate the novel firmly within the realm of *Bildungsroman*.

There is much that we could describe as masochistic throughout the story. Heinrich's masochism could very well be found in the moments when Heinrich is beaten by women, or the self-abnegation of Heinrich's mother, in which she seems to delight. As with other texts in this project, I am not primarily concerned with Heinrich's erotic, or pseudo-erotic, relationship with women.[76] Additionally, moments of the overwhelming sublimity of nature are wholly absent in Keller's work, as opposed to descriptions of the countryside, which include terrifying

[76]For recent discussions of Heinrich's relationships with women in the novel see: Gerhard Kaiser, "Grüne Heinrich -- ein epochaler Typus," in *Gottfried Keller: Elf Essays zu seinem Werk*, ed. Hans Wysling (München: W. Fink, 1990), 45–60; Hans Hahn, "Das Glück Der Selbstverwirklichung in Gottfried Kellers Frauengestalten," *Seminar -- A Journal of Germanic Studies* 47, no. 2 (May 2011): 268–284; Michael Minden, *The German Bildungsroman: Incest and Inheritance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

storms and overwhelming mountains found in a work like Stifter's *Der Nachsommer*. Rather than describing the potentially destructive moment of sublime inspiration, Keller's artist chooses to become an artist, not necessarily because of an overwhelming desire to portray a longing inside of him, or because of divine inspiration but rather he desires it as a vocation.[77] Heinrich embodies the suffering of artists as a means of identifying the socially constructed artistic ideal. His longing for artistic inspiration and recognition in contradistinction to his abilities as a painter, and the tension that this constant striving creates both in the novel and for Heinrich as a character produce a masochistic dynamic not just with his art and artistic inspiration, but also with the notion of the artist and the relationship that Heinrich has with art is more complicated than his constant striving for success and never achieving it.[78] Nadja Wick's recent insight that Heinrich attempts to model himself on various other artists, is critical to my work.[79] However, Wick focuses on how these various artistic models are a means for Heinrich to replace his father throughout the novel. Instead, I see Heinrich as an artist in his own right, who is in fact taught to mimic artists rather than confront the imaginative impulse and assume the artistic temperament. Holub's notion of mimesis in the novel is also important to understanding the repetitive nature of Heinrich's longing for recognition and imaginative impulse in the novel.[80] Though Holub is concerned with the mimetic in

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[77]Minden, 137.

[78]Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978). Swales description of the Bildungsroman, generally, and Keller's text specifically, as novels of becoming (werden), but never being (sein) explains what I would identify as the arrested development in the novel, but this does not explain the ways that Heinrich strives and the goals of his desire to mimic the suffering of other artists.

[79] Wick, *Apotheosen narzisstischer Individualität*. Wick explains the various artistic types, throughout the novel and suggests hat they are all essentially replacements for Heinrich's father; Michael Minden, *Incest and Inheritance*.Likewise, Minden posits a connection between Heinrich's teachers and his longing for the father.

[80]Holub, *Reflections of Realism*; Ritchie Robertson, "Keller and Ariosto: The Seductive Imagination in Der Grüne Heinrich," *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 80, no. 2–3 (2011): 127–142;

Heinrich's art, my approach shifts the focus to the mode of inspiration for producing that art, and the social construction of the ideal artist, who Heinrich is ultimately attempting to become.

I am primarily concerned with Heinrich and his desire to become an artist, the ways Heinrich mimics the sources of inspiration of other artists and how this repetition and arrested development play out in the novel. This section will, therefore, first investigate Heinrich's artistic inspirations and training from his desire to become godlike in his artistic production, to his interactions with other painters, particularly his teacher Römer and his fellow artist Lys. Moreover, we will consider the type of artist Heinrich strives to become and the means by which he strives for inspiration both within and beyond himself. We will consider Heinrich's break from the repetition of other's modes of inspiration and artistic success, as represented by his painting of the web at the end of the third book of the novel.

While Keller's own experiences as an artist to Heinrich's abilities as a painter inform the perspective and specific details of Heinrich's *Bildung* in the novel, this insight offers us more as a means of addressing the aesthetic model of Realism than Heinrich's sources of inspiration and how they are related to social constructions of artists. Hartmut Laufhütte has suggested that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* provides an organizing principle for the novel, as it explicates the central problem of art and reality.[81] While, I too believe this to be important to the novel, I would suggest that it is but one part of Heinrich's development as an artist. Richie Robertson points to the power of the imagination in Keller's *Bildungsroman*, and how the title character is seduced by both his imaginative capacity.[82] Heinrich's seduction by his imagination is critical to our understanding of the novel. It implies that there is something

[81]Hartmut Laufhütte, *Wirklichkeit und Kunst in Gottfried Kellers Roman "Der grüne Heinrich"* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1969).

[82]Robertson, 141.

desirable about engaging with one's imagination. Heinrich can only learn to use his imagination in a way that is productive for his choice of vocation by duplicating the efforts of others – not in their production of art – but in their inspiration for this production.

My focus is on the repetitive nature of mimesis throughout the novel. As we will see Heinrich's inspiration shifts depending on the teacher he has at any given moment and therefore his potential source of artistic inspiration also shifts. Holub has suggested that there is a "repeated fall into subjective fantasies, schematized most often in Heinrich's inability to imitate appropriate models" which "gives us a clue to the aesthetic and pedagogical lesson of the novel. Time and again the hero begins his work with the intention of sticking to an original only to fail because he cannot reconcile creativity and free will with mimesis."[83] Paul Flemming echoes this sentiment in his explication of Schiller and Goethe's writings on dilettantism. But whereas Goethe and Schiller describe the dilettant as a "genius repeater" who is able to copy the works of others with a certain mastery, Heinrich never truly achieves this level of skill.[84] This ebb and flow mark Heinrich as a dilettante artist, but even more than that, as a sort of chameleon who adapts himself to what he believes is expected of him, rather than finding the source of inspiration within himself or experiencing nature as a source of overwhelming inspiration.[85] As a result he does not experience a subjective encounter with inspiration, suffering, and the sublime, that he is then able to translate into artistic inspiration. In his discussion of women in Keller's work, Hans Hahn comments that the novel could have been subtitled "the search for happiness," but not happiness in a religious, metaphysical sense,

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[83]Holub, 84.

[84]Paul Fleming, *Exemplarity and Mediocrity: The Art of the Average from Bourgeois Tragedy to Realism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 115.

[85]Wick, 67-75.; Fleming, 118.

rather one that is related to a happy life in the here and now.[86] This motif of searching also relates to Heinrich's search for creative artistic inspiration, as well as recognition as an artist, which might also bring him happiness. The fact that this is always deferred points to the potential for the masochistic in this longing as well as a connection to Sacher-Masoch's dilettante protagonist. Moreover mimesis in Keller is indebted to Eric Downing's description of doubling in Keller's works.[87] Though Downing focuses on several of Keller's novellas, he points out the doubling and repetition of both the later novel from its early form, as well as the doubling and repetition of female characters. My reading of doubling and repetition in the text relates specifically to both Heinrich's attempts to replicate the modes of production of other artists by imitating their means of achieving inspiration. It implies that there is something authentic and "real" to the inspiration that these artists encounter, as well as suggesting that Heinrich might also be capable of creating these "authentic" encounters through replication.

Heinrich's Artistic Inspiration

Heinrich is initially inspired to become an artist when he sees the set painter for the traveling theater troupe. Though the connections to Wilhelm Meister are unmistakable, what concerns us here, and what has not been the focus of secondary literature, is how his interest in being an artist develops.[88] At first he expresses an interest in the theater troupe and then, as he

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[86]Hahn, 273.

[87]See: Eric Downing, *Double Exposures: Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-Century German Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[88]For the relationship between *Der grüne Heinrich* and Wilhelm Meister See: Wick, *Apotheosen narzisstischer Individualität*; Holub, *Reflections in Realism*; Reichelt, *Fantastik im Realismus;* Georg Lukács, *German Realists in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Paul Keast (London: Libris, 1993).. Additionally, there are comparisons to be drawn in relationship to *Venus im Pelz* and *Der grüne Heinrich*, particularly with regard to Heinrich's participation in the drama and when he stays the night at the foot of the Gretchen character's bed, similarly to how Sacher-Masoch describes his relationship with his dominant mistresses. Margaret Jacobs suggests that this scene in Keller's text is representative of the textual allusion of a knight protecting his lady, which then leads us to a consideration of the lady as inaccessible "other" per Zizek's analysis of courtly love in the

begins to spend more time with them, he sees the painter. "Vorzüglich hielten wir uns auch vor einem offenen Hintergebäude auf, wo ein kühner Maler inmitten einer Anzahl Töpfe, aufrechtstehend und die eine Hand in der Hosentasche, mit einem unendlich verlängerten Pinsel Wunder auf das ausgebreitete Tuch oder Papier warf."[89] When Heinrich sees the painter he focuses on both his attitude as a person and his relaxed stance as well as the "Wunder" that he produces through his art. He continues:

> Ich erinnere mich deutlich des tiefen Eindruckes, welchen die einfache und sichere Art auf mich machte, mit welcher er duftige und durchsichtge weiße Vorhänge um die Fenster eines roten Zimmers zauberte; mit den weingen weißen, wohlangebrachten Strichen und Tupfen auf dem roten Grunde ging ein Licht in mir auf, der ich vor solchen Dingen, wenn sie in der nächtlichen Beleuchtung vor mir standen, begrifflos gestaunt hatte.[90]

Again, Heinrich is impressed by the ease with which this artist produces the images, while at the same time noting that the images themselves have had an impact on him beyond this one encounter. In this moment of inspiration we see him begin to be inspired by art and confront the limits of his own abilities and the limits of his imagination. He is speechless before these images, unable to grasp them, unable to put his emotions into words. Though Keller does not name it as such, this could represent an encounter with the sublime. If not the sublime as such, then an encounter with an image that confounds him and yet inspires a longing to produce art

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masochistic tradition. Margaret Jacobs, "The Art of Allusion in Keller's Fiction," in *Gottfried Keller 1819-1890 – London Symposium 1990* (Stuttgart: Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1991), 97–108. Slavoj Žižek, "Courtly Love, or, Woman as Thing," in *The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality* (London; New York: Verso, 2005), 89–112.

[89]DgH, I, 11, 89. Citations of *Der grüne Heinrich* will indicate book and chapter number as well as page number of the edition used. Above all did we linger before an open shed at the back where a daring painter, standing erect amid a number of pots, one hand in his trousers pocket, performed miracles with a paint-brush of infinite length upon the canvas or paper spread out before him. Translations are taken from Gottfried Keller, *Green Henry*, trans. A. M Holt (New York: Grove Press, 1960).

[90]DgH, I, 11, 89. "I remember yet distinctly the deep impression made upon me by the simple and sure fashion in which he could conjure up misty, transparent white curtains around the windows of a red room; how, when I saw the few white, well-placed strokes and dabs on the red background, a light dawned upon me, for I had been amazed and utterly puzzled by such things when presented to my gaze in the evening illumination."

that evokes a similar reaction in others. He returns to this image over and over again in an attempt to master it both as an artist and as an individual.

It is through this encounter that he first realizes he is interested in becoming a painter. He wants to produce paintings that make an impact on others, just as this artist has affected him. Moreover, Heinrich wants to emulate this artist in his demeanor and manner. Heinrich reflects:

> Es dämmerte die erste Einsicht in das Wesen der Malerei; das freie Auftragen von dichten deckenden Farben auf durchsichtige Unterlagen machte mir vieles klar; ich begann nachher der Grenze dieser zwei Gebeite nachzuspüren, wo ich ein Gemälde zu sehen bekamm, und meine Entdeckungen hoben mich über den wehrlosen Wunderglaubens hinaus, welcher es aufgibt, jemals dergleichen selbst zu verstehen.[91]

The more he desires to learn about painting, the more he seeks out the origins of his development as a person, a man, and a painter. His origins as a painter begin by rejecting the divine *Wunderglauben* and embracing the technical aspects of painting. Rejecting the divine inspiration and focusing on the technical, Heinrich's first impulse to paint has less to do with representing something outside himself and more to do with exploring himself internally and mimicking others.

He argues later that his goal is to become godlike through his painting. After visiting his family in the countryside, he meets his future betrothed Anna and her father the *Schulmeister*. When the *Schulmeister* inquires about his profession, Heinrich explains why he wants to be an artist, specifically a *Landschaftsmaler*. When he is asked why he has chosen to be a painter, Heinrich responds in a lengthy dialogue in which he defends the profession by connecting it to religion and goes farther to place it above religion. The *Schulmeister*, a

[91]DgH, I, 11, 89. "My first glimpse into the art of painting was vouchsafed me; the free application of heavy colors upon the ground which here and there showed through made many things clear to me: I began then, whenever I happened to see a painting, to investigate the boundary-line between these two realms, and my discoveries lifted me above that helpless belief in miracles which abandons all home of ever understanding such things for oneself."

religious educator, seems concerned that the chosen profession is not respectable, but Heinrich asks: "Warum sollte dies nicht ein edler und schöner Beruf sein, immer und allein vor den Werken Gottes zu sitzen, die sich noch am heutigen Tag in ihrer Unschuld und ganzen Schönheit erhalten haben, sie zu erkennen und zu verehren und ihn dadurch anzubeten, daß man sie in ihrem Frieden wiederzugeben versucht?"[92] He seems to equate painting with prayer and connects it to the contemplation of God's creations. He then transitions into explaining how one is only able to paint when he stands in awe of God's creations:

> Wenn man nur ein einfältiges Sträuchlein abzeichnet, so empfindet man eine Ehrfurcht vor jedem Zweige, weil derselbe so gewachsen ist und nicht anders nach den Gesetzen des Schöpfers; wenn man aber erst fähig ist, einen ganzen Wald oder ein weites Feld mit seinem Himmel wahr und treu zu malen, und wenn man endlich dergleichen aus seinem Innern selbst hervorbringen kann, ohne Vorbild, Wälder, Täler und Gebirgszüge, oder nur kleine Erdwinkel, frei und neu, und doch nicht anders, als ob sie irgendwo entstanden und sichtbar sein müßten, so dünkt mich diese Kunst eine Art wahren Nachgenusses der Schöpfung zu sein.[93]

This is not, however how Heinrich produces his art. The simple imitation of God is not enough for Heinrich. Instead he then explains how the painter becomes a godlike creator himself:

> Da lässet man die Bäume in den Himmel wachsen und darüber die schönsten Wolken ziehen und beides sich in klaren Gewässern spiegeln! Man spricht, es werde Licht! und streut den Sonnenschein beliebig über Kräuter und Steine und läßt ihn unter schattigen Bäumen erlöschen. Man reckt die Hand aus, und es steht ein Unwetter da, welches die braune Erde beängstigt, und läßt nachher die Sonne in Purpur untergehen! Und dies alles, ohne sich mit schlechten Menschen vertragen zu müssen; es ist kein Mißton im ganzen Tun![94]

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[92]DgH, I, 21, 177. "Why should it not be a grand and beautiful calling, always to be sitting in solitude before those works of God which have to this day kept their innocence and their complete beauty, to understand them and to honor them, and to worship him by trying to reproduce them in their peacefulness?"

[93]DgH, I, 21, 177-8. "When one is drawing just a simple little bush, every branch fills one with reverence because it has grown thus and not otherwise, in accordance with the laws of the Creator; but when one becomes capable of painting, faithfully and truly, the whole wood of a wide field with its sky, and when at last one is able without a model to produce the like just from one's imagination, forests, valleys and mountain chains, or just little nooks, freely and independently, and yet exactly as they are to be seen somewhere or other, then this art seems to me to be a kind of true participation in the joys of creation."

[94]DgH, I, 21, 178. "Then you make the trees grow heavenwards and the loveliest clouds drift over them, and the reflection of both to be mirrored in the clear lakes! You say, Let there be light! And you scatter sunshine at will

In this description we can see the shadow of the artist he encountered at the theater, one who stretches out his hand and creates what was not there previously. His description of his desire to become an artist, is a replication of what he has seen in the artist at the theater. Moreover, even when Heinrich takes on jobs where he is just required to reproduce art, as with his job in the Haberstaat art factory, he cannot relinquish the notion that he is a godlike creator of worlds when he paints.[95]

His godlike creativity, however, comes across as false. Almost every individual familiar with nature rejects his paintings because they are not natural enough. He creates unseemly paintings that are obviously man-made. Instead of creating something as though God had created it – in the Kantian ideal – he imposes his will on his landscapes. Those who live in nature or in the countryside, who are familiar with and perhaps closer to nature than Heinrich is, reject them and guide him into further education and imitation of other artists who are more adept at copying nature. This training, however, through reading or further education and the focus that others place on imitating the works of other painters who have been successful, fails, in large part, because Heinrich has no connection to the divine even though he claims that he does.

Holub suggests that Heinrich requires the creation of God, by man, in order to justify his inspiration. "The analogy between God as the Creator of nature and man as the creator of art is retained here, but the source of certainty is no longer located in the Supreme Being but rather in the realm of human activity. Heinrich can become a second creator only by

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over the green growing things and the rocks, and make it die out under the shady trees. You stretch out your hand and a storm arises to frighten the brown earth and make the sun go down in the purple glow afterwards! And all this without having to consort with evil men; there is not one false note in the whole proceeding!"

[95]For discussions of the Haberstaat art factory and Heinrich's development as an artist with Haberstaat see: Wick, *Apotheosen narzisstischer Individualität*; Holub, *Reflections in Realism*; Reichelt, *Fantastik im Realismus;* Lukács, *German Realists.*

postulating an original he can imitate."[96] He explains that Heinrich's inspiration requires a double creation on his part. He must create God, in order to be inspired by God, but the fact that he is creating the image and source of inspiration means that inspiration is wholly of Heinrich's creation. In mimicking God, Holub argues, we can see that Heinrich constructs a situation where nothing can be beyond his sensibilities; nothing has the power to overwhelm his senses and lead to the *übersinnlich* because everything has been rationalized and already overcome by his reason. This is also an explanation of how Heinrich sees the artist and what he chooses to replicate. He sees art, even great art as an attempt at mimicry of various creators, including God and as such, for Heinrich, becoming an artist means duplicating moments of artistic inspiration and creation. As each new teacher explains their means of inspiration, Heinrich copies that in an attempt to get beyond his designation as a dilettante and become an artist, but this mode of copying marks him as a dilettant even further.[97]

Just prior to meeting his teacher, Römer, Heinrich is newly inspired upon returning home from the countryside. He reads the works of Goethe, particularly *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. He explains: "[ich] empfand ein reines und nachhaltiges Vergnügen, das ich früher nicht gekannt. Es war die hingebende Liebe an alles Gewordene und Bestehende, welche das Recht und die Bedeutung jeglichen Dinges ehrt und den Zusammenhang und die Tiefe der Welt empfindet."[98] He then decides that his proper place as an artist is to observe from a distance so as not to become too overwhelmed by his observations. He must maintain his "freedom" and agency to be able to observe, being careful not to become part of what he is

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[96]Holub, 82.

[97]Fleming 115-118.

