Carolin Hauck – Monika Mommertz –
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Tracing the Heroic Through Gender

Ergon

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Edited by
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Cover:
Mezzo Soprano Giuditta Pasta (1798–1865)
in the title role of Gioachino Rossini's opera *Tancredi* (1822),
Lithograph by Cäcilie Brand, n.d.

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Preface

The contributions assembled in this volume grew out of papers that were presented by scholars from numerous disciplines in the humanities and social sciences at the international conference "Tracing the Heroic Through Gender", hosted by the Collaborative Research Center 948 "Heroes – Heroizations – Heroisms" in February 2015 at the University of Freiburg. With varying historical and thematic foci, they explore the potential and the possible applications of the category of gender within heroism research.

In nearly all societies, the heroic is manifoldly gendered. The connection between heroes/heroines and gender lends itself to diverse transdisciplinary research approaches, not least because of the broad historical dimensions involved and the current relevance of the topic. Nevertheless, gender is excluded as a category of analysis in many studies informed by general heroism research and theory that explore the heroic in concrete historical and socio-cultural contexts. At most, the masculinity of the hero seems to be of interest. The present volume attempts to confront persisting shortcomings in heroism research, using various approaches and topics from humanities disciplines to investigate both masculine and feminine types of the hero and the victim as well as the interrelationship between them. The premise of the volume is that gender can serve as a central category for analyzing the heroic once the predominance of one gender over another becomes evident in a process of heroization. The point is to take seriously the relational character of the category of gender, thereby attenuating the current 'division of labor' between gender studies and heroism research with regard to the topic of heroism.

The editors would like to thank the participants of the conference "Tracing the Heroic Through Gender", both for their papers and for many vigorous and gripping discussions. We would like to extend special thanks to those participants who expanded their conference papers, in some cases substantially revising them for publication here. Furthermore, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Collaborative Research Center 948's head office which did the lion's share of the editing, especially Sebastian Meurer, Andreas Friedrich, and their excellent student assistants Daniel Hefflebower, Philipp Multhaupt, Chris Reding, Julia Rosenfeld, and Brendan Ryan. Thanks are also due to Hans-Jürgen Dietrich and Thomas Breier at Ergon Verlag for their support and patience. Finally, we would like to thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Ralf von den Hoff on behalf of the Collaborative Research Center for supporting and funding the publication.

For the editors, Carolin Hauck and Thomas Seedorf

Freiburg, December 2017

"I canti esaltino il suo valore"[1]

Gendering the Operatic Sound of the Heroic

Anke Charton

In April 1826, singer Giuditta Pasta signed a contract with the King's Theatre in London, then under the management of John Ebers. Pasta, who at this point was one of the most celebrated singers of her generation, had previously appeared in London to great success, a fact evidenced by the conditions of the contract granting her not just her pick of roles[2] and the right to refuse any she found unsuitable to her voice, but also the right to choose the colleagues who would appear on stage alongside her.[3] Most remarkable, though, is Pasta's standing among the theatre employees, as declared in the opening article of the contract:

> Art. 1. That Madame Pasta will be hired in the function of *Prima Donna Assoluta* and of *Musico assoluto*, to sing and act in the *opera seria* at the King's Theatre in London for three and a half months, from April 15 to July 31, 1826.[4]

More than any specific *Fach* – Giuditta Pasta, as a *soprano sfogato*,[5] sang a wide selection of stylistically differing parts – this first sentence stakes a gender-crossing

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1 Gioachino Rossini, Tancredi: Dramma per musica, Turin 1815, p. 39 (Act II, scene 8).