[98]DgH, III, 1, 356. "I felt a pure, enduring pleasure that I had not experienced before. It was the self-surrendering love towards all that has come into being and exists, which respects the right and the significance of every single thing and is sensible of the coherence and the profundity in the world."

observing and representing. This echoes Kant's observations on the revolution, but also Burke and Schiller's comments on how one must observe the sublime objects. They must be viewed at a distance, from a position of safety, in order to judge them.

At this point he begins describing art and life as poetical, gesturing toward the notion of universal poetry of the Romantics. He echoes Kant when he suggests "die sogenannte Zwecklosigkeit der Kunst nicht mit Grundlosigkeit verwechselt werden darf."[99] Though art is purposeless it is not groundless. As a result, at this point in his life he strives to simplify both his life and his art and he focuses on representing "das Notwendige und Einfache mit Kraft und Fülle und in seinem ganzen Wesen"[100] Proclaiming that this is art, Heinrich posits the fundamental difference between artists and other people:

> darum unterscheiden sich die Künstler nur dadurch von den anderen Menschen, daß sie das Wesentliche gleich sehen und es mit Fülle darzustellen wissen, während die anderen dies wieder erkennen müssen und darüber erstaunen, und darum sind auch alle die keine Meister, zu deren Verständnis es einer besonderen Geschmacksrichtung oder einer künstlichen Schule bedarf.[101]

He thus differentiates between "normal" people and artists. Artists are able to produce something out of what causes normal people to be amazed, just like the artist who inspired him to turn to an artistic life. This is not a unifying theme in the novel. Instead, it is but one point on Heinrich's path to becoming an artist as he learns to incorporate the lessons of his various instructors into his means of achieving artistic inspiration.

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[99]DgH, III, 1, 357. "The so-called lack of definite purpose in Art must not be mistaken for a lack of basis."

[100]DgH, III, 1, 357-8. "…the necessary and the simple with vigor and fullness and in its entire being."

[101]DgH, III, 1, 358. "Therefore artists differ from other people only in this, that they see that which is essential instantly, and have the power to reproduce it fully while the rest are compelled to recognize it and be amazed at it, and therefore those artists, to understand whom a special taste or an artificial school is needed, are not really masters."

Learning to be a Suffering Artist: Heinrich and his Teachers

Heinrich's views on art are not static, but change in relation to his various teachers. Holub points specifically to Heinrich's relationship and discussions with the artist Römer as a defining point for the aesthetics of Realism in the novel.[102] For this project, I am concerned with how Heinrich mimics Römer's artistic inspiration and incorporates it into his own. From their interactions with each other, we see that that their inspirations are incompatible. However, Heinrich's life eventually comes to mimic Römer's even if the source of his artistic inspiration is not the same. Heinrich essentially lives a life of mimesis without consequences, whereas Römer's paranoia leads him to suffer and produce art that is inspired by nature and his surroundings.

As with most of Heinrich's teachers, Römer suggests that Heinrich begin by copying his works. Römer is adamant about two things: that Heinrich go into nature and begin confronting that which has vexed him to this point, and that he learn Römer's own system. While we do not hear what Römer's system is, it is a revelation and he "sah zum erstenmal die einfache, freie und sichere Art, mit der ein Künstler arbeitet."[103] Römer's instruction however is not as kind and carefree as Heinrich first expects it to be. He offers harsh criticism to Heinrich, and his moods are changeable. Römer's system of painting appears to be methodical and their relationship at times is good. Heinrich submits to the process, the system, and to Römer in the hopes of becoming a better artist. Römer's brings Heinrich closer to his artistic goal and forces him to work harder at his craft. Heinrich remarks: "Wiederum steuerte ich endlich nach vieler Mühe einer angehenden Tadellosigkeit entgegen und wurde nochmals

[102]Holub, 79.

[103]*DgH*, III, 2, 354. "…saw for the first time […] the simple, free, sure fashion in which an artist works."

durch ein erschwertes Ziel zurückgeworfen, statt daß ich, wie ich gehofft, ein Weilchen auf den Lorbeeren einer erreichten Stufe ausruhen konnte."[104] Römer keeps pushing him to the limits of his capability and attempting to get him to be a better artist, always questioning him even when he believes he has gotten better. This would suggest that this is also part of Römer's system: that he will drive him beyond what he believes he is capable.

Heinrich describes Römer as a "*wirklicher Meister*" (real master) and while Minden suggests that he is also a "megalomaniac and a lunatic" these two concepts are not mutually exclusive.[105] As we have seen with the description of the artistic inspiration and the artistic temperament, Römer's perceived instability are characteristic of the artistic genius, which Heinrich aspires to be. Minden argues that Heinrich is confused because of Römer's "lack of stable authority" and must therefore assert authority in opposition to him.[106] I would suggest, however, that Römer's greatest intervention in Heinrich's artistic life is his ability to push Heinrich beyond his comfort zone, and to show him what a suffering artist looks like. Until this point he had only seen artists who were comfortable and happy and he had read about the artistic processes from artist's journals, but he had not encountered an artist who was so committed to their craft that they were willing to suffer to produce art. Römer's process involves misery and disappointment akin to the suffering artists we have seen in other works, attempting to confront nature, and striving toward a moving target. Moreover, Römer's process is preparing Heinrich for a potential encounter that he is unable to overcome by continually pushing his boundaries.

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[104]DgH, III, 2, 367. "Again, after a great deal of toil, I was at last steering towards something approaching perfection and again I was thrown back by the increased difficulty of the goal, instead of being able, as I had hoped, to rest on my laurels for a bit, having successfully climbed one step higher."

[105]Minden, 142.

[106]Ibid.

To demonstrate the longing and striving and the pain that the artist must endure, Römer tells Heinrich to read Homer, and specifically references the Nausicaa story, which presages the dream Heinrich will have in the fourth book.[107] As previously mentioned, Römer's life parallels Heinrich's in many ways. First, they both began their careers working on the mass production of art at the Haaberstaat workshop. However, while Römer has traveled widely, Heinrich has been held back and stunted in his grown as a painter by not being allowed to go to Rome. Heinrich has instead learned his craft by reading the stories of artists who have traveled and learned from great masters in Italy, and now he is learning from Römer. In some ways Heinrich is a stunted version of Römer. He is attempting to become an artist like Römer without the suffering that Römer has undergone from traveling and having to be on his own from having to make his own way through his art.[108] However, I would suggest, he will never be capable of becoming Römer because of the particular madness and artistic genius, which Römer personifies.

Because of his encounter with Römer, Heinrich seeks out suffering because he believes this is what he needs to experience in order to become a true artist; suffering which Römer wishes Heinrich in his letter from a French sanitarium. The letter seems to suggest that he still regards Heinrich with fondness. Römer writes:

> Sie sind mir wert geworden, und ich habe etwas Gutes mit Ihnen vor! Inzwischen nehmen Sie meinen Dank für die günstige Wendung, die Sie herbeigeführt! Möge alles Elend der Erde in Ihr Herz fahren, jugendlicher Held! Mögen Hunger, Verdacht und Mißtrauen Sie liebkosen und die schlimme Erfahrung Ihr Tisch- und Bettgenosse sein!

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[107]See: Holub, 78-87. His excellent reading of the Nausicaa storysuggests it is a foretelling of Heinrich's future. He also points out similarities between the Heinrich and Römer.

[108]Römer and his role as a mentor to for Heinrich has been the subject of much scholarship. See: Holub; Minden. Minden points out the connection between Römer's role as the genius artist and his almost manic, insane demeanor. Holub suggests that Heinrich has the potential to become a copy of Römer.

> Als aufmerksame Pagen sende ich Ihnen meine ewigen Verwünschungen, mit denen ich mich bis auf weiteres Ihnen treulichst empfehle![109]

These lines haunt Heinrich for some time and when he comes to Judith for advice and absolution, she gives him neither. Instead she tells him: "Die Vorwürfe deines Gewissens sind ein ganz gesundes Brot für dich, und daran sollst du dein Leben lang kauen, ohne daß ich dir die Butter der Verzeihung darauf streiche!"[110] He resolves to always take Römer's fate with him and to accept it as part of himself. From this moment on Römer becomes a connection to something greater than himself, his internalization of the suffering of others, to create suffering in himself. Römer's words do not seem like an admonition as much as a way forward for Heinrich as an artist. As Römer no longer has the ability to paint, having sold all of his supplies to live on, Heinrich must take up the pennant of the artist and suffer the fate of the artist on Römer's behalf.

Inspiration and the Suprasensual

It is not until Heinrich leaves home to find his luck as an artist that he meets other artists who are his peers rather than his teachers. In them, he sees that there are a variety of ways to find inspiration. Wick points out that Heinrich's art can be described as that of a dilettante, tapping into the nineteenth century discourses on the dilettante which we refer to in the chapter on the *Bildungsroman*.[111] Her analysis claims that Heinrich is, at best, a dilettante with little

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[109]DgH, III, 5, 394. "You have become dear to me, and I intend to do something for you! In the meantime, accept my thanks for the favorable turn of affairs which you brought about! May every misery of the earth enter your heart, my youthful hero! May hunger, suspicion and mistrust caress you, and misfortune be the companion of your bed and board! As pages to wait on you I send you my everlasting maledictions, with which, for the present, and in all sincerity, I bid you farewell!"

[110]DgH, III, 6, 400. "The reproaches of your conscience are very wholesome bread for you, and you shall chew it as long as you live, without my spreading the butter of forgiveness on it for you!"

[111]Wick, 67-75.

artistic talent.[112] While I agree that Heinrich has little of his own artistic inspiration throughout the novel, his attempts to copy the artistic models of Römer, Lys, a fellow artist he meets in Munich, and any number of other artists, are also attempts to mimic the social construction of the artistic temperament. Being an unsuccessful and only moderately talented artist, he receives biting criticism and a lack of recognition from friends and individuals in the art world. This enables him to fashion himself into the image of the *poète maudit*, or tortured artist. The less recognition he receives and the greater the number of rejections, the more tortured he becomes. This eventually this leads to the "web painting" he produces at the end of the third book.

Heinrich constructs his identity as a painter in relationship to his other, more successful artist friends. His painter friend Lys is an independently wealthy artist, who paints without concern for the reception of his works; nevertheless, he is a talented artist, and his works are well received. His critiques of Heinrich's painting, therefore, come from the perspective of someone with perhaps more talent than Heinrich, but also from someone who is conscious of himself and his desires and does not suit his desires to the whims of others. Heinrich on the other hand purposefully rejects any awareness of his desires and only concerns himself with the expectations of the viewer, even though he purports to be inspired by the godlike nature of creation. Throughout the novel Heinrich has denied himself encounters with the sublime, instead the encounter with the limits of one's subjectivity, normally are either deferred, or simply absent.[113] The work Heinrich paints after his duel with Lys is different. Analyses of

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[112]Wick, 67.

[113]There is little specific engagement with the notion of the sublime in Keller's text. For the most part, scholars point to the realist aesthetic in Keller's text rather than pointing specifically to the sublime. For discussions of Keller's position as a realist author, see: Lukács, *German Realists*; Holub, *Reflections of Realism*; Reichelt, *Fantastik Im Realismus*.

this scene have typically focused on how the work prefigures modernist art.[114] Rather than being interested in what Keller might have prefigured, I am more interested in what this piece of art, and particularly what his creation of this artwork, says about Heinrich's source of inspiration and what it means that it represents a new phase in his work.

Subsequent to the duel, Erikson arrives just as Heinrich has completed painting an abstract piece which resembles a spider web. The inspiration for the painting is partially his despondency and partially mindless sketching. He says that as he works on it he does so "mit eingeschlummerter Seele, aber großem Scharfsinn" implying that the power of his imagination has taken over, while at the same time his conscious mind, his soul is sleeping or inactive. The work is pure imagination, perhaps not even connected to reason.[115] He explains how he returns to a work of art he had abandoned months ago that began with the trunks of two trees. As he starts to work on the branches, he lets his mind wander: "Aber kaum hatte ich eine halbe Stunde gezeichnet und ein paar Äste mit dem einförmigen Nadelwerke bekleidet, so versank ich in eine tiefe Zerstreuung und strichelte gedankenlos daneben, wie wenn man die Feder probiert."[116] He states it is as though he is painting for the first time. Though he has spent his life learning to paint, his childlike scrawling is what he produces when he shuts off his mind and lets his instincts take over, when he stops trying to mimic the inspiration of others. He finds that this work is what continues to return to. "An diese Kritzelei setzte sich nach und nach ein unendliches Gewebe von Federstrichen, welches ich jeden Tag in verlorenem Hinbrüten weiterspann, sooft ich zur Arbeit anheben wollte, bis das Unwesen wie ein ungeheures graues

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[114]Holub 86.

[115]DgH, III, 15, 567. "…with a slumbering soul but great ingenuity."

[116]DgH, III, 15, 566. "But I had scarcely been drawing for half an hour, and clothed a few branches with the uniform needles, than I became lost in deep preoccupation, and went on making strokes unthinkingly, as one does in testing a pen."

Spinnennetz den größten Teil der Fläche bedeckte."[117] This is the first time he describes any of his works as an "Unwesen" or an "Ungeheuer." Like Spinello's devil, it comes from an unconscious place of pure imagination; it is something he cannot describe. He works on this for days and weeks and his only distraction is to look at the images in the clouds and lets his thoughts float by like the clouds. The scene transitions from one of unconscious artistic production to critique when his friend Erikson arrives: "So arbeitete ich eines Tages wieder mit eingeschlummerter Seele, aber großem Scharfsinn an der kolossalen Kritzelei, als an die Türe geklopft wurde."[118] His soul is asleep, but it is not *just* asleep; it is in the process of continually falling asleep, representative of the repetitive nature of the piece as well as his longing for something beyond his consciousness.

The response to the piece by his friend Erikson is a mixture of artistic criticism and irony. When Erikson sees the web painting he is on the one hand complementary, explaining to Heinrich: "Du hast hier einen gewaltigen Schritt vorwärts getan von noch nicht zu bestimmender Tragweite."[119] The painting is abstract, based on logic and artistic skill. It is the perfect combination of the two, without being an attempt at the representation of nature.[120] What Heinrich had been attempting was to become godlike through the representation of nature – what God had created. Instead, with this painting he has created art which is detached

[117]DgH, III, 15, 567. "Close to this scrawl there gradually came to be an unending web of pen-strokes which I spun out further every day, sitting in fruitless brooding, as often as I tried to begin work, until the master, like a vast grey cobweb, covered the greater part of the surface."

[118]Ibid. "One day I was working like this at the colossal scrawl, with slumbering soul but great ingenuity, when there was a knock at the door."

[119]DgH, III, 15, 568. You have here made an enormous step forward, of an importance which cannot yet be estimated.

[120]My analysis does not concern itself with the particulars of the painting since I am more concerned with the source of inspiration rather than the actual content of the art produced.

from nature. He becomes an artist, and not an imitator. His inspiration is neither nature, nor truly is surroundings, but something else, something nameless.

Erikson's diatribe and critique of Heinrich's painting has been described as biting, harsh and ironic; addressing Heinrich with sarcasm and derision. His monologue, however, also serves as a moment of excursus, offering the reader aesthetic commentary that transcends the moment. Particularly his commentary that Heinrich has made a dramatic step forward in German art in that he has abandoned the beautiful and in its place he has embraced the abstract. He is critical of the beautiful in art, and while he is giving up art himself, he sees the value for the art world in shifting the focus away from the beautiful. On the other hand, Erikson is critical of the origin of the painting: the two trees, which started the expansion of the web. He chastises Heinrich for this grounding the painting in the natural explaining: "auch wirst du nicht umhin können, um dem herrlichen Gewebe einen Stützpunkt zu geben, dasselbe durch einige verlängerte Fäden an den Asten dieser alten, verwetterten, aber immer noch kräftigen Fichten zu befestigen, sonst fürchtet man jeden Augenblick, es durch seine eigene Schwere herabsinken zu sehen."[121] Heinrich has connected the web to these trees in part because he allowed his mind to wander while he took up an existing painting. The existing painting, therefore, can serve as his connection to his artistic training. It forms the foundation for the new work of art. In reality, because all of Heinrich's paintings of art are his own version of reality, he abstract web is also not inspired by nature, but in self-referential way, he is inspired by his own construction of nature.

[121]DgH, III, 15, 569. "…even you will not be able to refrain from giving the splendid web a point of support, fastening it by a few elongated threads to the branches of these old, weather-beaten but still robust pines, otherwise one would fear every moment to see it sink down through its own weight."

Before departing, Erikson deals two final blows to Heinrich. First, he tells Heinrich that their friend Lys as left the artistic world forever and has become a bureaucrat in his own country. Then, with a mixture of admiration and admonition he says: "Und nun komme ich daher und finde dich an einem abenteuerlichen Grillenfang stehen, wie die Welt noch keinen zweiten geboren hat! Was soll das Gekritzel? Frisch, halte dich oben, mach dich heraus aus dem verfluchten Garne! Da ist wenigstens ein Loch!"[122] With this, he punches a hole in Heinrich's painting and departs. Heinrich describes his feelings toward Erikson as appreciative and proof of his friend's sympathy. Erikson recognizes that the net is something that is within Heinrich, something that needs to escape, a representation of Heinrich's struggle to become an artist. Erikson is sympathizing with Heinrich's need to escape from the trap he has set for himself. He must escape his longings to be an artist and escape from his melancholic musings. While his melancholy also provides a certain source of inspiration, it is also a means of imitating Lys and Römer. In doing so, however he exposes that by mimicking the suffering of others does not mean that his suffering will lead to the artistic success he desires, and which they enjoyed.

All this happens in a chapter entitled *Grillenfang*, a term that Erikson uses to describe the activities in which Heinrich has been engaged through the painting of this web. Though often translated as "whimsy" there is a much more negative connotation with *Grillenfang*. The *Deutsches Wörterbuch* states that it is a combination of the verb *grillen* and *fangen* and defines it as "von trübseliger, miszvergnügter Stimmung"[123] which implies a sort of ill-tempered

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[122]DgH, III, 15, 571. "And now I come along and find you standing beside a fantastic whimsy, the like of which the world has never produced! What's the meaning of the scrawl? Come, keep your head above the water, get out of the damned net! There's a hole at any rate!"

[123]"Grillenfang, m," *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jakob Und Wilhelm Grimm* (Leipzig, 1971), http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?bookref=9,326,15. "of melancholy, ill-tempered mood"

melancholy. But it also points to the definition of Grille which suggests that the term is "meist im Sinne trübselig, miszvergnügt sein" but also connected with "wunderliche Gedanken, Einbildungen."[124] If *Grillenfangen* is related to both a sense of ill-temperedness and melancholy as well as fantastic thoughts and fantasies, then the *Grillenfang* that Heinrich undertakes by painting the web is a means of overcoming his psychic pain through his imagination. The web itself suggests that melancholy has him trapped and he is having difficulties extricating himself from it. Rather than encouraging him to continue working in this way, as he seems to be expressing in his initial lauding of the painting, Erikson instead destroys the web and tells him to move on. He pushes Heinrich away from these fantasies, and from the limits of his subjectivity, from his internalized expression of the sublime turned outward, and denies him access to it again.

Abandoning Art and the Sublime

Heinrich never reaches a truly sublime moment. He is never overwhelmed and forced to confront the limits of his imagination. At best, he mimics the suffering of others in an attempt to achieve inspiration and the suprasensual. This is in part because he abandons his pursuits, but also because he becomes the godlike creator, and as such cannot be overcome by them. Additionally, no one is ever overwhelmed by Heinrich's art. If the sublime, according to Kant, is a confrontation with the limits of subjectivity, such that one is presented with either the option to overcome it with one's ability to reason or are destroyed by it because one is not capable of reason, there must be some confrontation with the limits of the sensual. Heinrich, does confront nature, but only through his own construction thereof. As Lys suggests, Heinrich's art is ultimately a selfish game, rather than real art. The reader never sees Heinrich's

[124]Ibid. "Mostly in the sense of being melancholy or ill-tempered."

motivation, other than become godlike and to make money. It is not until the final book of the novel that Heinrich is at a place in his life where he actually must confront personal hardship for his art.

Heinrich eventually does suffer the life of an artist, starving and reduced to selling all of his art for very little money just to be able to buy food. Before he is convinced by his neighbor to return home and care for his suffering mother, he is haunted by dreams which combine Heinrich's imagination and fears. The nature depicted in his dream is a replication of Heinrich's own paintings, and while he describes this as uncanny or odd, he is not consciously aware of why that might be the case. The most important aspect of the dream is that it ties together his relationship with Römer, his journey home, and his rejection of his chosen profession. His final success at the Count's villa, prior to arriving home is also referred to by Römer in his story of Nausicaa. Heinrich recall's Römer's stories and suggests that everything has all come full circle. Though not duplicating Römer's life, his life duplicates the lessons, which Römer taught him.

When discussing Heinrich's artistic abilities, the Count suggests that whereas his friends Lys and Erikson gave up on art for their own reasons, Heinrich has not yet arrived at a place where he ought to abandon his desires. "Allein Sie haben sich, wie mich dünkt, noch nicht genug geprüft. Gerade weil Sie die äußere Höhe, die Sicherheit jener beiden Männer noch nicht erreicht haben, scheinen Sie mir noch nicht berechtigt zu sein, den stolzen Schritt der Resignation zu tun!"[125] By arguing that Heinrich has not tested himself enough, the Count is suggesting toward Heinrich's relative lack of boundary pushing in his art, and that he has not

[125]DgH, IV, 10, 707. "But you, it seems to me, have not tested yourself long enough. Just because you have not yet attained the stature, the sureness of these tow men, it seems to me that you are not justified yet in taking the proud step of giving up."

yet tested the bounds of his subjective experience, the bounds of his subjectivity and before he can be sure that he is prepared to give up he must do so. He must experience such an encounter with his limits.

He uses his time at the castle to do just this. He reflects on his art, which has been collected by the count, and is able to see his failings as an artist. Rather than looking at the art of others and trying to copy it, and find the source of the artist's inspiration, Heinrich is confronted with his own art and his own lack of inspiration. The Count pays him for his paintings and now that he no longer has to suffer physically for his art he is able to confront the inadequacies of his past. In the process his relationship to his art and his artistic production changes: "Die lange Unterbrechung, die Erlebnisse, der Beschluß der Entsagung hatten ohne Zweifel eine Freiheit des Blickes und eine Neuheit der Dinge in mir bewirkt oder vielmehr aus dem Schlafe gerufen, die mir jetzt zustatten kamen."[126] Whereas before he had been focused on making money, now that he has money from the paintings he had made before, he is more interested in the art itself, and in the inspiration for his art. The money has given him the freedom he needs to paint in a way that is different, and to see in a way that is not colored by the need to paint for his existence. In a way, he is now able to paint more like his old friend Lys, who was unencumbered by the need for profit. The use of the phrase "aus dem Schlafe gerufen" suggests that he is being called to action by this freedom of perspective. He looks at paintings both old and new as though the scales had been removed from his eyes and he begins to work "eifrig und kühl, stürmisch, sorglos und vorsichtig zugleich."[127] The combination of these various emotions while he paints points to a conflict in him, but it is a productive conflict,

[126]DgH, IV, 12, 725. "The long interruption, the experiences, the determination to give up my career, had without a doubt brought about in me, or rather awakened in me, a freedom of view and had given a freshness to things which was of advantage to me now."

[127]DgH, IV, 12, 725. "…eagerly and coolly, impetuously, recklessly and discretely all at the same time."

one that spurs him to produce art without hesitation and paint in a way he was never able to do before. His final remark on his new artistic vision appears somewhat pessimistic. "Hier war es der Fall, natürlich innerhalb der Grenzen, die mir überhaupt gezogen sind."[128] There is an acceptance of his fate, as well as of the limits placed on him.

Heinrich never really becomes *übersinnlich*, nor is that what he desires. He seeks out means of staying in the sensual world. Downing argues that poetic realism is "grounded in a repetition or redundancy of the dominant discourse, but also in its resistance; to recall the self-conscious, somewhat self-destructive dimension that is intrinsic to realism, and almost inseparable from what we value in literary realism."[129] Everything repeats itself and Heinrich does not seem to learn from his mistakes, but makes the same mistakes in different ways throughout the story. His inspiration comes from the varying ways he confronts the same issues. He does not overcome, and even though he chooses, in the end, to abandon his art, he does not give up. He simply chooses a different way of seeking without finding, of reflecting on oneself through self-conscious repetition.

When we view Keller's artist in juxtaposition with Sacher-Masoch's and Wackenroder's, several things become clear. The nineteenth-century construction of the suffering artist, while glorified and at times destructive, is deeply embedded in cultural expectations. Whereas Vasari suggests that artist who are able to produce are in spite of their suffering perhaps the greatest artists, the masochistic means of looking at it would be to state that artists who suffer are the greatest artists, or that only by suffering can one even become an artist. If this is what Heinrich thinks after reading about and copying various artists, then he

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[128]DgH, IV, 12, 725. "It was the case here, though naturally within the limitations which in any event are imposed upon me."

[129]Downing, 13.

believes at the end suffering and denial, will allow him to become a great artist even when his actual artistic ability is lacking.[130] What Keller shows is the failure of the artist who is incapable of achieving this sort of artistic production on his own, the failure of artistic mimicry, and that inspiration is not necessarily a byproduct of suffering. He also shows how Heinrich's longing for recognition leads him to new a desire for the suffering which will lead to artistic production, but which might be seen as a form of masochistic longing.

Conclusion

The artist is an excellent example of a masochistic subject not only because artists are seen as relying on inspiration, but also because of the cultural construction of the suffering artist that predisposes us to assume there is a physical and psychical suffering associated with artistic inspiration. We have seen in this chapter that the image of the suffering artist and his association with sublime inspiration are a long standing tradition. Additionally, as we see with Wackenroder's different types of artists, particularly the artist Spinello and his depiction of the devil, the internalized self-created inspiration is increasingly removed from a source of divine inspiration. Instead, it is associated with the power of the individual to push the limits of his abilities, sometimes to his own detriment. As the sublime and the notion of divine inspiration become less crucial throughout the century, and the focus becomes more on the individual, the sublime is displaced as a source of inspiration. It is no longer the source of inspiration, but instead artists are driven by some other nameless source. Be it fame or money or a desire to be godlike in their creation, the artists in Keller's text are less interested in suffering for their art, or seeing the connection between suffering, the suprasensual, and artistic inspiration, than they are in mimicking this suffering as a means of achieving success.

[130]This is quite similar to the attitude taken by Goethe's Werter in *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers.*

The suprasensual, however, still plays a role in an almost psychologized way; the artist in Keller's work is able to create his best work when he is unconscious, when his conscious mind is not guiding his artistic endeavors. When he stops focusing on his external sources of inspiration – fame, wealth, artistic imitation – his mind creates art that represents his desires beyond the physical. This psychologization of the sublime displaces it back into the Kantian framework. It cannot be strived for, though it can be longed for; it is only by not longing, and not striving for it, that one is able to achieve it. The transformative effects of the sublime encounter are then represented in the art. But once a certain level has been achieved, one longs to attain the next level. The cycle continues ad infinitum. One is never fully realized, never fully suprasensual.

Sacher-Masoch's text represents both of these artists. His "German artist" takes his inspiration from encounters with the fearful, leading him to seek this out continuously. The dilettante artist and protagonist, Severin, on the other hand, sees his connection to the suprasensual and in his longing for knowledge as represented through his "Confessions of a Suprasensual." By naming himself thus, he not only connects himself to the Kantian and Faustian tradition of infinite longing for the sublime, but also works against it. He is "healed" because he is pushed beyond the sensual through the sensual.

All of these experiences, while by male artists do not necessarily represent a crisis of masculinity represented by female domination. While Severin talks about the role of gender in his society, this is not necessarily his primary concern, and whereas the German artist seeks out submission to beautiful, cruel women to produce his art, once he has captured it, he is able to submit to the work of art rather than the woman. Heinrich's masculinity is also not called into question, though he deals with the same confrontations with women, his relationship at the end

of the novel is less than problematic. The unavailable women of the Romantic Wackenroder – particularly the Virgin Mary – represent something forbidden, but likewise fecundity and life, and are not particularly tied to a sort of masculine crisis. In no way is Raphael's masculinity in crisis, nor that of Leonardo da Vinci, or Spinello. All of the male characters are attempting to come to terms with their own abilities to push the limits of their experience, whether it means a connection with the divine or a lack thereof. It is not particular to their gender, or their role in society as related to their position as men. Instead, the masochistic is a desire to confront the limits of their capabilities and push beyond them in a way that does not destroy them. If they are destroyed then they have been unsuccessful, but this does not mean that they are feminine or that their masculinity is threatened. Instead, their positions as subjects, artists, and agents are placed in peril, regardless of their gender and the masochistic can be found in all of these texts even without considering sexuality.

Chapter 4

Martyrs and Penitents: Religious Symbolism in Literary Traditions of Masochism

> Ich war früh entwickelt und überreizt, als ich mit zehn Jahren etwa die Legenden der Märtyrer in die Hand bekam; ich erinnere mich, daß ich mit einem Grauen, das eigentlich Entzücken war, las, wie sie im Kerker schmachteten, auf den Rost gelegt, mit Pfeilen durchschossen, in Pech gesotten, wilden Tieren vorgeworfen, an das Kreuz geschlagen wurden, und das Entsetzlichste mit einer Art Freude litten.[1]

> Der Gesang verhallte, Lenz sprach, er war schüchtern, unter den Tönen hatte sein Starrkrampf sich ganz gelegt, sein ganzer Schmerz wachte jetzt auf, und legte sich in sein Herz. Ein süßes Gefühl unendlichen Wohls beschlich ihn.[2]

> Wie dem Weltrichter will ich Ihnen mein Inneres aufschließen. Verdammen Sie mich, wenn Sie können.[3]

Introduction

Sacher-Masoch's texts, emerging out of the Catholic peripheries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, engage with two equally important literary traditions and modes of religious power: the hagiography and the confession. Hagiographies are biographical texts, often part of a collection, which tell the story of conversion or martyrdom of a specific saint. The protagonist in *Venus im Pelz* reads the *Legends of the Martyrs*, which looks at the lives of those saints so committed to their religion that they would rather die than deny their faith. Though not all saints are martyred – physically tortured or killed on account of their beliefs –

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[1]*Venus*, 45. "I developed early and was overexcited, when at the age if about ten years old I received the *Legends of the Martyrs*; I remember that I read with a grimness, that was actually delight, how they languished in prison, were laid on a hot grate, were shot with arrows, were covered in pitch, thrown before wild animals, beaten on the cross, and suffered the most gruesome with a sort of joy."

[2]*Lenz* 92. "The singing ended, Lenz spoke, he was shy, under the sounds his rigidness had set in, now his entire pain awoke, und laid itself in his heart. A sweet feeling of unending well being crept over him."

[3]*Giftmischerin*, 6. „As to Him who judges all the world, so to you I want to reveal my innermost self. Curse me if you can„

all saints are considered to have lived a life in the image of Christ, or *imitatio Christi*.[4] Their self-abnegation and devotion to their faith are chronicled in these texts, which are often read as sources of religious inspiration, but at times also read for their salacious details.[5] When considering the genre of hagiography, therefore, we must look at both the purpose of the suffering and the means by which the genre is utilized to both critique it and inscribe new meanings.

Though Sacher-Masoch does not, himself, write in the hagiographic tradition, his textual reference to it shows that it holds some meaning for the masochistic subject. As we see from the quotation from *Venus im Pelz* in the epigram, Severin describes the various tortures that martyrs must endure as his inspiration, but falls short of elucidating that their suffering is made tolerable on account of their religious devotion. Instead he seems to point to an entirely sensual connection between pain and pleasure. When his dominant mistress, Wanda, questions whether these martyrs were of a weak, sensual nature, Severin responds: "Im Gegenteil, es waren *übersinnliche* Menschen, welche im Leiden einen Genuß fanden, welche die furchtbarsten Qualen, ja den Tod suchten wie andere die Freude, und so ein Übersinnlicher bin ich, Madame."[6] Severin identifies with the joy that the martyrs seem to gain from their suffering, but at the same time, by calling them suprasensual, as we have seen from our discussion of aesthetics, he also relates their suffering to a sort of transcendence that cannot be

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[4]For research and descriptions of hagiographies, or Vita, see: Thomas Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Gábor Klaniczay, "Legends as Life Strategies for Aspirant Saints in the Later Middle Ages," *Journal of Folklore Research* 26, no. 2 (May 1989): 151–171; David Williams, *Saints Alive: Word, Image, and Enactment in the Lives of the Saints* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

[5]Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip: a Cultural History of Arousal* (New York: MIT Press, 2007), 288.

[6]*Venus*, 27. (emphasis in original) "On the contrary, they were *suprasensual* people, who found enjoyment in suffering, who sought the worst torments and even death like others seek joy, and I am such a suprasensual, madam."

understood through one's senses and certainly not through the erotic. He avoids connecting this explicitly with its religious source, instead concentrating on the inexplicable and transcendent connection between pleasure and pain in the individual. It is from this evocation of transcendence and his identification with the suprasensual martyrs that Severin draws on for the title for his confessional text.

Likewise, Sacher-Masoch's work participates in the genre of confession when he entitles his framed narrative "Bekenntnisse eines Übersinnlichen."[7] Written confessions are autobiographical accounts of a person's life. In the Catholic tradition, however, confessions are not written, but instead are a private act of contrition requiring the verbalization of sins to a private confessor as a means of obtaining absolution.[8] In German, the sacrament of confession is referred to as *Beichte* (religious confession), and it is a formally structured rite requiring an enumeration of the sins one has committed.[9] The narrative description of one's transgressions is known as the *Bekenntnis* and therefore, in the German literary tradition, confessional writing is often marked as *Bekenntnisse*, or confessions. By naming his framed narrative "Bekenntnisse eines Übersinnlichen," Sacher-Masoch intentionally associates his work with a diverse history of literary traditions beginning with *The Confessions of St Augustine* in the

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[7]*Venus*, 17. "Confessions of a Suprasensual."

[8]Though confessions in the early Church were public and relatively infrequent, by the implementation of the 1216 Lateran Canon, they began to be codified as sacraments with priestly authority over the hearing of confessions. For scholarship on the history of the confession in the Catholic tradition, see: M. Hepworth and B. Turner, "Confession, Guilt and Responsibility," *British Journal of Law and Society* 6, no. 2 (December 1979): 219–234; Oliver Buckton, *Secret Selves: Confession and Same-Sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Peter Brooks, *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Suzanne Diamond, *Compelling Confessions: The Politics of Personal Disclosure* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011); Björn Krondorfer, *Male Confessions: Intimate Revelations and the Religious Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Miranda Sherwin, *Confessional Writing and the Twentieth-Century Literary Imagination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Les Smith, *Confession in the Novel: Bakhtin's Author Revisited* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996).

[9]This is distinct from *Geständnis*, which is the legal term for a criminal confession.

fourth century, and continuing into modern and decidedly more secular works like Rousseau's *Les Confessions* (1782), Goethe's *Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele* included as part of *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* (1795-1796), and Schlegel's *Lucinde: Bekenntnisse eines Ungeschickten* (1799). In addition, Sacher-Masoch's text is built on another tradition of often anonymous confessional works of a more sensationalistic and pornographic nature written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, such as the *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust* (1790), *Bekenntnis einer Giftmischerin von ihr selbst geschrieben* (1803), and *Schwester Monika* (1815). Of course erotic literature does not begin in the nineteenth century, but instead has a much longer literary tradition. The eroticism of these texts, however, is not their most essential feature; rather, we are primarily concerned with the work that the erotic performs by critiquing and exposing the power of the confessional form. By understanding how these erotic confessions function to subvert social norms as well as the convention of religious confession, we can relate masochism as it emerges in the work of Sacher-Masoch to literary traditions which came before him.

While much scholarship has focused on the physical pain of masochism and how this is related to religious devotion, my principal interest is not with the physical or psychic pain of the practices of *imitatio Christi* as such.[10] Instead, this chapter concentrates on how the genres of hagiography and confession employ tropes like *imitatio Christi* in secular fiction to create new meanings for both the genre and the suffering described therein. Though suffering is an important part of this, it is the discursive deployment of suffering that is of greatest interest. These secular texts mirror the textual structures of more religiously reverent confessions and

[10]See: Wojciech Małecki, "Ascetic Priests and O'Briens," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 14, no. 3 (December 2009): 101–115; Frauke Berndt, "Endstation Ewigkeit. Martyrium und Masochismus in den Gryphischen Trauerspielen," in *Tinte und Blut: Politik, Erotik und Poetik des Martyriums*, ed. Andreas Kraß and Thomas Rrank (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2008), 169–194; Torben Lohmüller, *Die verschlagene Lust: zur ästhetischen Subversion im Masochismus* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007).

hagiographies, employing the language of the confession or the suffering of the saints, but do so as a means of assuming the power of such texts, foregrounding the individual, and rejecting the morality of religious confessional.

Christian religious symbolism has often been associated with simultaneous suffering and desire. The tradition of *imitatio Christi* – the imitation of the suffering of Christ as a means of religious devotion – is found in literary accounts of the lives of the saints and the devotional vows of religious orders since the foundation of Christianity.[11] In recent literary scholarship, this notion of *imitatio Christi* has been associated with medieval and early-modern masochism.[12] Hagiographies of martyrs, who sacrifice their health and often their lives for the sake of their devotion to God, are found to have a decidedly masochistic tone.[13] Religious devotees, from the medieval to the modern, read these texts both as historical documents and as lessons in how to be more devoted to God.[14] At times the descriptions of religious suffering and ecstasy were overtly erotic in nature, and thus depictions of saints in their moments of transcendence have been described by scholars as erotic and even masochistic.[15] The physical

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[11]David Williams, 46; Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip*, 201-206.

[12]For discussions of medieval Catholicism and flagellation see Largier, *In Praise of the Whip*, and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Our Dark Side: A History of Perversion* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009).

[13]Hagiographies are biographical literature which describes the lives of holy men and women. For research on the masochistic tone of hagiographies, see: Largier, *In Praise of the Whip*, 235; Roudinesco, 27.

[14]These texts were often thought of as divinely inspired and therefore as inspirational as scripture. See Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*.