2 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "5. Madame Pasta ne sera obligée de chanter pendant la durée de son engagement que dans les opéras suivants: *Tancredi*, *Romeo*, *Otello*, *Semiramide*, *Rosa bianca e rossa*, *Nina*, et *Medea*; Mr. J. Ebers s'engage à monter tous les dits opéras si Madame Pasta le juge nécessaire. [...] 7. En outre des opéras sus-mentionnés, Madame Pasta consent à jouer dans un opéra nouveau qui sera composé exprès pour le dit Théâtre du Roi, de condition pourtant qu'elle doit être entièrement contente de son rôle, autrement elle ne sera pas obligée d'y chanter." (5. Madame Pasta will, for the duration of her engagement, be obliged to sing only in the following operas: Tancredi, Romeo, Otello, Semiramide, Rosa bianca e rossa, Nina, and Medea; Mr. J. Ebers commits himself to producing all of these operas if Madame Pasta should deem it necessary. […] 7. In addition to the operas mentioned above, Madame Pasta consents to appear in a new opera that will be expressively commissioned for said King's Theatre, under the condition that she must be fully satisfied with her part, otherwise she will not be obliged to sing it.) John Ebers, Seven Years of the King's Theatre, London 1828, p. 388.

3 "6. Dans tous les opéras ôu jouera Madame Pasta, ce sera elle seule qui aura le choix des acteurs, la distribution des rôles, la direction absolue pour tout ce qui regarde les répétitions et tout autre pour la mise en scène des dits opéras." (In all the operas in which Madame Pasta will appear, she shall have the sole choice of performers, the casting of the roles, the power of decision for everything concerning the rehearsals and anything else pertaining to the staging of said operas.) Ibid., p. 388.

4 "ART. 1°. Que Madame Pasta s'engage en qualité de *Prima Donna assoluta* et de *Musico assoluto*, pour chanter et jouer l'opéra seria au Théâtre du Roi à Londres pendant trois mois et demi, depuis le 15 Avril au 31 Juillet, 1826." Ibid., p. 387.

5 The *soprano sfogato* is a voice type that does not fit within the *Fach* terms of the twentieth century. It means a voice with a wide range, which was typically crafted through the combination of a mezzo-range tessitura with a lighter, differently colored head register, sepa-

claim on the position of lead singer.[6] The text also specifies that Pasta is taking on the central representative genre, the *opera seria*, a term already slightly outdated at the signing of this contract. In contrast to the comical subgenres of opera, the *opera seria* is central to the construction of uncontested heroic figures: it is an affirmative genre.[7] And even though the selection of parts proposed by Pasta for London range from the naïve country girl driven to madness out of heartbreak in Giovanni Paisiello's *Nina* (1789) to a raging Medea in Giovanni Simone Mayr's *Medea in Corinto* (1813),[8] all of these remain heroic parts in regards to their position within the dramaturgy of each opera, and none of them is a comedy.

The only part on the list actually depicting a hero is Tancredi in Gioacchino Rossini's opera of the same title (1813), a swashbuckling warrior in stark contrast to Desdemona in Rossini's take on *Otello* (1816) or Nicola Antonio Zingarelli's lovelorn Romeo in *Giulietta e Romeo* (1796), an opera that Pasta sang under the title of just *Romeo*.

Vocal depictions of the heroic in opera in the late 1820s are, it seems, not bound by content as much as by the situating of a part within the dramaturgical hierarchy of an opera, and by the singing which constructs aural images of the heroic through a distinct vocal range and style. Heroic demeanor, then, is less a matter of who is singing, but how – also transgressing the borders of a binary gender model.

Pasta's singing both male and female leads as *prima donna* and *primo musico*, a term that was primarily used for castrato singers from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, is not unusual or an exception within opera: in the first half of the nineteenth century, after the demise of the castrati, female singers labeled with the term *contralto musico* inhabited the vacant vocal space of the heroic that those singers had left behind. It is a sign of the gender order of the nineteenth

rated by a noticeable gap. The different coloring of separate registers, which contradicts a late-twentieth-century singing aesthetic, was an artistically valued feature of expression for the *soprano sfogato*, as evidenced, for instance, in Stendhal's effusive praise of Giuditta Pasta's "two-voiced" singing, see Stendhal, La vie de Rossini, Vol. 2, Paris 1824 (Repr. 1923), p. 142.

6 Further underlined in article 3, see Ebers, Seven Years (Fn. 2), p. 387: "3. Dans tous les opéras où jouera Madame Pasta elle aura toujours le choix des rôles de son double emploi." (3. In all the operas in which Madame Pasta will appear, she will always have her choice of role as given by her double engagement.)

7 Affirmative in the sense of being a central genre of mainstream representation, as *opera seria* was for absolutist rule and the space of the court, as opposed, for example, to genres stemming from the traditions of the *théâtre de la foire* with their commenting distance to affirmation.

8 The corresponding operas are *Tancredi* (1813), *Otello* (1816) and *Semiramide* (1823) by Gioachino Rossini, *Giulietta e Romeo* (1796) by Nicola Antonio Zingarelli (usually with the last act swapped out for the variant by Girolamo Crescentini, the Romeo of the opera's world premiere; Romeo was one of Crescentini's signature parts just as it was to become one of Pasta's central roles a generation later), *Nina* (1789) by Giovanni Paisiello and *Medea in Corinto* (1813) as well as *La rosa bianca e rossa* (1820) by Giovanni Simone Mayr.

century, however, that *prima donna* and *primo musico* are seen as two distinct entities divided by gender and distinct enough to have them both listed in Pasta's contract.[9]

A hundred or even merely fifty years prior, a female singer taking on a male part in *opera seria* or in a comedy genre such as the Neapolitan *commedia per musica*[10] was likewise a common occurrence. But other than in Pasta's elaborate 1826 contract, it usually did not warrant more than the brief note "da uomo" (as a man),[11] if at all.

How opera fashions a sound – not only in composition but also in execution, two areas that are still very much interwoven in *bel canto* singing – of the heroic is historically variable, but looking at it through the lens of gender allows a more layered understanding of the heroic and the way it was constructed. This includes not only the sound of the heroine as opposed to the sound of the hero but also the underlying issue of what kind of sound is understood as heroic in the first place, which may or may not be tied to exclusive notions of gender.

Giuditta Pasta, despite her prominent position that allowed her to create spaces outside of social and artistic expectations, serves as a prime example for how notions of gender both inform ideas of the heroic *and* render these ideas more accessible through the lens of the additional construction of gender-based patterns. Pasta's repertoire, then, makes it discernible that the heroic in opera is not, in fact, a rule tied to male and female bodies in different manners but to a voice that embodies the heroic, largely independent of the body that produces its sound. This becomes especially notable when compared to other signifiers beyond gender that contribute to the construction of the heroic, such as age, ability, and ethnicity. All these markers, just like gender, show themselves to be surmountable by the operatic sound of the heroic: it is the voice that makes the hero or the heroine. It does not matter if a singer is far older or far less physically agile than the role they portray: the sound of the voice is the code that defines a role portrayal.[12]

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9 Pasta's London contract has been discussed in Naomi André, Voicing Gender. Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera, Bloomington, IN 2006; Heather Hadlock, Women Playing Men in Italian Opera, 1810–1835, in: Jane Bernstein (Ed.), Women's Voices across Musical Worlds, Boston, MA 2004, pp. 285–307; Anke Charton, *prima donna*, *primo uomo*, *musico*. Körper und Stimme: Geschlechterbilder in der Oper (Leipziger Beiträge zur Theatergeschichtsforschung; 4), Leipzig 2012.

10 See Nina Treadwell, Female Operatic Cross-Dressing. Bernardo Saddumene's Libretto for Leonardo Vinci's *Li zite'n galera* (1722), in: Cambridge Opera Journal 10, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 131–156.

11 See the popular example of Carolina Perini being cast as Annio (a *secondo uomo*) in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* (1791). Johann Anton André, W. A. Mozart's thematischer Catalog, Offenbach 1828, p. 62: "Sra. Carolina Perini / da Uomo" (Mrs. Carolina Perini / as a man).