[15]Niklaus Largier, "Divine Suffering – Divine Pleasure: Martyrdom, Sensuality, and the Art of Delay," *Figurationen* 1 (2011): 67–80. Largier argues that the passion of St. Teresa of Ávila is a decidedly masochistic text in its moment of pain and pleasure and the almost erotic wording of her encounter with Christ.

For works on the imagined sensual and even sexual relationship between some monastics/mystics and God, see: Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, eds., *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996); James Cleugh, *Love Locked Out: An Examination of the Irrepressible Sexuality of the Middle Ages* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1964); Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997).

suffering of medieval monks, including self-afflicted suffering through asceticism and flagellation, is well documented in religious orders as a means of attaining closeness with God and thereby gaining pleasure through their suffering.[16] Also well documented is this devotion's move from the public sphere into private spaces, so that the imitation of Christ, even within the Catholic tradition, assumed a sort of inwardness.[17] Both public and private forms of *imitatio Christi* united feelings of corporeal and psychic anguish with ecstatic religious sentiment. At the same time, explicitly religious confessional literature, ostensibly biographical texts imitating the act of religious confession, serves as a form of literary self-flagellation: penitents revealing their sins and prostrating themselves before a reading public in order to be judged. Though confession was a decidedly Catholic practice, the tradition was appropriated into eighteenth-century pietist German literature as a means of recapturing personal closeness with God, and revealing one's faith through autobiographical performance of contrition.[18] Subsequent to Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782), the autobiography is then used as a form of secular revelation using the same tropes and conventions as the religious form of confession.

This chapter will proceed through two parts focusing on the mobilization of these two forms of religious writing toward critical and masochistic ends. In each section we will examine secondary literature pertaining to the genres of hagiography and confessional or

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[16]Largier, "Divine Suffering," 74.

[17]As a response to the monastic traditions of physical asceticism and self-imposed flagellation, Thomas à Kempis authored a devotional entitled *The Imitation of Christ* (*De Imitatione Christi*) (1418-1427) that suggests that the imitation of Christ be turned inward rather than serve as an external sign of devotion. The work is second only to *The Bible* in popularity as a devotional text, and is said to have inspired St. Thérèse of Lisieux's autobiographical and spiritual writings.

[18] Dorothea von Mücke, "Experience, Impartiality, and Authenticity in Confessional Discourse," *New German Critique* no. 79 (January 2000): 14; Günter Niggl, *Geschichte der deutschen Autobiographie im 18. Jahrhundert: Theoretische Grundlegung und literarische Entfaltung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977), 169.

autobiographical literature and their transition from a religious form to more secular genres. Just as the hagiography provides an account of how someone has transcended the pains and worries of the corporeal world and to exhibit holy or saint-like features, so too do confessions provide access to the means by which individuals reconcile their sinful natures and become better, more moral. Confessional literature can be seen as a form of cleansing and transcendence, but as Foucault suggests, it is in this period where the confession becomes a social imperative and a means of discursively constructing themselves as subjects and perhaps, within the context of the masochistic, a meaning of their suffering.[19] Literature that writes against these traditions exposes it for what it is and the work that it is doing. At the same time, many of these works are also erotic and counter to social morals, and as such, are vilified for the anti-moral work that they do. Sacher-Masoch's work falls into this same tradition, as do many works like his that offer supposedly biographical expressions of sexuality in a confessional form, which establishes historical precedent for such works and their marginalization on account of their suspect content.

In connection with the tradition of hagiography, we will consider Georg Büchner's posthumously published *Lenz* (1839), which depicts a short period in the life of Reinhold Lenz, an eighteenth-century author and pietist. Georg Büchner (1813-1837) was the author of only handful of works, on account of his short life. While he wrote during the *Vormärz* period (prior to the March revolutions in 1848), he distanced himself from the *Junges Deutschland* movement, a group of revolutionary authors, who expressed a distinct liberal political project in their works and were often censured as a result. In spite of this, Büchner's works often have a decidedly political tone. His first publication, *Der Hessische Landbote* (1834), was a political

[19]Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, 21.

treatise calling for revolution against the nobility. In three of Büchner's other works, *Lenz*, *Dantons Tod*, and *Woyzeck*, he utilized historical figures to present narratives which demonstrated his own political or artistic agenda. Büchner's *Lenz* relies on the autobiographical writings of Lenz and the first-hand accounts of these events by Protestant minister Johann Friedrich Oberlin (1740-1826). It depicts a form of *imitatio Christi* that is at once religiously based, but also one that calls into question the very existence of God. Büchner's *Lenz* mimics a hagiography – it tells of the transformation of an individual through his suffering – but in the process, rather than becoming more committed to his faith, Lenz rejects religion. Lenz is generally understood as a biographical text, with scholarship concentrating on Lenz's schizophrenia, loss of faith, and the *Kunstgespräch* (artistic discussion) in connection with the Büchner's own religious and aesthetic project. Lenz's self-inflicted pain is typically seen as a symptom of his madness, rather than an attempt at religious devotion. My reading of the text focuses primarily on the self-inflicted pain linking Büchner's text to the descriptions of the lives of the saints and martyrs and ultimately to Sacher-Masoch's focus on the transcendence of the suprasensual. By reading the pain-pleasure dyad as an attempt to find religious transcendence to fill the void in his psyche, we can see how Lenz is portrayed as acting out both the lives of saints and martyrs and the stories of Christ in an attempt to give meaning to his suffering and madness.

From there I will turn to a secondary, but equally important aspect of religion in Sacher-Masoch's texts, namely the notion of confessional literature within the masochistic genealogy. Writings in this tradition, which do not fit the mold of being contrite confessions of faith, engage in critique of the genre by exposing its hypocrisy. Rather than read a single text closely, I will look at erotic confessional literature in the nineteenth century, exemplified by

the anonymous works *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust, Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin von ihr selbst geschrieben* and *Schwester Monika,* all of which play into this genre by exploiting the expectations of the reader. In this way I will bridge the gap between the religious and the erotic in a less subtle way that we see with Largier's analysis of St. Theresa or other female saints whose descriptions of encounters with the Holy Spirit are ecstatic in both a religious and erotic sense. These texts might be read simply for their value and function as pornography, but instead, I will show how in writing within the tradition of a religious genres, they do so as a means of critiquing these discourses and rejecting the power of confession. In doing so, they expose the structures of power, that the genre constructs. From the perspective of Foucault's discussion of the confessional, these texts, in their role as fiction, both participate in the incitement to confess, as well as call it into question by the suspicious nature of their confessions and their refusal of contrition.

The Masochistic-Hagiography: Büchner's *Lenz* and the Veneration of Pain

Published in 1839, Büchner's *Lenz* (1836-7) is a text based on the biography of dramatist Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz.[20] The story follows Lenz on his journey to an acquaintance the Reverend Johann Friedrich Oberlin, following what has been described as a psychic break.[21] It describes a period of approximately two weeks with Oberlin, during which Lenz experiences great psychic and self-inflicted physical pain, attempts to redeem himself through a Christ-like miracle, and eventually loses his faith. The story ends with a complete

[20]The work has been described as a fragment and a novella, depending on the degree of completion that the scholar believes the work to be in. For the purposes of this project, I will refer to it as a novella.

[21]Lenz's biography is well documented. See: Matthias Luserke, *Lenz-Studien: Literaturgeschichte, Werke, Themen* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2001); Johannes Schnurr, *Das Genie an der Grenze: eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung an das klinische Profil des Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004); Georg-Michael Schulz, *Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001).

deterioration of his mental state and finally his departure from Oberlin and journey to Strasbourg where he lived for some time under the care of a physician. The novella relies heavily on Oberlin's diaries for its narrative structure, plot, and the narrator's account of Oberlin's perspective in the text, so much so, in fact, that Büchner has at various times been accused of plagiarism due use of quotations and descriptions directly from the source materials.[22] The issue of authorship need not be disconcerting. Much like Büchner's drama *Dantons Tod* (1835), which includes lengthy excerpts from the historical figure Georges Danton's speeches, the passages from Oberlin's diary provide context and historical authenticity to a work that chronicled a period in the life of a tragic playwright well known to Büchner's readers. The narrative describing Lenz's perspective, thoughts, and emotions, however, are entirely Büchner's creation.[23] Furthermore, the text is more than a simple telling of facts. As Theo Buck suggests, it serves as a crystallization of Lenz's life and as such, this short text is perhaps to be considered a metaphor for the issues at play in his well-documented troubles not necessarily an accurate representation thereof.[24]

Of primary interest for this project is how the longing for suffering and other religious themes in the story mark *Lenz* as a sort of hagiography. By developing a story of a historical character who constructs his life in a way that either mimics or attempts to recreate moments in the lives of religious figures, including Christ, we are presented with a narrative that seems to bear a resemblance to the literary tradition of the hagiography. The text does not, however, characterize the life of a saint or martyr; instead, Lenz's feelings of emptiness and loss at the

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[22]Hellmuth Karasek, "Der Ehrabschreiber," *Der Spiegel*, January 15, 1990.

[23]Holub, 37. Holub points out that Büchner's editorial intervention is strongest in the points where Lenz is most active - particularly in the discussion about art in the middle of the story.

[24]Theo Buck, "Riss in der Schöpfung" *Büchner-Studien II* (Aachen: Rimbaud, 2000), 80.

end of the story are indicative of a failed attempt at transcendence and his attempts to imitate Christ make him into a secular martyr focused on Christ's humanity rather than his divine spirit. Whether this was Büchner's intent is of not of great concern, but in order to understand *Lenz* as a secular hagiography we must look at the ways which the work participates in the hagiography tradition as well as how Büchner writes against the tradition. I would suggest reading Lenz neither as a "modernist and atheist icon" nor as a representation of Büchner's aesthetic and religious beliefs. Instead, I will focus on drawing out the constructions of religiously inspired pain and references to religious figures and to show how these bring the text into discourse with the hagiography genre. Reading the text a secular hagiography we can see how the tropes of suffering, martyrdom, and *imitatio Christi* are deployed to show *Lenz* within a literary tradition Christian martyrdom. Furthermore, the text participates in the discourse on religious masochism in a way that is wholly distinct from the traditional hagiographies of martyrs and saints by emphasizing Lenz's humanity and thereby the humanity of Christ.

There have been a variety of approaches to reading Büchner's works. While *Lenz* has specifically been read for its description and diagnoses of schizophrenia,[25] general scholarly literature on *Lenz*, and in fact all of Büchner's works, falls into three general areas: reading Büchner as a nihilist, revolutionary, and precursor to postmodernism;[26] approaching

[25]See: James Crighton, *Büchner and Madness: Schizophrenia in Georg Büchner's Lenz and Woyzeck* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1998); Helga Stipa Madland, "Madness and Lenz: Two Hundred Years Later," *The German Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 34–42.

[26]See: Maurice Benn, *The Drama of Revolt: a Critical Study of Georg Büchner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Georg Lukács, "The Real Georg Büchner and His Fascist Misrepresentation," in *German Realists in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Paul Keast (London: Libris, 1993), 69–94; Karl Viëtor, *Georg Büchner: Politik, Dichtung, Wissenschaft* (Bern: A. Francke, 1949).

Büchner's texts, and specifically *Lenz*, as a critique and rejection of religion;[27] or attempting to reclaim the religious context to Büchner's works.[28] It is within this last group of scholarly work that this analysis is best placed. While there is merit to other approaches, my identification of *Lenz* as a sort of masochistic hagiography requires that we consider the connection of suffering and pleasure in the novella within the context of religious discourses, and as a means of exposing the religious meaning behind such suffering. Peter K. Jansen points out that in correspondence between Büchner and Gutzkow, Gutzkow described the text as "Lenziana," and "Erinnerungen an Lenz" based on "Thatsachen."[29] The term Lenziana is interesting, since it calls to mind similar terms like Shakespeareana and Dickensiana – literature on or related to a particular person, which to a certain extent implies that the person is honored through his or her descriptions in the text, just as we see with religious martyrs and saints.[30] Erwin Kobel makes explicit reference to Lenz's suffering in a religious context. His identification of the pain and pleasure as simultaneous and thus representative of something new and not a mirror of *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics is important to our understanding of how

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[27]For literature on Büchner's which places his religious beliefs in question marking him as a nihilistic revolutionary, see Ariane Martin, "Religionskritik Bei Georg Büchner," *Georg Büchner Jahrbuch* 11 (2005): 221 – 236; Christian Soboth, "Religion," in *Büchner-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung*, ed. Roland Borgards and Harald Neumeyer (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2009), 156–161; Wendy Wagner, *Georg Büchners Religionsunterricht, 1821-1831: christlich-protestantische Wurzeln sozialrevolutionären Engagements* (New York: P. Lang, 1999).

[28]A number of scholars have attempted to complicate the field of religion in Büchner, including: Theo Buck, *"Riss in der Schöpfung"*; William Collins Donahue, "The Aesthetic 'Theology' of Büchner's Lenz," in *Commitment and Compassion: Essays on Georg Büchner*, ed. Martha B. Helfer and Patrick Fortman, Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik 81 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 113–134; Erwin Kobel, *Georg Büchner: Das dichterische Werk* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974); Wolfgang Wittkowski, *George Büchner: Persönlichkeit, Weltbild, Werk* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1978).

[29]Peter K. Jansen, "The Structural Function of the 'Kunstgespräch' in Büchner's 'Lenz'," *Monatshefte* 67, no. 2 (July 1, 1975): 155n14.

[30]"ana, suffix and n.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2012), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6862. The OED definitions explain that this might be focused on "Anecdotes of, notes about, or publications bearing upon" a particular person, but they also describe the suffix as denoting "Artefacts and other collectable items associated with a place, period, person, or activity."

Büchner seems to be valuing the mixture of suffering and desire.[31] He also identifies a marked focus on suffering in all of Büchner's works, stating that "Büchners dichterisches Werk überblickend, erkennt man, daß darin eine Phänomenologie des Leidens gegeben ist."[32] Kobel makes heavy use of letters from Büchner and the historical Lenz as evidence of Büchner's intentions in the story and convincingly argues for a strong connection to Christian suffering in the novella. Finally, through theologian Karl Barth, he identifies a sort of veneration of religious heroes and holy people a feature of pietism, which distinguishes it from both "altlutherischen und altcalvinistischen" namely that:

> sie empfehle wieder allerlei Übungen äußerer und innerer Askese zur Erlangung höherer Vollkommenheitsgrade; die große Wahrheit, daß der Weg des Christen immer ein eigener Weg vor Gott sei, bekomme im Pietismus die Gestalt, daß der Weg des Christen auch in seinen eigenen Augen und in denen seiner Umgebung, also durchaus auch von unten gesehen, ein eigener, origineller Weg sein müsse; deshalb bringe der Pietismus, anders als der alte Protestantismus, wieder Heiligengestalten hervor, Heroen der Reinheit, des Gebetsleben, der Liebe und des Glaubenseifers, in der Meinung, daß diese Menschen durch die Gnade Gottes seien, was sie sind, aber eben doch direkt aus ihren Werken, ihrer Lebensführung, ihrer Haltung als Heilige erkenntlich, biographisch als solche zu beschreiben und wie Heroen auf anderen Gebieten als solche zu feiern.[33]

Though he does not take this identification of "Heilige" or heroes of purity to the next step by showing how Lenz meets with these characteristics, I would suggest that it is precisely in this

[31]Kobel, 151.

[32]Ibid., 157. "Surveying Büchner's poetical work, one recognizes, that therein exists a phenomenology of suffering."

[33]Kobel, 167. "They suggest again all manner of practices of external and inner asceticism to achieve ever greater levels of perfection; the great truth, that the way of a Christian is always ones' personal way to god, takes the form in pietism, that the way of a Christian also in his own eyes and in the eyes of his surroundings, thereby also as seen from below, must be a personal and original way; therefore pietism, as distinguished from Protestantism, once again creates holy figures, heroes of purity, of a life of prayer, love, and enthusiastic belief, in the opinion, that these people are what they are through the grace of god, but are recognizable as holy through the works that they do, the way they live their life, their attitudes, they are to be described as such through their biographies, and to be celebrated holy heroes in other areas."

pietistic view of the way Lenz lives his life, particularly through good works and asceticism, where we see should locate the desires of Büchner's text.

Focusing on what has been described as a moment of excurses at the center of the novella, the *Kunstgespräch* (discussion of art), William Donahue's recent work on religion in Lenz "rescues" the *Kunstgespräch* from its identification as a textual anomaly and situates it within the religious context of the rest of the novella. His reading of the *Kunstgespräch*, concentrating on the Emmaus story, calls into question readings of the novella which celebrate "the Lenz of the frame narrative, particularly at his nadir of despair, isolation, and atheism" by "some readers who share this worldview."[34] The story of the encounter on the road to Emmaus and the subsequent meal, where Christ appears to his disciples after his resurrection and only through his suffering do they recognize him, takes a central role in Donahue's analysis of "Lenz's theory of realism."[35] Moreover, though Donahue hints at other religious meanings in the *Kunstgespräch*, through Lenz's exhortation that "Man muß die Menschheit lieben, um in das eigentümliche Wesen jedes einzudringen, es darf einem keiner zu gering, keiner zu häßlich sein, erst dann kann man sie verstehen;"[36] he does so only in support of his distinction between the relative pessimism of the frame that comprises the greater part of the novella. I would instead read this as a direct attempt by Lenz at *imitatio Christi*. Whether this is congruous with Lenz's state of mind in the rest of the novella is not as important as how Büchner positions Lenz as a Christ-like martyr. We need only point to the striking similarity between Lenz's

[34]Donahue, 134.

[35]Ibid., 125.

[36]*Lenz*, 95. "One must love mankind, in order to penetrate the peculiarity of each person's existence, one must not be too petty or too ugly to others, only then can one understand others."

statement and Christ's New Testament commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself."[37] Seen in this way, there is little incongruity between the joy and suffering in the framing story, and the explications on art and religion in the *Kunstgespräch*. I would agree with Donahue that Büchner's novella is deeply bound to biblical discourses but suggest that he exposes a connection between suffering, pietism, and holiness that has yet to be explored in a critical way and that explicitly ties it to the tradition of hagiography and martyrdom in a way that we will pursue here.

Though there is a recognized genre of hagiographic writing, those texts are not codified in the same way that we have seen with other forms of writing, like the novella, the novel, or even the confession. From secondary literature on hagiographic texts, they seem to explore the biography of the saint, outlining various important moments in their lives that might mark them as specifically pious or worthy of beatification.[38] Moreover, Thomas Heffernan provides a historical perspective of the genre that reaches back to the tradition of Greco-Roman biographies.[39] He argues, however, that hagiographies of saints function in a way that demonstrate the divinity of the individual, but that also interprets "what was only partially understood, mysteriously hidden in the well-known public record, buried in the very ideal of sanctity itself."[40] Lenz is not a figure of divinity or sainthood, but his audience was aware of his mental state. His madness, however, is known but not understood, and as such, Büchner

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[37]This statement harkens back to Jesus' second commandment in the New Testament: Matthew 22:39 "You shall love thy neighbor as yourself"

[38]For literature on the form and content of hagiographies see: Aideen Hartney, *Gruesome Deaths and Celibate Lives: Christian Martyrs and Ascetics* (Exeter, Devon, UK: Bristol Phoenix, 2005); Thomas Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*; Frederick C. Klawiter, "The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism," *Church History* 49, no. 3 (September 1, 1980): 251–261.