12 For a take on the (gendered) physique of the opera singer and its implication in creating an image of the heroic voice, see Sam Abel's discussion of the "Fat Lady", in Sam Abel, Opera in the Flesh. Sexuality in Operatic Performance, Boulder, CO 1996, pp. 12–20.

The *contralto musico* not only gives testimony to a mindset that did not tie the heroic exclusively to just male or just female bodies, it also bespeaks a curious lack of linking the heroic in a fundamentally different manner to male- and female-identified bodies. Still, this does not mean that the space of the heroic in opera is not regulated by gender; instead the importance of gender in constructing portrayals of the heroic is increasing or lessening at different points in history.

Rather than thinking about whether the heroic is linked more closely to male or female figures, the more fruitful question might be whether a hero or a heroine is described as heroic through different patterns. Much of *opera seria*, as the core genre of affirmative opera until the late eighteenth century, holds male and female characters to the same standard of heroism: courage, self-sacrifice, disdain for death, and the willingness to uphold their beliefs against all odds, lest the sovereign demand otherwise. In addition, these standards are expressed in a very similar vocal idiom in male and female roles alike.

As of the nineteenth century, beyond the realm of internationalized *opera seria*, these standards drift towards a binary gender stance, with socially compliant self-sacrifice – usually motivated by romantic love – understood to be heroic when assigned primarily to female characters, while a consciously chosen, unconventional path expressed in warfare or death centered around male-identified characters. These changed standards, structured intricately around a gendered divide, are then also expressed in different music-writing for the singing voice, requiring a different – gender-adjacent – sound.[13]

Opera also knows spaces where the requirements to constitute something as heroic are nearly gender-neutral. It warrants mentioning, however, that in lieu of gender – which has less of an importance, e.g., in *opera seria* – other social markers become essential for the heroic. In *opera seria*, this requirement is class, evident in the removal of non-heroic parts from the plot with the so-called libretto reform around 1700,[14] which was heavily inspired by the *doctrine classique*.[15]

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13 A symbolic fixture for this development is the "ut the poitrine", the "high C" sung in chest voice, first anticipated in broad reception as a sonic choice in 1837 by tenor Gilbert Duprez in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*. While subsequently, also in concordance with larger orchestra bodies, dramatic voices gained traction, the surplus of a powerful sound, generally at the expense of agility and the stylistic criteria of falsetto singing, was far more strongly applied to men's voices, as evident e.g. in the mid-nineteenth-century writing for the *grand opéra*.

14 The approaches of, among others, Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Metastasio shaped the aesthetic of the *opera seria* libretto around 1700, particularly in regards to eliminating comic personnel and any content not compatible with the concept of *bienséance*.

15 The *doctrine classique* pertains to the French classicist drama of the seventeenth century, but largely influenced the aesthetics of affirmative theatre genres. One of its core principles was stylistic and narrative propriety (*bienséance*), applied to the Venetian-based model of *opera seria* in the late seventeenth century through the libretto work of Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Metastasio. Central to this libretto reform was the removal of supernatural personages and interferences, leaving the stage to a uniformly classed body of aristocracy.

Taking a step back to look once more at the different fields of creation of the heroic within opera – to the content of a work, the dramaturgical constellation of parts, and the voice perceived as heroic – the singer producing the heroic voice needs to be added, which is a field intricately linked to historically variable ideas of gender and of representation at large. If the heroic voice bears male and female variations, they may not just concern a stylistic gendering of sound – meaning, for instance, that a forceful tone or the distinct use of chest register might be exclusively associated with masculine heroism – but it might also concern soundspaces: are there absolute ranges or notes that are only to be sung by a male hero or only by a heroine?

The most striking example of this is the casting of high voices (in the mezzo and soprano range) for the operatic hero, a convention that lost traction around 1800 and was finally aesthetically shunned as of the 1840s. In addition, those high-voiced male heroes sung by men – most prominently by castrato singers between the late 1500s and the Age of Enlightenment– were nearly exclusively taken on by female singers throughout the early nineteenth century in the figure of the *contralto musico*. This twofold application of gender to sound – one in style, one in range – finally connects to the body of the singer and the question whether the gendered expectations of heroic sound can be fashioned onto any body, or whether they are linked to a body under gendered assumptions. In this context, a gendered body can preclude a stylistic and vocal portrayal of the heroic or turn it into a commentary on patterns of the heroic, which as a mode of telling belongs more into the realm of comic opera.[16]

Still, gender, if understood as the interpretation and enactment of a supposedly physical difference of sexes, can matter less or little, given historic circumstances, even while the context is not exempt from gender as a category: it was present, even though it did not necessarily need to be defined by a singing *body*. In Early Modern and Baroque times, the gender of a voice was generally assigned due to how it was employed, both in regards to style patterns and rhetorical positioning. A voice displaying virtuosity was understood as fit for a hero (and a heroine), as was a voice singing from a position of power within the text.[17]

16 On the concept of comedy narrative as an "ex-centric" perspective, see Sebastian Hauck on the example of Stendhal: Zimtfarbener Überrock und Spazierstock-Pirouetten. Über Henri Beyle und Stendhal, in: Friedemann Kreuder [et al.] (Ed.), Theater und Subjektkonstitution. Theatrale Praktiken zwischen Affirmation und Subversion (Theater; 33), Bielefeld 2012, pp. 437–448, here p. 438.

17 On the importance of rhetorical agency in constructing the heroic with regards to the hegemonic dynamics of both power and gender in a vertical order of society, see Anne MacNeil, Music and Women of the Commedia dell'Arte in the Late Sixteenth Century, Oxford 2003, pp. 60–61, and Sarah Colvin, The Rhetorical Feminine. Gender and Orient on the German Stage, 1647–1742, Oxford 1999.

An occurrence that reveals the influence of gendered tropes on the heroic in both physical and vocal form can be seen in the specific tradition of casting female singers in male roles of *opera seria* during the early eighteenth century. It allowed for portrayals of heroic masculinity through voices tied to female bodies, while at the same time limiting these female singers to the repertory of the *secondo uomo*, which seems to bring the (female) body back into play: to make a true hero, it apparently takes a male body. This casting practice is not to be generalized throughout the reign of *opera seria*; it is one of many regional microclimates within the relatively stable fabric of the genre. It was commonplace and the rule of the day for George Frideric Handel's works for London,[18] while at the same time in Venice, Antonio Vivaldi repeatedly worked with *prima donna* singers, who traditionally held a special standing in Venice[19] and were cast as *primo uomo* next to castrato singers as *secondi uomini*.[20] Yet another microclimate governed Rome where the law-mandated absence of women within the ranks of the Catholic Church bore an influence on the public Roman stages, which often resulted in all parts being cast with male singers, generally castrati, a practice also at work in the genres of comic opera.[21]

In contrast, male singers in heroic female roles in *opera seria* did not occur in London, and a similar gender border applied vice versa to the male heroic. After an early *primo uomo* for a soprano (Margherita Durastanti in the first rendition of *Radamisto* in 1720), Handel's considerable output of male roles written for female singers remained restricted to *secondi uomini*, including, for instance, the hero's friend or brother in arms, an unlucky (or sometimes lucky) rival in love, and the outright antagonist.

The casting of women singers in the slot of *secondo uomo* was not exclusive in return: castrato singers and, at times, lower-voiced male singers such as tenors

18 The particular Handelian casting of female singers as *secondi uomini* was recently discussed at the annual Handel conference in Halle/Saale (Handel and his interpreters, June 2015) by Thomas Seedorf: Der doppelte Radamisto. Zur Besetzungspraxis von Heldenpartien bei Händel, in: Händel-Jahrbuch 62 (2016), pp. 165–176.