[39]Heffernan, 5.

[40]Ibid., 21.

takes advantage of this to juxtapose his insanity against religious devotion and to show how his private pain consistently threatens to, and sometimes does, rupture into public spaces. In much the same way that Severin focuses on the experience of pain and pleasure as a means of non-sensory transcendence in *Venus im Pelz* – both in the lives of the martyrs and within himself – so too is Lenz portrayed as using self-imposed pain to overcome his madness. Taken from sources such as the diaries of the subject or those close to him or her, as well as local tradition and historical accounts, hagiographies provide both an attempt at historical truth as well as veneration of the subject for the purposes of inspiring a community.

In addition, it is not inconceivable that Büchner's text might be seen as something akin to hagiography. In her monograph on depiction of Lutheran mystic and theologian Jakob Böhme by Romantic authors, Paola Mayer points out that the hagiographic form was appropriated by these authors to depict him as both a prophet and martyr. Mayer draws on scholarship on the genre of hagiography to show how the form celebrates the while simultaneously hoping to inspire emulation by the reader.[41] She suggests that hagiographies and other literary references to Böhme were meant as a source of inspiration for the Romantics and their religion of poetry and aesthetics. Büchner uses the same strategies as we find in both traditional hagiographies as well as Romantic appropriations of the genre. His use of authentic sources is in keeping with the tradition makes use of authentic sources as we find from traditional hagiographies. Of note, however, is that unlike the Romantic invocations of Böhme, Büchner's novella is not meant as a religious veneration of Lenz even though it marks him with features related to religious martyrdom. He attempts to perform miracles, inspire a religious community, and makes gestures toward a desire to live a life in the spirit of *imitatio Christi*.

[41]Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 29-30.

Instead of religious martyrdom, Büchner memorializes Lenz's breakdown through psychic suffering and attempts at transcendence through the imitation of Christ. These repetitive, shifting efforts to subdue madness through physical pain and closeness with God are not only unsuccessful but run counter to traditional conceptions of *imitatio Christi*. Rather than transcending to a level of the divine, Lenz uses this pain to achieve a level of psychic stability and the text thereby serves as an anti-hagiography in that martyrdom is leveraged as a validation of sanity, rather than transcendence.

Pain, Suffering, and the *Übersinnlich*

The notions of the religious transcendence and the sublime are apparent in the first pages of the novella. While traveling over the mountains he is struck by the greatness of nature. "Anfangs drängte es ihm in der Brust, wenn das Gestein so wegsprang, der graue Wald sich unter ihm schüttelte, und der Nebel die Formen bald verschlang, bald die gewaltigen Glieder halb enthüllte; es drängte in ihm, er suchte nach etwas, wie nach verlornen Träumen, aber er fand nichts."[42] The sense that he is searching for something as though in a lost dream, something that he cannot find, is later echoed in his response to darkness. The unending darkness that he experiences in the forest, and later in the village, leads him to an overabundance of contemplation. There is nothing on which he can focus, no anchor point, and this leads to a destruction of the self similar to what we saw with the artist Spinello in Wackenroder's text or Keller's *Der Grüne Heinrich*. The paratactic nature of Büchner's writing echoes the anchorless feelings in Lenz. The single sentence, lasting for over fifty lines, describes how Lenz interacts with and observes his surroundings and draws the reader in to his

[42]*Lenz*, 85. "Initially, it pushed him in the chest, when the rock consistently stepped back, the the gray forest shook beneath him, and the fog devoured the forms, now the powerful limbs half revealed, and it pushed into him, he was looking for something like after lost dreams, but he found nothing."

state of mind. After describing how Lenz feels at once powerful and powerless in his encounters with the storm he encounters on his way to Oberlin, Büchner writes: "Aber es waren nur Augenblicke, und dann erhob er sich nüchtern, fest, ruhig als wäre ein Schattenspiel vor ihm vorübergezogen, er wußte von nichts mehr."[43] This notion that everything he experienced was simply a play of shadows, relates back to his previous statement that he is lost in a dream he cannot find. He locates nothing of substance to hold onto. When night falls in the mountains, and the darkness envelops him, and he is surrounded by his fear. "[E]s faßte ihn eine namenlose Angst in diesem Nichts, er war im Leeren, er riß sich auf und flog den Abhang hinunter. Es war finster geworden, Himmel und Erde verschmolzen in Eins. Es war als ginge ihm was nach, und als müsse ihn was Entsetzliches."[44] Though we can attribute psychic trauma to Lenz's interactions with darkness and his paranoia that something terrible is following him, we might also connect this to a sort of religious fear in the unity of heaven and earth – or the sky and the earth – since the German makes no distinction between the words sky and heaven. Additionally, the nameless fear of the abyss could be considered related to what we discussed in the chapter on the suffering artist and their moment of inspiration. If this nameless fear, is like the nameless fear that Schiller associates with Juno's head in the *Aesthetic Letters* then, as we have seen this may be his encounter with the potentially destructive sublime moment. Because Lenz is unable to distance himself from the fear, he is also unable to find pleasure in it. The all-consuming darkness cannot be productive in this case. Lenz is, perhaps, not capable of overcoming the fear of overwhelming nature and thereby

[43]*Lenz*, 86. "But there were only moments, and then he got up sober, solid, quiet as if a play of shadow by before him, he knew nothing more."

[44]*Lenz*, 87. "In this nothingness a nameless fear overtook him, he was in the void, he pulled himself up and flew down the hill. It had become dark, earth and sky merged into one. It was as if something was following him, and as though it was something terrible."

unable to experience the suprasensual. He cannot use his faculties of reason as a handhold by which he is able to extricate himself from the depths of his fear. Instead, he emerges from this nameless feeling when his mind is interrupted by the sound of people and a light which distracts him from the darkness.

Upon arriving in the town and settling into his accommodations, Lenz is once again overwhelmed by the darkness with nothing to anchor his psyche. The text likewise is once again rambling and paratactic. Lenz's thoughts rush from one idea to another and, rather than succumbing to the darkness, he takes matters into his own hands. He rushes into the courtyard of the village and finding it as dark as his room, he engages in an act of self-abnegation akin to that of the martyrs and saints.

> eine unnennbare Angst erfaßte ihn, er sprang auf, er lief durchs Zimmer, die Treppe hinunter, vor's Haus; aber umsonst, Alles finster, nichts, er war sich selbst ein Traum, einzelne Gedanken huschten auf, er hielt sie fest, es war ihm als müsse er immer "Vater unser" sagen; er konnte sich nicht mehr finden, ein dunkler Instinkt trieb ihn, sich zu retten, er stieß an die Steine, er riß sich mit den Nägeln, der Schmerz fing an, ihm das Bewußtsein wiederzugeben, er stürzte sich in den Brunnstein, aber das Wasser war nicht tief, er patschte darin.[45]

In order to anchor himself this time, he appropriates another religiously marked text – the Lord's Prayer – and when that does not bring him back to himself, he throws himself on the stones and tears at himself with his nails. The pain is enough to bring him back to his consciousness. Though he lunges into the fountain (or well), because the water is not deep he ends up splashing about in the water. The way he throws himself on the stones and injures himself with nails is reminiscent of Christ's Passion, and the subsequent splashing in the water

[45]*Lenz*, 88. an unnamable fear overtook him, he jumped up, he ran through the room, down the stairs in front of the house, but it was all for naught, everything dark, nothing, he was himself a dream, individual thoughts scurried through, he held on to them tightly, it was as though he must always say the Lord's Prayer; he could no longer find himself, a dark instinct drove him to save himself, he pounded on the stones, he tore at himself with his nails, the pain began to give him back his consciousness, he threw himself in the fountain, but the water was not deep and he splashed around inside.

could be mapped onto an attempt at rebirth through baptism. It is not too far of a reach to say that in this case religion seems to provide a source of salvation, but it is a sort of *imitatio Christi* in which he engages and that is necessary for him to counter his fear.

Oberlin, the pastor for the town, is a source of calm in his otherwise chaotic psyche. Oberlin comes to his aid during the aforementioned self-mutilation, and the next day when they set forth to a neighboring village, the relationship between Oberlin and Lenz is described as maintaining a powerful silence – one that might also be considered a powerful calmness. "Es wirkte alles wohltätig und beruhigend auf ihn, er mußte Oberlin oft in die Augen sehen, und die mächtige Ruhe, die uns über der ruhenden Natur, im tiefen Wald, in mondhellen schmelzenden Sommernächten überfällt, schien ihm noch näher, in diesem ruhigen Auge, diesem ehrwürdigen ernsten Gesicht."[46] By looking Oberlin in the eyes, he is able to find a point of anchor – something on which to focus his energies and to release his fears. Oberlin's steady guidance and appeals for Lenz to engage in biblical study seem to be a source of calm for Lenz, though it is clear that he is still tormented by fear and emptiness.

The correlation between night and madness runs throughout the novella. As we saw with Lenz's first evening in the village, he seems to resolve these feelings of emptiness and fear by inflicting pain upon himself. Though the novella only describes this once, there are other references that would lead the reader to believe that these episodes continue for Lenz.

> Aber nur so lange das Licht im Tale lag, war es ihm erträglich; gegen Abend befiel ihn eine sonderbare Angst, er hätte der Sonne nachlaufen mögen; wie die Gegenstände nach und nach schattiger wurden, kam ihm Alles so traumartig, so zuwider vor, es kam ihm die Angst an wie Kindern, die im Dunkeln schlafen; es war ihm als sei er blind; jetzt wuchs sie, der Alp des Wahnsinns setzte sich zu seinen Füßen, der rettungslose Gedanke, als sei Alles nur sein Traum, öffnete sich vor ihm, er klammerte sich an alle

[46]*Lenz*, 89. "It all had a positive calming effect on him, he had to look Oberlin in the eyes often, and the powerful silence that fell over the quiet nature in the deep forest, in the moonlit melting summer nights, seemed to him to be closer, in these quiet eyes, in this honorable, serious face."

> Gegenstände, Gestalten zogen rasch an ihm vorbei, er drängte sich an sie, es waren Schatten, das Leben wich aus ihm und seine Glieder waren ganz starr.[47]

Without analyzing this as a psychological break, there is a definite connection between being lost in his own dream world and the fear and darkness of the night and of shadows. If we look at this from a religious context, Oberlin is able to control him during the day – to provide him a source of anchoring through faith, but at night, he dreams of things that he is afraid of, and the belief that he is incapable of being saved overtakes him. This lost salvation is then recaptured through an actively sought out through self-inflicted pain. By plunging himself into the water, "wenn seine Augen an die Dunkelheit gewöhnt waren, machte ihm besser, er stürzte sich in den Brunnen, die grelle Wirkung des Wassers machte ihm besser, auch hatte er eine geheime Hoffnung auf eine Krankheit, er verrichtete sein Bad jetzt mit weniger Geräusch."[48] Though his eyes have adjusted to the light, he still jumps into the well/fountain and finds comfort in the harshness of the water. The fact that he is continues to go to the fountain, making less noise so as not to alert the villagers, denotes a consciousness that he must hide his actions. He is aware that his actions are considered aberrant, but finds comfort in them and is thus unwilling to cease his nightly ritual. The more time he spends with Oberlin, the more he begins to study the Bible and see it as a means of interpreting his fears, calming him and giving him new perspective. As he finds a modicum of comfort and sanity in religion, Heinrich inquires whether he might deliver a sermon to Oberlin's congregation. The preparations likewise

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[47]*Lenz*, 89-90. "But only as long as the light was in the valley, did it seemed to him tolerable, in the evening he was seized by a strange fear that he would liked to have chased the sun; as the objects become increasingly shadowed, everything seemed to him to be so dreamlike and contrary, the fear came to him like it does to children who sleep in the dark, it was as if he was blind, the darknesss now grew, the nightmare of madness sat down at his feet, the hopeless idea, as was all just be a dream, opened before him he clung to all the objects, shapes moved quickly past him, he pushed on them, they were shadows, the life drained from him and his limbs were quite stiff"

[48]*Lenz*, 90. "When his eyes had gotten used to the light, it was better for him, he jumped into the water and the harsh effects of the water made him better, he also had a secret hope for a sickness, he carried out his bathing with less noise."

distract him from his madness. “Lenz ging vergnügt auf sein Zimmer, er dachte auf einen Text zum Predigen und verfiel in Sinnen, und seine Nächte wurden ruhig.”[49] Lenz is able to break free of his repetitious evening sojourns to the village fountain and devote his energies to his preparations for the sermon.

The sermon itself and the reaction by the congregation, however, reawaken his pain. As he begins his sermon, he is overwhelmed: “Der Gesang verhallte, Lenz sprach, er war schüchtern, unter den Tönen hatte sein Starrkrampf sich ganz gelegt, sein ganzer Schmerz wachte jetzt auf, und legte sich in sein Herz. Ein süßes Gefühl unendlichen Wohls beschlich ihn.”[50] His sermon causes the pain from inside him to awaken, but it is a comfortable pain. He is no longer rigid and afraid in this pain, but he welcomes the pain because in it he finds a sweet feeling of eternal well-being. This pain is not dissimilar to that which he inflicts upon himself in the fountain. Both are imbued with religious overtones, seem to calm his madness, and cause him great joy. As he continues his sermon the mutual pain of the congregation calms him. “Er sprach einfach mit den Leuten, sie litten alle mit ihm, und es war ihm ein Trost, wenn er über einige müdgeweinte Augen Schlaf, und gequälten Herzen Ruhe bringen, wenn er über dieses von materiellen Bedürfnissen gequälte Sein, diese dumpfen Leiden gen Himmel leiten konnte.”[51] His tortured heart is put at ease and the suffering of the congregation is offered up. Following his sermon, the congregation breaks out in the following responsorial:

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[49]*Lenz*, 91. “Lenz went happily to his room, he thought on a text for preaching and fell into his thoughts, and his nights were quiet.”

[50]*Lenz*, 92. “The singing ended, Lenz spoke, he was shy, under the sounds his rigidness had set in, now his entire pain awoke, und laid itself in his heart. A sweet feeling of unending well being crept over him.”

[51]Ibid. “He simply spoke to the people, they all suffered with him, and it was a comfort to him when he brought sleep to his eyes, tired from crying, and calm to his tormented heart. when he could lead the dull suffering of these beings tormented by material needs to heaven.”

Laß in mir die heil'gen Schmerzen,
Tiefe Bronnen ganz aufbrechen;
Leiden sei all' mein Gewinst,
Leiden sei mein Gottesdienst.[52]

Suffering and anguish are the means by which the congregation attains closeness with God. In response, Lenz is shaken by their outpouring of music and pain. "Das Drängen in ihm, die Musik, der Schmerz, erschütterte ihn. Das All war für ihn in Wunden; er fühlte tiefen unnennbaren Schmerz davon."[53] While he cannot name the pain that he feels, we do not get the sense that he gains pleasure from it. The pleasure is instead gained through his encounters with the religious community and provide calm to his fits of emptiness.

Subsequent to the visit from his family friend, Kaufmann and the discussion on art they have, Lenz once again begins to feel the emptiness and coldness which he had previously been able to stave off with religious devotion. As Oberlin has departed with Kaufmann for Switzerland, he is forced to seek out Madame Oberlin as his anchor, but he once again feels empty. In order to recapture his psychic equilibrium, he attempts to create a flame of religious feeling in order to "Unterdessen ging es fort mit seinen religiösen Quälereien. Je leerer, je kälter, je sterbender er sich innerlich fühlte, desto mehr drängte es in ihn, eine Glut in sich zu wecken, es kamen ihm Erinnerungen an die Zeiten, wo Alles in ihm sich drängte, wo er unter all' seinen Empfindungen keuchte; und jetzt so tot."[54] I would suggest that the empty, cold, feeling of dying inside is not his religious torture, but instead the pressing embers relate cause him suffering. We should not think of these tortures as negative, however. These tortures just

[52]Ibid. "Let the holy pain in me / break open deep wells / Suffering is all my reward / Suffering is my worship."

[53]*Lenz*, 92. "The urge in him, the music, the pain, it startled him. This all was for him an open wound, he felt from it a deep nameless pain."

[54]*Lenz*, 101. "Meanwhile, his religious torture continued. The emptier, colder, the more he felt inside like he was dying, the more it, the more it pressed in him, to awaken a fire within himself, it seemed to him memories of the days when all pressed in him, where he gasped at all his sensations , and now as dead."

as with the pain that he experiences elsewhere in the novella are a means of filling the emptiness. Moreover the "Glut" could be connected to the fire of the Holy Spirit which will relieve him of his emptiness. "Er verzweifelte an sich selbst, dann warf er sich nieder, er rang die Hände, er rührte Alles in sich auf; aber tot! tot! Dann flehete er, Gott möge ein Zeichen an ihm tun, dann wühlte er in sich, fastete, lag träumend am Boden."[55] The sign he requires of God is part of the religious *Quälereien* that he needs to stave off the death, despair, and emptiness. The religious tortures he feels are not of the same quality as the tortures experienced by Catholic martyrs and chronicled in hagiographies. For one thing, the tortures of martyrs were deployed in rejection of their religious faith, whereas Lenz's tortures are all in support of religion and how it functions to salvage his sanity. While he gains pleasure in his tortures, it is primarily because he is no longer plagued by the emptiness and darkness which have been with him since the beginning of the story.

Returning to how we might consider *Lenz* in relation to the genre of hagiography, we must consider how the pain of the martyr is distinctly different from that which Lenz experiences. Whereas martyrdom implies an imitation of Christ in which the spiritual and carnal transformations are in the service of religion, Lenz's is related to religion, but not in its service. By this I mean he uses the pain to transform himself and to escape his madness, whereas martyrs mobilize their pain emulate Christ's sacrifice for mankind. At the end of the novella Lenz does not depart a deeply religious person, but instead he leaves Oberlin without a sense of religious calm. Instead his pain and fear are simply there – something he lives with, but not something he necessarily treasures.

[55]*Lenz*, 101. "He despaired of himself, then he threw himself down, he rang his hands, he touched everything in himself, but dead! dead! Then he implored, God would want to give him a sign, then he dug into himself, fasted and lay daydreaming on the floor."

> Lenz starrte ruhig hinaus, keine Ahnung, kein Drang; nur wuchs eine dumpfe Angst in ihm, je mehr die Gegenstände sich in der Finsternis verloren. Sie mußten einkehren; da machte er wieder mehre Versuche, Hand an sich zu legen, war aber zu scharf bewacht. Am folgenden Morgen bei trübem regnerischem Wetter traf er in Straßburg ein. Er schien ganz vernünftig, sprach mit den Leuten; er tat Alles wie es die Andern taten, es war aber eine entsetzliche Leere in ihm, er fühlte keine Angst mehr, kein Verlangen; sein Dasein war ihm eine notwendige Last. – So lebte er hin.[56]

In showing that Lenz continues to live with this pain, and embrace it without giving it religious value, it juxtaposes the religious pain of transcendence with the fear and emptiness of the individual and their attempts to place themself in the modern world.

Madness and *Imitatio Christi*: Non-Transcendent Martyrdom

From our modern perspective, the lives of the saints strike us as stories of disturbed individuals: men and women of faith who choose suffering and even death rather than compromise their beliefs. With *Lenz* we have a story of a madman, whom everyone knows to be emotionally disturbed, but a story where he is constructed in a way such that he mimics the lives of saints, or even the life of Christ. There is a disparity between Lenz's emotional state and the way he is perceived by others that should not go unnoticed, particularly since the descriptions of Lenz's inner state are not derived from an external source, but Büchner's interpretation. While Lenz feels insanity nipping at his heels, those around him only notice it insofar as he enables them to see his suffering. At times, however, he is not in control of his outward appearance, which comes to mimic, that of saints and martyrs at the height of their suffering and penitence.

[56]*Lenz*, 111. "Lenz stared quietly, no idea, no desire, only a dull fear grew in him, the more the objects were lost in the darkness. They must come, as again he made several attempts to lay hands on himself, but he was too sharply guarded. The following morning in cloudy rainy weather, he arrived in Strasbourg. He seemed quite reasonable, spoke to the people, and he did everything as did the others, but it was a terrible emptiness in him, he felt no fear, no desire, its existence was to him a necessary burden. - So he lived on"

The first example of congruence between Lenz's inner and outer state comes at the beginning of the novella, after Lenz arrives at the other end of the forest in Waldbach. Büchner describes him, in much the same way that Oberlin does in his diaries: "die blonden Locken hingen ihm um das bleiche Gesicht, es zuckte ihm in den Augen und um den Mund, seine Kleider waren zerrissen."[57] His pale face, disheveled hair, sunken eyes and mouth and torn clothing are outward signs of his suffering. Oberlin does not recognize him for the middle class man of letters that he is, and instead mistakes him for a craftsman. It is not clear whether he rends his own clothing, or if his garments are torn because of a struggle in the forest. But torn or rend garments are typically a sign of mourning. Biblical figures like David, Jacob, and Job all tear at their clothing in acts of mourning and suffering.[58] If we take his torn garments to be a sign of mourning, then Lenz this might be seen as mourning the loss of his own sanity, or overcome by the fear at losing his mind as he feels as though insanity is close behind him.

The next time we see his outward appearance seem to mimic his internal state of mind is when he decides to leave the village and travel to Fouday in order to reanimate a recently deceased girl. In the time since Oberlin has left him he has traveled to the cabin where the holy man lives, to whom many undertake pilgrimages. Upon his return, his mental state goes between absolute emptiness when he is alone to relative calm in the presence of Madam Oberlin. When he makes the decision to visit the dead girl, he does so as a penitent: "Am vierten trat er plötzlich in's Zimmer zu Madame Oberlin, er hatte sich das Gesicht mit Asche beschmiert, und forderte einen alten Sack; sie erschrak, man gab ihm, was er verlangte. Er

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[57]*Lenz*, 87. "His blonde curls hanged around his pale face, his eyes and mouth twitched, his clothes were ripped to shreds."

[58]Historically the tradition of rending garments as a sign of grief or penance can be found in the classical period as well. See: Harry L. Levy, "Rending the Garments as a Sign of Grief," *The Classical Weekly* 41, no. 5 (December 1947).

wickelte den Sack um sich, wie ein Büßender, und schlug den Weg nach Fouday ein."[59] By covering his face in ashes and wearing the equivalent of a hair shirt, he begins to play the role of religious penitent, and inflicts religiously valued suffering upon himself in hopes of attaining some sort of affinity with religious peoples worthy of being party to miracles. While martyrs are seen as having a divinity within them that is represented through their actions, Lenz is filled with an emptiness that he tries to fill with pain, which has a similar quality to the pain of a religious martyr, but which is not tied to a religious belief. His failure to raise the girl, and the pain he experiences when he realizes that he cannot create a moment of divine transcendence, lead to a resignation that he must accept the emptiness and fear that he had fought through the story.

When Oberlin returns from Switzerland, we see the final example of Lenz's attempts to perform his pain. Lenz knocks on Oberlin's door and enters: "mit vorwärtsgebogenem Leib, niederwärts hängendem Haupt, das Gesicht über und über und das Kleid hie und da mit Asche bestreut, mit der rechten Hand den linken Arm haltend."[60] He continues to cover himself in ashes and assume a submissive stance. Just as the hair shirt in the previous example is representative of penance, so too, are ashes associated with atonement and contrition. Lenz holds his arm because he has dislocated it after secretly jumping out of his window.[61] Since he did so in secret, he does not want anyone to see his dislocated arm and asks Oberlin to help him set the injury. Though Lenz has previous performed his suffering and contrition for an

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[59]*Lenz*, 102. "On the fourth day, he suddenly stepped into Madame Oberlin's room, he had smeared his face with ashes and asked for an old sack. She swaddled himself in the sack, like a penitent, and set out on his way to Fouday."

[60]*Lenz*, 105-6. "with his body bent forward, downward hanging head, his face and clothes were strewn with Ashes, he held his left Arm with his right hand."

[61]*Lenz*, 106.

audience, it seems that the escalation of his self-harm is done in secret. Lenz does not martyr himself for the community, but instead does so privately as a means of overcoming his own fear and madness. As such the inwardness of his suffering and his attempts to use this religiously coded suffering to work through his emotional and psychic pain remain unsuccessful.

My reading of *Lenz* has been focused on Lenz's pain and suffering as a means of escaping madness as well as Lenz's desire to perform religious suffering in a way that would mimic his internal pain in a public way. Though it is easy to suggest that Lenz desires pain because it gives him pleasure, this is not the whole story. Lenz desires pain because this pain displaces the emptiness inside of him. Ultimately Lenz's *imitatio Christi* is a desire to become godlike in order to take away his pain, and the pain of others. He goes so far as to tell Oberlin this at the end of the story when he posits what he would do if he were all powerful: "aber ich, wär' ich allmächtig, sehen Sie, wenn ich so wäre, und ich könnte das Leiden nicht ertragen, ich würde retten, retten, ich will ja nichts als Ruhe, Ruhe, nur ein wenig Ruhe und schlafen können."[62] This is at the heart of Lenz's image of desired relationship with God. He wishes to be able to save and to be saved, but without the ultimately destructive pain that he is currently experiencing. When Oberlin tells him that this is not possible, and calls his statement profane, he realizes that he cannot find salvation through religion.

Lenz does achieve a sort of *Übersinnlichkeit* at the end of the novella, but not in the same way that martyrs and saints do. Instead, the suffering that he experiences leads to the same type of destruction of the self that we see with Spinello in Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen*. Though the readership of the piece would have been familiar with

[62]Lenz, 109. "but I, if I were all powerful, you see, if I were to be so, and I couldn't carry the pain, I would save, save, I want nothing but peace, peace, just a little peace and to be able to sleep."

Lenz's madness, Büchner shows how in his attempts to use religion to overcome his misery, he mirrors the devotion of the martyrs. Finally, Lenz is not interested in transcendence the way that martyrs do. In a similar way to Severin of Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*, instead he concentrates on the appeal of suffering. He longs to experience the *imitatio Christi* of the saints and martyrs and to do so in a way that mimics the religious experience. However, even though the religious provides a source of inspiration, it is not the purpose of their suffering that is being venerated, but instead the non-religious use of the stories for physical ends.

From the Pious to the Profane: Erotic and Confessional Literature

If literary hagiography has the potential to participate in a genealogy of masochism as a mode of inspiration, the confessional offers a means of self-expression for the masochistic tradition. The confessional text embedded within *Venus im Pelz* takes on the tropes one has come to expect from the genre of confession. From its autobiographical nature to its explication of sins and transgressions, the only thing missing is the judgment by the reader, who might provide absolution. The history of confessional literature is deeply tied to its religious context. The best known and most widely read "Confessions" are those of St. Augustine, who tells the story of his life, conversion, and reflections on his faith. Rousseau, too, published his own *Confessions* (1765-1781) which move the confessional form into the secular sphere. This transition into the secular also signifies a shift into the erotic and away from the repentant. In discussing the history of confessional literature, Miranda Sherwin writes: "Rousseau's use of the confessional genre disguises the lack of repentance in his own narrating persona; the genre enables a frank explication of sexual exploits precisely because it presupposes the renunciation of one's sins and the transformation of the sinner into saint."[63]

[63]Sherwin, 5-6.

Rousseau's confessions thus shift the genre into a text not concerned with repentance, but instead with an explication of sins without repentance or absolution. The content of these works or their veracity are not the primary concern, but rather the way that they work to *represent* something accurate and to present an image, which sheds light on the life of the individual or on that which the individual wishes to reveal, calling into question the authority of the confession.

The religious confessional form became increasingly popular in German literature at the end of the eighteenth century. As Dorothea von Mücke has pointed out in her essay on pietism and eighteenth-century confessions, these texts offer a self-reflexive means of demonstrating a conscious separation from the concerns of the secular and profane.[64] The expansion of explicitly pietistic epistolary and autobiographical texts in the eighteenth century set the stage for a literary form based on the Catholic confession, but transferred to the public sphere and advocating a radical break from dogmatic religion. They focused on lived experience and individualized religious conversion, which could then be shared with a community of believers to inspire their own faith. Von Mücke points out that these texts included "autobiographical documents by Roman Catholic nuns, monks, and laypeople," thus expanding the source to include individuals of all Christian faiths.[65] Since the confessional form had already been used in the spirit of religious critique, it should not be surprising that it should be further deployed to critique other social mores, and even the genre itself. As fictional confessions, these works both participate in the literary tradition of the confession, and seem to work against it. Whether the characters speak directly to the reader, asking for absolution or

[64]von Mücke, "Experience, Impartiality, and Authenticity," 5.

[65]Ibid., 14-15.

forgiveness, or whether they are unrepentant in the presentation of their transgressions, they are marked with language that indicates they are playing with a tradition of confession and exposing its power. Foucault suggests that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries initiated a culture of confession throughout Europe, whereby individuals were incited to reveal their transgressions and educated in the proper way to do so.[66] What we see with many of these works is both this confessional, revelatory drive as well as an acknowledgement that these confessions need not be judged by the religious and social powers that seek to control them. These works acknowledge that culture of confession and turn it into a literary farce, which exposes the supposed power that such confessions have.

Confessions also participate in a tradition of autobiography, which has increasingly become the subject of scholarly attention. Though the genre, which supposedly reveals personal experiences, has few rules, it does require "that the personal experience be important, that it offer an opportunity for a sincere relation with someone else."[67] The confessional autobiography is in some senses also a potentially subversive act. Björn Krondorfer argues that male confessions are particularly subversive because they question normative masculinity by countering the image of the virile, emotionless male.[68] He also argues that confessional literature is primarily a male genre, but as we shall see in the confessional texts in this section, female protagonists are fully capable of participating in the genre and being constructed as agency-imbued subjects. Just as biography and the hagiography are constructed to produce an image of an individual to fit the purpose of the biographer, so too does the subject of the

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[66]Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 61-65.

[67]James Olney, *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 77.

[68]Krondorfer, 3.

autobiography reveal an image of herself that she wishes to portray.[69] The subversion, I would suggest, comes into play with autobiography when the image is a fabrication. Fictional confessions are thus constructions of an imaginary confessing subject as well attempts to manipulate an audience into forgiving, or sympathizing with the subject of the confession. This is perhaps most significant in confessions by authors whom one knows and whose "truth" might be revealed through other means. The texts we are looking at in this section, however, are all anonymous and fictional works of erotic nature, and thus there is no "truth" to be found. The subversion, therefore, may come into play through juxtaposition with the confessional genre against the erotic.

Simultaneous with the expansion of religious confession that von Mücke points out, we also see what seems like an increase in the number of books devoted to sexual subjects. Isabel Hull cites sources that claim that along with the general flood of popular literary works at the end of the eighteenth century, there was also a significant upsurge in books on sexual subjects.[70] Hull explains that in the German context, "much of the writing on sexual matters ignored society and focused instead on the individual, on his or her physical health, happiness, and personal development."[71] Of these stories, many were in the form of *Sittengeschichten* (moral stories), which explained the sexual mores and functioned as pedagogical texts, and were simultaneously read as pornographic fiction.[72] On the other hand there are a good

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[69]Diamond, 33-4. Suzanne Diamond points out that confessions are both acts of unburdening the subject, and "scripting a reception on the other."

[70]Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Cornell University Press, 1996), 229. Pointing to the *Ehestandalmanach* at the end of the century, Hull states that it "listed 1201 titles on sexual themes, most in German; the editor claimed he knew of 3,000, while an acquaintance of his boasted of knowing twice as many."

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid., 230. Hull points out that works on sexual desire, written by medical doctors, served to reinforce men's sexual virility and women's passivity. Literature focused on both the proper education of the sexes, but also on

number of purely erotic texts which we might consider *Trivialliteratur* (trivial literature), or even *Hintertreppenliteratur* (back-door literature), of which we might count Christian August Fischer's *Dosenstücke* (1801) or the anonymous *Nettchen oder die Geheimnisse eines Boudoirs* (1871). Though the literary value of many of these works is questionable, their publication is evidence of an erotic discourse outside the medicalized and the socially acceptable works on sexuality, often of equally suspect literary value. Hull explains that many of these works made claims of exposing some sort of secret or "*Geheimnis*" that would educate, thereby offering some sort of grand revelation to the readers, in much the same way that contemporary readers are offered promises of sexual secrets in the latest issues of *Cosmopolitan* magazine.[73]

The confession is not formally structured, but there are tropes that one can identify with the genre, based on the historical confessions and these can be in three broad categories. First, the stories are autobiographical, and typically begin in childhood. Though the explanations of childhood activities need not be lengthy, childhood experiences establish a base of goodness and redemptability important for the genre. Second, the characters describe their sins, often in great detail. While the confession is meant to be a completely revelatory act, and both Rousseau's and Augustine's confessions are detailed in their explications of sins, the genre is necessarily selective in its presenation of the sins, as a means of constructing a sympathetic protagonist. Finally, these texts often address the reader directly, whether in the form of a letter, a diary, or consciously writing a book of their transgressions. They typically ask for forgiveness or absolution from the reader. These general features of confessional literature are

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marriage and morality as critical to development and ultimately those who were unable to comply with moral standards met terrible ends in these texts.

[73]Ibid., 246.

not exhaustive and there are certainly other formal structures, but particularly in the erotic texts we will read, these are the three general structures which these texts play with, or attempt to subvert.

The intersection of the erotic and confessional enables us to connect these works to Sacher-Masoch's texts, and to see all of these works as more than just erotic fiction. While scholarly work has considered French libertine texts like those of the Goncourts or Sade and the British pornography like John Cleland's 1748 *The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* and the late nineteenth-century periodical *The Pearl* in light of their as social and religious criticism rather than as pure erotica, little work has attempted to consider the German tradition in this same light.[74] We will look at three works of anonymous erotic literature in this chapter and their participation in the confessional form, as well as their attempts at social critique to show how the erotic confession is mobilized in the German context. We begin by looking at *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust* (1790), an example of a work of erotic literature, which loosely uses the structure of the confessional. Though the text has little plot structure, other than offering a litany of various sexual encounters, it works counter to the confession by denying repentance and thus utilizing the confessional form as pure sensationalism. We will then consider the deployment of the confessional genre in *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin, von ihr selbst geschrieben*, which offers self-conscious reflections on the confessional form coupled with a critique of the role of women and an exposure of the construction of identity. Finally we will look at *Schwester Monika*, a bit of an outlier in the field of confessional literature, in that it does not classify itself as confessional.

[74]In part this may be due to the lack of availability of many of these texts which were locked away in Remota archives or censured. This does not explain the wide availability of libertine texts and the broad scholarship of these works, which were likewise censured throughout Europe. These texts were also published in relatively small numbers and through presses with low production values, so that many of these texts have not physically survived to the present.

The story, however, returns to the oral tradition of confession shifting it to a community of cloistered sisters rather than relying on the reader to serve as confessor. The confessions explicitly reject the spirit of penitence, and are undertaken within a community based on shared guilt and femininity. Each of these works connects the erotic with a refusal of the power of confession. Sacher-Masoch's text can also be seen in this same tradition.

Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust

Anonymously published sometime between 1790 and 1795, *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse oder die Freuden der Wollust* is a work of erotic fiction, which plays with the genre of confession. Though the story does not begin with an acknowledgment of the reader's authority to either pass judgment or offer absolution, *Lina's Bekenntnisse* begins like most confessions, with an accounting of the narrator's upbringing. Lina's description is, however, more cursory than most. With a mother who died in her youth, she was raised by her family servants and she thanks them for the secrets of life that they passed on to her. In two paragraphs Lina quickly addresses her formative years, her mother's promiscuity and wantonness, and her decision, at the age of twelve, to live her life in her mother's spirit of pleasure. While confessional literature typically involves lengthy descriptions of childhood experiences and complete exposures of sins committed, Lina instead glosses over this period of her life as though her sins only begin when she commits herself to pleasure. Though it is not explicit in the text, the reader gets the sense that both Lina's mother and Lina might be described as *demimondaines* or courtesans. The way she describes her casual relationships and the fact that most of her lovers are of higher classes, would lead us to believe that this might be a lifestyle or profession. It is certainly not a description of life common to late eighteenth-century women in Germany. This translates to literature as well: French erotic fiction, particularly libertine texts

of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment period is well documented; within the German context, there is has been little scholarship written on such works.[75]

Unlike most confessions which acknowledge a confessant or judge from the beginning, Lina does not recognize the reader at the beginning of the story, only addressing an audience mid-way through the tale. She explains why she has chosen the stories she will tell:

> Ich übergehe alle Vorfälle, die mir auf die letzte Unterhaltung begegneten, weil ich nur die wichtigsten Scenen aus meinem Leben ausheben will. Auch des berühmtesten und merkwürdigsten Menschen Leben ist keine Kette von lauter wichtigen Begebenheiten. Gewöhnliche wechseln mit ungewöhnlichen und außerordentlichen ab; ohne dies würden wir gar keinen Unterschied unter denselben machen können.[76]

Rather than giving a full account of her life, Lina states that she is only concentrating on the most important episodes from her life. The scenes she describes, however are all scenes of sexual encounters, each including different elements. Whether it is her first encounter with a condom, or the "sister" who dies because her lover insists on always having anal sex rather than "natural" sex, each description has a pedagogical tone in addition to its explicit pornographic content. Much like the various scenes from Sade's *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, where his characters educate the young Eugenie in the ways of libertinism, the scenes of Lina's life seem to demonstrate both her education and an education for the reader on the variety of sexual encounters.[77] Moreover, while Lina justifies the selection of incidents in the story to the reader, she does not do so in the interest of redemption, and thereby the text can be seen as rejecting the authority of the confession while participating in the genre.

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[75]Jean-Marie Goulemot and Arthur Greenspan, "Toward a Definition of Libertine Fiction and Pornographic Novels," *Yale French Studies* no. 94 (1998): 133–145.

[76]*Lina*, 23-24. "I pass over all the incidents that I came across on the last conversation, because I want to excavate only the most important scenes in my life. Even the most famous and remarkable human life is not a simple series of important events. Ordinary alternate with unusual and exceptional, without this we would be able to make no difference among them."

[77]This is reminiscent of Sade's *Philosophy in the Bedroom* which is explicitly focused on educating a young girl in the ways of libertinism.

Unlike libertine literature, however, there is little in the way of political purpose in this text and none of the anti-religious sentiment that we see in the French tradition. Instead, this work, as its title suggests, is a frank description of the sex life of an eighteenth-century woman. Though one might expect her to be repentant at the end of her life, the narrator ends her story with a tone of defiance:

> Ich aber habe nie Mangel an wollüstigen Begierden und Wünschen gehabt. Jetzt, in meinem zwey und sechzigsten Lebensjahre, bin ich für die Freuden der Wollust noch nicht unempfindlich geworden. Ich genieße sie öfters an dem Busen und in den Armen eines Mannes und finde die Wahrheit bestätigt: *daß das Leben schön ist, wenn man es zu genießen weiß*.[78]

The explicit rejection of a moral that would lead her to regret any part of her life or submit to religious morality can be seen in her final words: if one knows how to enjoy life, then life is beautiful. There is no focus on the afterlife, or on religious guilt. Instead Lina's story, even through the title, rejects the religious foundation of *Bekenntnisse* and appropriates it as an erotic text. The juxtaposition of revelation and defiance indicate an awareness of the genre but also an understanding that it can be mobilized toward other ends namely as pleasure reading for an interested public. Lina's confession, however, may very well be meant to inspire its readers. Though Lina's is one of unending pleasure and lust, others are not as lucky. Three women die in the story from unexplained illnesses, related to their sexual encounters. While these deaths are acknowledged as an issue, they are explained mostly as problematic for those ignorant to the dangers they encounter. In this way it stands counter to the non-erotic *Sittengeschichten*, which Hull argues are so critical to sexual education during this period. As an almost explicitly pornographic work, it bears some resemblance to French libertine

[78]*Lina*, 71. (Emphasis in the original) "But I have never had a lack of lustful desires and wishes. Now, in my sixty-second year of life, I have not yet become resistant to the pleasures of lust. I enjoy them more often at the breasts and in the arms of a man and find the truth confirmed: that life is beautiful if you know how to enjoy it."

literature but without the explicit political proclamations. Finally, this short text plays with the genre of the confessional, while rejecting any religious or social power that the confessional form. In doing so, it exposes the power of the genre and its inability to offer absolution without the consent of the confessor.

Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin von ihr selbst geschrieben

Following the sensational trial and conviction of Countess Charlotte Ursinus for poisoning various people between 1779 and 1803, several works were published investigating her life and transgressions.[79] The anonymous novel *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin von ihr selbst geschrieben* (1803) is one such text. While the novel is not an actual confession by Countess Ursinus, it seized upon the interest in such sensational novels by a reading public which was shocked by "a female protagonist so at odds with the paragons of female virtue and submissive renunciation that populated beloved literary works of the day."[80] As we have seen with *Lina's Bekenntnisse*, erotic literature with wanton women as protagonists, was not lacking in the German literary field. Moreso than *Lina's Bekenntnisse*, the criticisms of marriage, sexuality, and the position of women in *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* are portrayed through calculated sexual encounters, murder and commentary on social interaction.

Though the work was published anonymously, and at the time thought written by a man, it has been more recently been suggested that the work may have been written by Friederike Helene Unger, along with the likewise anonymous *Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele von ihr selbst geschrieben*, another work of confessional fiction that is a response to the sixth book of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Unger was one of the most productive

[79]Diana Spokiene and Raleigh Whitinger, "Introduction," in *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin, von ihr selbst geschrieben* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009), x.

[80]Ibid., xi.

female authors of her time, working beside her husband Johann Friedrich Unger at his publishing house until his death, when she took over management of Unger Verlag.[81] She was also an accomplished translator, having translated Rousseau's *Confessions* into German, and was an expert on his texts.[82] Scholars of her works argue that they grapple with gender and the representation of femininity often through the use of intertextual forms. Whether Unger is indeed the author or not, the text, as Whitinger and Spokiene suggest, presents a critical view of women's position in society as well as intervenes in contemporary debates about the role of theater and literature, mobilizing the confessional form of many other authors of the time, including Rousseau, Richardson, and Goethe.[83]

Unlike Lina's *Bekenntnisse*, which does not address a reader until well into the story, *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* takes the form of a three part letter addressed to a more pious and respectable friend. The text is broken into three sections. The first, like most confessional works, presents her childhood until the death of her father. The second section chronicles her rise in social status through marriage and the various affairs which lead to her downfall. The final section portrays her demise and ruin following the murder of her husband and the suicide of her lover. In the framing section at the beginning of the letter, she admits her guilt, but does so in an almost legalistic way – indeed, she is guilty of actual crimes, not just moral ones: "Dass ich eine Verbrecherin bin, weiß ich; dass ich Verbrechen auf Verbrechen häufen muss,

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[81]For historical information on Unger, see: Birte Giesler, *Literatursprünge. Das erzählerische Werk von Friederike Helene Unger* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003); Birte Giesler, "Social Satire, Literary Parody, and Gender Critique in French and German Fairy Tales of the Enlightenment: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friederike Helene Unger," *Amsterdamer Beiträge Zur Neueren Germanistik* 70, no. 1 (2009): 233–250; Susanne Zantop, "The Beautiful Soul Writes Herself: Friederike Helene Unger and the 'Große Göthe'," in *In the Shadow of Olympus: German Women Writers Around 1800*, ed. Katherine Goodman and Edith Josefine Waldstein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

[82]Heide von Felden, *Die Frauen und Rousseau. Die Rousseau-Rezeption zeitgenössischer Schriftstellerinnen in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1997), 197.

[83]Spokiene and Whitinger, "Introduction," xxiii.

weiß ich nicht minder. Für mich findet keine Reue statt, noch weit weniger ein Umkehren von dem einmal betretenen Pfad."[84] The fatalistic statement of her crimes that she has gone so far that she cannot turn back suggests that the author intends to write a traditional confession, exposing her sins and crimes to the reader. She claims to do so, not in an effort to be sensationalistic, or to unburden herself (she has already admitted that she will bear the burden and cannot turn back), instead she writes these confessions open herself up to her friend the way she would open herself to God in confession. "Wie dem Weltrichter will ich Ihnen mein Inneres aufschließen."[85] While the introduction to the letters seems to be a legal confession, both the title and the reference to God as her judge indicate that the text is meant to be connected to the tradition of the religious confessional.

Following her explicit declaration that the reader should judge her, she begins with one of the typical tropes of the written confession, the description of her childhood. Her education was handled by her father who is described as having the ruthless personality of Caesare Borgia.[86] Her mother, stuck in an unhappy marriage, turns to drinking and plays very little role in her daughter's life. Though their relationship is strained, the narrator is nonetheless upset to discover that her father has poisoned her mother – an act which leads to their estrangement. She only returns to her father when he is on his deathbed. Much like Lina, her upbringing is marked by numerous affairs, including her first sexual encounter with her French tutor, who impregnates her and tricks her into taking an abortifacient. Though she does not realize at first what has happened, her inability ever to get pregnant again leads her to believe that he is

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[84]*Giftmischerin*, 7. That I am a criminal, this I know; that I must heap crime upon crime, I know equally well. For me there will be no remorse, and far less able am I to retreat from the path I have taken.

[85]Ibid. As to Him who judges all the world, so to you I want to reveal my innermost self.

[86]Ibid., 8.

responsible for this. The description of this affair and its effects are constructed in a way so as to make the reader feel sorry for her, and to place the blame for her transgressions not on the narrator, but rather on the men who place her into compromising positions.

Her various affairs are described in less explicit detail than we see in *Lina's Bekenntnisse*, but the reasoning behind her selection of lovers indicates a concern with her social standing and the role that rumors and innuendo play in the construction of one's public self, which continues throughout the story. She provides the reader insight into the construction of her public persona as a self-conscious performance. The text seems to offer greater insight into the narrator's mental state than we find in *Lina's Bekenntnisse*, however the disclosure that her personality and interactions with men and women seems calculated to ensure her status within society, calling into question the veracity of her claims as a contrite subject. There is a sense that the narrator is consciously constructing a persona for herself, and thus the completeness her confessions is suspect.

At the end of the first section she once again addresses the reader directly, reminding the female recipient of her confessions that she alone will serve as to judge the deeds of the narrator. She writes: "Sie haben mich bisher vielleicht schon bedauert; aber Sie werden mich nochweit mehr bedauern, wenn Sie mich weiter lesen. Die selbe Wahrheitsliebe, mit der ich mich Ihnen bisher aufgeschlossen habe, soll auch ferner meine Feder leiten."[87] She contends that a love of the truth will guide her pen, but she has already demonstrated that she has an ambivalent relationship with the truth. Though the text seems thorough in its presentation of her misdeeds, and her actions offer the reader an anti-hero who they are by no means meant to emulate, the story she tells is constructed in such a way so as to illicit sympathy from the reader

[87]Ibid., 80. Perhaps you have already felt pity for me up until now, but you will pity me much more if you read on. The same love of truth with which I have revealed myself to you thus far shall continue to guide my pen.

even though the reader knows she should judge such moral transgressions harshly. The narrator even goes so far as to indicate that she is consciously fabricating her confession to be more effective than those she has read in the past, admitting that she has never read a confession that satisfied her: "aber darum will ich auch die Fehler vermeiden, die andere begangen haben. Nichts will ich beschönigen oder entschuldigen; und noch weit weniger etwas rechtfertigen. Ich will von mir sprechen, wie mein guter Genius mich vertreten würde, wenn er den Auftrag dazu erhielte."[88] By declaring that she will avoid the mistakes that other confessions have made, she characterizes her confessions as constructed and potentially embellished or fabricated while simultaneously insisting that she has made no changes to her tale, or judgments as to its worth. She leaves the reader to stand in judgment over her story. One would assume that the mistakes she identifies in other works are that they have a tendency to gloss over details or make excuses or justifications for their actions. This is precisely what she does in the previous section where she attempts to shift blame to her parents in order that she might be considered a victim of circumstance, however. By exposing the genre in this way, she compromises its validity, demonstrating the subjective nature of even the most contrite confession. Moreover, when seen through the lens of Foucault's argument that there is an incitement to confess in this period, the narrator seems to serve as a representative for this by calling into question the efficacy of such confessions, and show the falseness of such confessional form. *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* thus mobilizes the confessional form as a mode of criticism, both of the genre itself, and of a society which forces one to construct

[88]Ibid.. "I have never read confessions that satisfied me, but for that reason I shall avoid the mistakes others have made. I will embellish or excuse nothing, and far less still will I justify anything. I will speak of myself as my good spirit would represent me if it were given the task of doing so."

themselves to fit a socially acceptable role, while simultaneously requiring total honestly in confessions of guilt.

Whereas the confessional genre is meant to allow the writer to lay bare the protagonist's soul and express contrition for his or her misdeeds, the narrator of *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* takes no responsibility for her actions. By blaming others for her downfall, the character takes a stance opposite to what we see in pietist confessions throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead of articulating remorse she states:

> Was früher mit mir vorgangen ist, kann auf mannigfaltige Weise entschuldigt werden—durch meine Jugend—durch die seltsame Bildung, die ich erhielt—durch die sonderbaren Verhältnisse, in welchen ich lebte; es kommt bloß darauf an, dass man den guten Willen habe die Gründe zu suchen, um sie ganz sicher zu finden. Was jetzt anhebt—Soll ich selbst den Stab über mich brechen? Ich sage Ihnen vorläufig bloß, dass mich vor dem Überblick schaudert und dass ich nicht weiß wo ich den Mut hernehmen soll, in meinen Bekenntnissen fortzufahren.[89]

By offering up her youth, education, and relationships as to blame for her downfall, she ultimately places the burden on the reader to explain how she could have committed the crimes she does. There is an implication that reader would be interested in offering her forgiveness rather than placing blame. In doing so, she countermands the genre of the confessional. The pietist confessional genre admitted guilt and sought forgiveness. The *Giftmischerin*, on the other hand, balks at the suggestion that she should pronounce her own guilt. Though she writes within the genre of confession, she does so in a way that rejects both the intention of the genre and any external authority that would make her admit guilt. She is willing to confess all of her transgressions, but unwilling to accept any culpability for her actions, and in essence almost challenges her reader to find fault with her.

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[89]Ibid., 92. "What had happened to me before can be excused in many ways – by my youth, by the strange upbringing and education accorded me, by the unusual situations in which I lived-the important thing is merely to have the good intentions of looking for reasons and they are sure to be found. What is now about to begin – must I pronounce myself guilty? For now I shall say to you only that I shudder merely to survey the events and that I do not know where I am to find the courage to continue with my confessions."

Unfortunately her crimes and digressions are many. In the second section, the reader finds that after carrying on a long-term affair with her husband's cousin, the narrator decides she can no longer stay in her marriage. Rather than divorce and risk social ruin, she devises a scheme to poison him. The guilt of knowing what she has done causes her lover to commit suicide, and she is left alone to encounter another string of lovers before realizing that the world had changed and she was no longer able to develop a social image of herself that allowed her to maintain both her innocence and her good name. She ends the confessions, once again, with a tone of defiance, inciting the reader to judge her or feel spare her and feel sympathy, claiming she feels no sense of regret:

> Wenn Sie glauben, dass micht die Reue gequält habe, so irren Sie, Auf ein Leben wie meinige, kann man nicht mit Vergnügen zurückblicken; aber Reue dar:uber zu empfinden ist ebenso unmöglich. Sagen Sie selbst, was hätt' ich wohl vorzücligh bereuen sollen? War nicht allse eine eng zusammenhängende Kette von Ursachen und Wirkungen, von selchen die letzteren immer wieder zur Ursacen wider Wirkungen wurden? Hier war duchaus kein Anfang und kein Ende; hier musste also die Verwirrung auf den ersten Rückblick in die Vergangenheit folgen.[90]

The contrition required for a true confession is absent. Though she says the words, and pulls the reader in as judge and confessor, her lack of regret nullifies the confession, making it impossible for her to obtain absolution.

Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin appropriates the confessional form in a much stronger and more traditional way than we see in *Lina's Bekenntnisse*. Both stories, however, reject the genre of the confession through their erotic content and their failure to signify any sort of contrition. Foucault's suggestion that this period is marked with a confessional drive is validated by both of these texts. The litany of sexual acts and various crimes are freely

[90]Ibid., 214. "If you believe I am tortured by regret, then you are wrong. Upon a life like mine one cannot look back with pleasure; but to feel regret about it is just as impossible. Tell me yourself what I should regret. Was it not all a closely knit chain of causes and effects in which the last is always the cause of the new? Here there was absolutely no beginning and no end; so here the first look into the past could not but cause confusion."

confessed. Whereas Foucault suggests that this incitement to confess was a means of validating a social construction of morality, both of these texts work against that. As pornographic stories, they traffic in scintillation and rather than conforming to a socially prescribed discourse on proper sexuality and religious repentance. As such, these two texts stand as literature which consciously constructs itself within and against the confessional form.

Schwester Monika

We now turn to the final work in this chapter, the anonymously published *Schwester Monika erzählt und erfährt. Eine erotisch-psychisch-physisch-philantropisch-philantropinische Urkunde des säkularisierten Klosters X. in S.* (1815). Recent scholarly attention to the work addressing its questionable attribution to E.T.A. Hoffmann, describes the text and its critical reception as follows: "Consisting largely of sadomasochistic descriptions of buttocks being flogged, it unsurprisingly found only a limited market and non-critical reception." [91] Though there has been some critical discussion of the text, it has largely been in relation to its authorship and not to its content, the masochistic overtones, and more generally to erotic literature in the early nineteenth century.[92] Though the text does not mark itself as confessional in the title as do the other works we have looked at in this chapter, the notion of it being an *Urkunde* (official document) imbues it with a sense of authenticity.

The explicit connection to Catholic religious orders enables us to connect the work with religious discourses surrounding the confession and penitence. I would argue, however

[91]Though attempts have been made to attribute the work to E.T.A. Hoffmann, recent stylistic analyses have suggested that while Hoffmann's other works are all quite similar in style to one another, *Schwester Monika* is distinctly different and likely not written by Hoffmann. See: Brian Duncan, J. Daniel Kim, and Joel Levine, "Hoffmann und Schwester Monika: A Stylometric Analysis," *E.T.A. Hoffmann-Jahrbuch* 19 (2011): 113–124.

[92]Duncan et al, 113n4. This article point to several scholars who have addressed the issue of authorship, specifically Gustav Gugitz' 1910 reprint of the novel which first claimed Hoffman's authorship, as well as the negative assessments of this opinion by Hans von Müller, Carl Georg Maassen, Johann Cerný, and Oskar Walzel among others.

that the autobiographical and biographical nature of the various vignettes may also mark it as a traditional confession. The text could also be situated within a much earlier tradition of "whore dialogs" from the early modern period. These texts, typically between two or more women (often between religious women) were educational texts meant to initiate younger women employing satire, anti-clerical sentiments, and sexual content.[93] Whether part of this literary tradition, or a take on the confessional, the sexual content of the text is strikingly similar to and at times more graphic than both *Lina's Bekenntnisse* and *Bekenntnise einer Giftmischerin*. The pornographic nature of the novel may be seen in the same tradition as the works of Sade and other anti-Catholic works of this period. These works ascribed sexual deviance to priests and other Catholic religious persons, while simultaneously linking the penitential rite to religious conversion and faith in a way that subverts its power by associating pleasure with the suffering of atonement.

Moreover as *Lina's Bekenntnisee* and the *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* were both epistolary confessions, Schwester Monika's confessions return to the oral tradition where the women speak to each other rather than the reader. The first book of the novel is focused on Monika, her mother, and their childhoods. Monika begins the story by telling the group of collected women about her mother's upbringing rather than her own. Like most confessional works it begins with the confessor's childhood, but in this case in order to explain her own past, Monika must describe and justify her mother's education. In some ways, however, by confessing her mother's transgressions, she takes on the guilt in exchange. The story explains how Monika's mother, Louise, is whipped by her mother, observers her mother's sexual

[93]Whore Dialogues have been broadly discussed in English, French, and Italian literature, but not typically in German. For discussions of "whore dialogs" see: Eberhard Kronhausen, *Erotic Fantasies: A Study of the Sexual Imagination* (New York: Grove Press, 1969).

encounters with her tutor, Father Gerhard, and how Louise is raped by their gardener. All of this leads to Louise being sent away to be educated by a community of Ursuline nuns where she will be safe and learn morality not found in her home. In some ways, the convents and communities of women stand as a foil to the secular society and as well as to all men both secular and religious. Father Gerhard representative of a sort of Catholic evil found in many Gothic novels of the period, but the Ursuline nuns to whom Louise goes, are described, in passing as rather boring.[94] Monika's mother does not tell her much about her time in the cloister:

> Von ihrem Leben im Kloster habe ich nie viel erfahren können; es verfloß, sagte sie mir, zwischen Einförmigkeit und Phantasie: "Die erste, als Lichtgestalt und Nachtschatten des ganzen weiblichen Zirkels, und die zweite lebte in mir selbst und wurde genährt durch das Lesen asketischer und religiöser Erbauungsbücher.[95]

The circle of women is described as rather monotonous, but the ascetic and religious books she reads feed her imagination. If we connect the reading of hagiographies in *Venus im Pelz* with the religious books that Louise reads, we can see that both texts inspire characters in their actions, but whereas Severin is inspired to submit to a woman, Louise uses the texts as a source of inspiration to gain agency and power over men. Since Louise does not become any less sexually promiscuous following her time in the cloister, we can assume that these texts also provide her with inspiration for the combination of pain and pleasure which are part of most of her sexual experiences. The first book of the novel continues with Louise's sexual encounters with men and women, erotic whippings, and fantasies about men and women. The chapter ends

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[94]There are many English language gothic texts which show an anti-Catholic bias, describing monks and priests as oversexed perverts, who take advantage of innocent people. For some descriptions of these religious tropes in the Catholic tradition and beyond, see: Tyler R. Tichelaar, *The Gothic Wanderer: From Transgression to Redemption: Gothic Literature from 1794 - Present* (Ann Arbor: Modern History Press, 2012).

[95]Monika, 13. "I could not have known much about her life in the cloister; she told me it flowed between monotony and fantasy: 'The first, as a shining light and night shadows of the whole female circle, and the second lived in myself and was nourished by the reading of religious ascetic and devotional books.'"

with Monika repeating the sexual history of her mother and succumbing to the sexual advances of her new tutor, Gervasius. Monika departs with her mother, and Gervasius following the castration of Louise's husband and his friend. Among her fellow sisters, Monika is essentially incited to confess twice: once for her mother and once for herself. Since Monika is now a Sister, we can only assume that she has reformed herself, but the act of confessing for another, and taking their guilt on as your own, does represent a certain degree of *imitatio Christi*.

Monika's confessions begin in the second chapter, when her mother at the advice of her sister, brings Monika to an institute for girls run by a Madam Chaudelüze. Louise says Monika seems to live only for pleasure, and the punishments she has meted out have had no effect. When Monika hears of the institute, she is inconsolable, to which her aunt replies: "hast du nicht gelesen, was der Apostel Paulus alles gelitten hat, und das war doch ein Heiliger, und du bist eine unzeitige Geburt schnöder Lüste?"[96] Her invocation of the disciple Paul, a convert to Christianity and an early martyr of the church, as an example for Monika demonstrates the use of martyrs as sources of inspiration. The explicit combination of pleasure and pain is connected to religion in this text and could likewise be seen as related to Sacher-Masoch's inspiration via the *Legends of the Martyrs*. Unlike Severin, however, Monika is not interested in suffering, but rather in pleasure and continues to cry as they arrive at the institute. Her mother introduces her and explains why she has come: "Hier, meine Tochter wünscht etwas zu lernen, vorher aber den Schmerz zu kennen, der, wie sie nicht glauben kann, unseren Leib eigentlich mehr regiert als ein Pelzhandschuh den Frost."[97] Again we have a sense that recognizing and accepting pain is important to her daughter's development. Monika tells the story as a means of admitting

[96]Ibid., 51. "Have you not read what all the Apostle Paul has suffered, and that was a saint, and you're one untimely birth of vile lusts?"

[97]Ibid., 52. "Here, my daughter wishes to learn something, first, however to recognize pain, since she cannot believe that our bodies actually react more than a fur glove the frost."

her lack of faith in education through pain, but also as a sensationalistic story of pleasure, since Madame Chaudelüze's institute is not just concerned with punishment but with the combination of pleasure and pain. The transition of the setting from Germany to some sort of French-borderland also indicates an allusion to French erotica. As they travel into the countryside, and the three women travel into the remote countryside to continue Monika's education, we are reminded of Sade's *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, a reference that is reinforced when we are introduced to another girl at the institute named Eugenie, the same name as the girl instructed in libertine ways in Sade's work.[98]

Such displays of promiscuity and punishment are rare in Monika's education and she explains that they were only undertaken on two religious holy days: Good Friday and the Feast of the Wedding at Cana. She then proceeds to describe the scene as it occurred on the celebration of the Feast at Cana. The two days are seemingly diametrically opposed: the wedding at Cana being Christ's first public miracle and Good Friday the day of his crucifixion. After telling the story of the debauchery undertaken with the Capuchin monks at the feast of the wedding at Cana, Amalie, one of the other sisters present says: "Das war nun, Schwestern! die Hochzeit zu Kana. Am Karfreitag ging es anders her,"[99] and we hear nothing more about the rituals undertaken at the institute for girls. In some ways *Schwester Monika* rejects the confessional form altogether by its omission of details. Whereas in *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* the reader had access to the thoughts of the confessant and was privy to her carefully constructed portrayal of herself as somehow innocent sinner, *Schwester Monika* seems to engage in a disruption of the confession. Instead of the women confessing all of their

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[98]Marquis de Sade, *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, trans. Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (Grove Press, 1990).

[99]*Monika*, 79. That, Sisters, was the Wedding at Cana! Things were different on Good Friday."

sins and transgressions they begin stories and then are interrupted or trail off before finishing. These interruptions show that the confession is not complete. While the women confess among themselves, they participate in the confessional genre on their own terms rejecting the judgment of the reader.

We read nothing more about how Schwester Monika came to leave her life of pleasure and pain to become a sister. Though she states that she was at the school for two years, we know nothing of her conversion, except what the Abbess of the cloister tells the women about the origins of female religious orders and based on the Abbess's explanations there does not appear to be anything tawdry associated with women in the Church. She describes contemplative orders, nuns who serve the public around them, and those who help educate young women, but not in the tradition of the whore dialogues, or in the way that Schwester Monika was educated in the institute for girls. Quoting Hippel, the Abbess says:[100]

> Jedermann weiß […] wie viel an der frühzeitigen Bildung des Verstandes und des Herzens der zarten weiblichen Jugend gelegen ist. Auferbauliche Christinnen, fromme Ehegattinnen, vernünftige Hausmütter haben wahrhaftig in die Glückseligkeit der Ehen, in den Frieden und die Ruhe der Familien, in die Aufrechterhaltung des Nahrungsstandes, in eine wohlgeordnete Kinderzucht und hiermit in die Wohlfahrt eines ganzen Staates nicht geringen Einfluß…[101]

The emphasis on the proper education of women seems incongruous to the descriptions of sexuality and violence. Other than several same-sex erotic encounters between women, there is little to suggest that women, if educated properly, might not live chaste and peaceful lives

[100]Though Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel the Younger was alive at the publication of this work, I would argue that this reference to Hipple is likely student of theology and satirist Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel the Elder who published several treatises on women and their natural abilities at education, including *Über die Ehe* (1774) and *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* (1792).

[101]*Monika*, 125. "Everyone knows [...] how much is placed on the [missing word] of the early education of the mind and heart of the delicate female youth. Upstanding Christians, pious wives, reasonable mothers have no small influence in the happiness of the marriage, in the peace and tranquility of the family, in the maintenance of proper nutrition, in a well-ordered child discipline and hereby in the welfare of an entire state really.

together. The first indication of this is Louise's description of her life in the cloister as mentioned above. Then later in the first book Schwester Monika interrupts the story of her mother's upbringing to address her audience in the cloister:

> Ihr wißt, Schwestern, wo Personen unseres Geschlechts vertraut, offen und ohne Etikette und Konsequenz miteinander umgehen können, da fallen alle Schleier des überklugen Anstandes und der bedächtigen Observanz; und weibliche Seelen kennen dann keinen Rückhalt mehr unter sich, wenn sie einmal Zutrauen zu gegenseitiger Diskretion und innigen Freundschaftsbezeugungen gefaßt haben.[102]

The lack of *überkluger Anstand* goes beyond the constructed nature of society that we see with *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin*. Instead, she seems to be saying that the stories they tell amongst themselves need not be full of falseness, and one need not protect one's reputation among other women. They can confess to each openly without reproach. This seems almost utopian and resembling the idyllic *Frauenutopie* (women's utopia) at the conclusion of Sophie von La Roche's *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (1771). By pointing out the openness with which they speak amongst themselves, we are made aware that we as readers are interlopers; we do not hear all of the stories, not because they are not told, but because we are not privy to them. The disruptions remarked on earlier serve to make clear to the reader that he or she is not part of this community

The confessional features of *Schwester Monika* also reveal a decidedly libertine, anti-Catholic sentiment which indicates a need for proper education of women, particular in communities of other women. This emerges as a common theme between *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* and *Schwester Monika* as well as Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*, as we saw with in the chapter on the social construction of identity. Common to all three "confessional"

[102]Ibid., 14. "You know, sisters, where familiar people of our race, openly and without etiquette and consistency with each other can work around, since all fall veil of about clever decency and thoughtful observance, and female souls know then no more support than among themselves, once they have confidence in mutual have taken discretion of friendship and intimate."

works is a seeming lack of repentance on the part of the protagonists. In *Lina's Bekenntnisse*, this can be seen in her continuing enjoyment of pleasures of the flesh well into her sixties. The protagonist in *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* remains defiant to the last. Though she asks to be heard, she does not as for forgiveness, and seems to indicate that had she been better educated, had her familial circumstances been better, she might not have gone down her ruinous path. Additionally, the "von ihr selbst geschrieben" (written by herself) part of the title rejects those accounts that would try to make her seem contrite. In this way she rejects the power of confession by using the genre to construct a narrative which suits her needs. Finally, *Schwester Monika* rejects the confession through a community of women that can neither hear confession nor offer absolution.[103] The telling of confessional stories within a community of other religious women may appear to be an act of gossip or connected to an earlier tradition of whore dialogues, but given the relatively positive depiction of both women and communities of women, I would argue that the text is refusing the masculine discourse of the confession by converting confession into storytelling among women who do not and cannot judge.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of this chapter we have focused on two religious genres that we might identify as playing a role in our understanding of the history of masochistic literature. Hagiographies, in their biographical retelling of the lives of martyrs and holy people, are redirected in the masochistic tradition away from their religious roots and used to show other types of transcendence which mimic the religious, including madness and perhaps even the sexual. Confessions – religious autobiographical texts assumed to be contrite and truthful in

[103]Within the Catholic tradition, only priests and other male religious are able to hear a confession and offer absolution for confessed sins.

their revelation of one's life – develop over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into erotic texts which reject both the values of penitence and truthfulness in an effort to deny the power of confession, instead focusing on the construction of the subject.

The genres of hagiography and confession are employed in secular fiction to create new meanings for both genres. Though suffering is an important part of this, it is the discursive deployment of suffering which is of greatest interest. These secular texts mirror the textual structures of more religiously reverent confessions and hagiographies employing the language of the confession or the suffering of the saints. They do so, however, as a means of breaking the power of such texts, foregrounding the individual, and rejecting the morality of religious confessional. My reading of Büchner's text has centered on self-inflicted pain, linking the work to the descriptions of the lives of the saints and martyrs and ultimately to Sacher-Masoch's focus on the transcendence of the suprasensual. This hagiographic form contributes to our understanding of the masochistic by not allowing the pain to be destructive but as a means of staving of madness within a religious context. It also shows how Lenz attempts an imitation of Christ through his suffering, miracles, and loss of faith. Whereas Oberlin represents the dominant religious discourse in the novella, Lenz works against this discourse, calling it into question through his demonstrative performance of *imitatio Christi*.

Büchner shows that the short episode in Lenz's life depicted in the novella is indicative of his struggle as an individual and a religious person. In a variety of ways, Lenz tries to use his knowledge of religion to draw connections between his mental state and his faith. In the end, however, he calls into question the entire enterprise. At the beginning of the novella he is disturbed by the darkness because of its lack and its connection with his disturbed mental state. He strives to make himself feel something, so he prays, submerges himself in the water of the

fountain, whips himself, and inflicts pain and suffering. Though Lenz undergoes many of the same trials and tribulations as Christians venerated in the religious hagiography, Lenz seeks out discomfort in hopes of filling the void and feeling the presence of God, but because it is not true divine inspiration, his pain is never transcendent. Just as Severin's pain strives to be divine and *übersinnlich*, so too does Lenz desire such escape, which he never achieves.

We have also considered how the confessional genre contributes to a masochistic dynamic beyond its sexual content. By referencing the confessional form, one maintains a series of expectations for the work, which may or may not be fulfilled. These stories are not unlike Sacher-Masoch's own text in their repeated descriptions of dominant woman who initiate sexual contact. Moreover, explicit references to French educators can be seen as direct references to French libertine texts in an effort to acknowledge a potential source as well as a rejection of their educational techniques. Marking their texts as confessions up front, *Lina's aufrichtige Bekenntnisse* and *Bekenntnisse einer Giftmischerin* both end on defiant notes, denying contrition in their closing pages. Similarly, we see that with a text like *Schwester Monika*, while it does not bear the name "Confession," it begins within a religious community. The portrayals of violent sexual acts in the text stand in juxtaposition to the almost utopian feminine community. In a similar way, Sacher-Masoch's framing narrative displays a masculine utopia counter to his confessional tales. His confessions, inspired by his identification with the suffering and transcendence of martyrs, do not seem to indicate a desire for absolution, but instead reject the tropes of the confession, as well as the power of confession to construct himself and his utopian space and the end of the novella. Though there are many other religious more erotic and conventionally masochistic portrayals in these texts, these religious genres also play an integral role throughout the nineteenth century and

contribute to an exposure of the power of autobiographical and biographical forms in their ability to construct a subject within and against religious power.

Conclusion

"Everything in the world is about sex. Except sex. Sex is about power."

That quotation is widely attributed to Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), but its exact provenance is uncertain. Whether he said it or not, the sentiment is fully in keeping with both Wilde's demeanor and the spirit of the age in which he wrote. The quotation also gets to the heart of how we have been looking at the genealogy of masochism prior to the late nineteenth century. I want to conclude the project by returning to the ideas we considered in the introduction: namely, what we are to make of a masochism that is not sexual and that does not fit with the definitions so firmly held? My contention has been that masochism, rather than being primarily concerned with the intersection of pleasure, pain and the erotic, is instead a phenomenon interested in laying bare the structures of institutional power by either reversing, embracing, or simply complicating the meaning of power, submission, and dominance.

In the first chapter we looked at the two common tropes for the masochistic woman in Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* and Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz*. The masochistic roles available to women offered a productive means of exploring the structures of power and how we might reconceptualize the domination and submission of women therein. We saw how the social construction of gender, femininity, and "normative" masochism has limited the critical potential for the role of women and showed that by reading these characters against the grain, they become active participants rather than passive images of men's fantasies of fears. The second chapter looked and the process of socialization as it is undertaken in the German

Bildungsroman. By focusing on the modes of reading and the metatextual references to literature we were able to demonstrate how the characters in the novels submit to a process of *Bildung*, similar to the argument that has been made by Friedrich Kittler. My analysis diverges by explicitly focusing on how novels subsequent to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* work within the system of power created by that novel, and providing a critical view of this socialization. Considering the genre of the *Bildungsroman* as masochistic enables us to conceive of broader implications for the connection between *Bildung* and the masochistic, particularly how the institutional power of *Bildung* and the cultural project of subject formation it supports might be subverted or critiqued. We then turned to the role of aesthetics and the sublime in systems of power which relate to artistic inspiration and the desire to be inspired by the sublime. The longing for suffering with the artistic endeavors of artist throughout the period provided for a rich understanding of how the sublime may have been deployed and understood in juxtaposition with contemporary theories. The suffering of the artist then segued into the notion of religious suffering and how the genres of hagiography and confession are mobilized in secular texts in order to play with the structures, meanings, and power of the religious form. In each of these cases I have shown how the power structures are acted out and simultaneously critiqued.

Over the course of this project I have considered masochism from within a variety of discourses of power beyond the erotic. By removing the erotic from the equation, we have been able to focus on other aspects of power that are at play both in Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* as well as in other canonical and popular literature preceding it. I acknowledge that this attempt to remove the erotic is as artificial as choosing to focus only on the erotic in these texts. The systems of power in which these works exist are complicated, and one cannot simply remove a

piece of the matrix without doing some damage to the whole. I believe, however, this project has enabled us to look at works from different perspectives ranging from the *Bildungsroman* to the pornographic novel, by considering how these genres play with the power that surrounds them and in some ways defines them, ultimately creating new meanings for the genres that reject simple binaries.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of research on masochism has been its identification as a symptom of the crisis of masculinity. By showing that a genealogy outside of the masochistic exists for these works, I hope I have been able to call into question the broader persistence that masochism somehow is explicitly a reference to a crisis of masculinity. I do not deny that there was some fear over women's increased role in society, nor do I believe it is unfair to consider how that might have contributed to those works which portray dominant women. Certainly in a work like Fontane's *Frau Jenny Treibel* (1892) or even Wedekind's Die *Büchse der Pandora* (1904), there are dominant women who seem to control either men, or society as a whole, and whose presence disrupts the status quo. However, we need not mistake Sacher-Masoch's personal sexual interests for a social phenomenon. As Alfred Kind demonstrated in his three volume work, *Weiberherrschaft*, female dominance had been a topic of interest in art since the classical period; it is hard to imagine a crisis so enduring that it would last for over 1800 years. Moreover, though there have been claims that increases in the production of masochistic literature emerged particularly at the turn of the century, we should question the role that naming masochism in 1890 may have had to this phenomenon, or even to what degree Sacher-Masoch's wildly popular texts had in opening up the literary field to the possibility of expressing such desires – whether real or imagined. Finally, though I have identified it as part of the enlightenment project, and something that in German-language

literature emerges as a post-enlightenment emphasis, it is possible that this has an even longer history. Where we would seek to identify a crisis of masculinity, we should instead look at larger structures beyond the simple male-female dichotomy.

Before concluding, I would like to suggest that although I have taken great pains to exclude the erotic, we might think about reinserting it into the conversation to provide a more complete view of the matrix of power and to see how the erotic is a dynamic system of power. If we look at a work like *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, for example, there are clearly erotic themes in the novel. Scholars like Alice Kuzniar have deftly elucidated the importance of reading the erotic into the text, but if we shift our focus from the erotic to one of power, what can we gain by understanding that the two are closely related?[1] How does this minor shift help us to understand what the erotic in these texts is demonstrating? Likewise, with a text like *Der grüne Heinrich*, there are many moments of pain and a desire for pleasure intersecting beyond his artistic endeavors, and these moments are typically associated with his interactions with women. What do we gain in our reading of the text by equating the two, by showing that his longing for women is akin to his longing for inspiration – neither of which he ever truly attains? And further, how does the discourse on the sublime contribute to our reading of the sexual? To this end, it may be fruitful to return to Foucault's description of erotic sadomasochism represents an "acting-out of power structures by a strategic game that is able to give sexual pleasure or bodily pleasure."[2] If we keep this in mind when we look at texts that we might consider masochistic beyond those which involve explicit sexual content, we can identify the spaces of critique and the modes of control, but also consider the role that pleasure

[1] Kuzniar, "Hearing Woman's Voices."

[2]Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 1, 3 vols., *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 169. From an interview conducted in 1982 and printed in *The Advocate* 400 (August 7, 1984), 26-30 and 58.

might have in subverting power. Though Foucault is specifically looking at sexual sadomasochism, I would sugest that the pleasure need not be erotic, and the play need not be sexual, for us to extend the the potential of this thinking beyond the erotics of masochism.

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