19 Regarding the status of the *prima donna* within the specific social fabric of Venice, see Wendy Heller, Emblems of Eloquence. Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice, Berkeley, CA 2003, and Beth Glixon, Giulia Masotti, Venice, and the Rise of the Prima Donna, in: Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music 17, 2011: http://sscm-jscm.org/jscm-issues/volume-17-no-1/giulia-masotti-venice-and-the-rise-of-the-prima-donna/, 8 January 2018.

20 See, for instance, Vivaldi's *Farnace* (1726) and *Orlando furioso* (1727) that both saw a female singer in the role of the *primo uomo* next to two castrati as *secondi uomini*. See Reinhard Strohm, The Operas of Antonio Vivaldi, 2 vols., Florence 2008; Charton, *prima donna* (Fn. 9), p. 238.

21 See, for instance, the reference in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Italienische Reise (1816), in: Goethes Werke (Hamburger Ausgabe), Vol. 11, pp. 372–373: "Nachts in die komische Oper. […] Die als Frauenzimmer verkleideten Kastraten machen ihre Rollen immer besser und gefallen immer mehr." (In the evening at the comic opera. […] The castrati dressed as women are getting better and better at their roles and garner more and more praise.)

were also cast, while the part of the *primo uomo* was generally reserved for a star castrato. This adds another twist to a modern-day look at the gendering of operatic heroes, since it was the castrati who themselves came under heavy fire as supposedly 'effeminate' and 'emasculated' in the mid- and late eighteenth century,[22] with Enlightenment thought gaining a stronger footing throughout Europe. It seems forced, then, to exclusively tie the casting of *primo uomo* and *secondo uomo* parts to a gendered divide, particularly since castrato singers of a lesser standing often appeared as *secondi uomini*, making apparent the financial factor of simply casting the most expensive singer as the lead, and since the castrato singer himself, while perfectly understood as male, represented a distance from a later, 'naturalized' idea of gendering.

Trying to analyze the castrato singers and their ability to embody the sound of the heroic from a post-Enlightenment perspective will usually struggle with moving past (or, as it were, to a point before) those naturalized gender assignments that are in their institutionalized objectivity an inherited burden of nineteenth century thought. It is important to remember that the castrati, much like the casting in *opera seria* at large, simply followed a different layout of masculinities, and an overall different understanding of representation and identity.

Within that particular frame of mind, the castrato, as a fashionable vocal powerhouse and an emblematic figure of artifice, fits the hero's bill better than a perhaps equally well-voiced female singer, which makes the casting not just about sound, but marks it as a place where social assumptions of onstage and offstage spaces are linked (and in which gender may or may not take a part): the most famous would portray the most heroic.

From this perspective, Giuditta Pasta's portrayals of the heroic both in male and in female roles also warrant another reading: Of course Pasta's standing was, in the late 1820s, such that it would have been incomprehensible to have her cast in anything *but* the lead role. Pasta could have chosen for her London 1826 contract a line-up of solely female roles. She did, however, not only include Romeo and Tancredi, but had herself expressively hired as both *prima donna* and *primo uomo*, staking a claim on all the registers of the heroic, by mastery of her craft.

A look at Pasta's roles in London 1826 – the warrior Tancredi, the lyrical Romeo, the mad lover Nina, the raging Medea, the victimized Desdemona, the

22 See, for instance, Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst, Stuttgart 1839, p. 52, on "die Menschenstimme durch Entmannung fortzupflanzen" (propagating the human voice through emasculation), or Johann Adolf Scheibe, Critischer Musikus, Leipzig 1745 (Repr. Hildesheim 1970), p. 155: "Wie lächerlich ist es nicht, die Könige, die Helden […] und überhaupt alle männlichen Personen durch […] solche Leute, die schon von Natur dem Charakter widersprechen, vorzustellen? Wie […] ekelhaft ist es nicht, wenn wir in einem großen und starken Stücke nichts anders, als zarte und weibische Stimmen vernehmen." (How ridiculous is it to present the kings, heroes […] and all male persons through people who contradict that character by their very nature? Is it not disgusting to hear in a grand and powerful piece nothing but soft and effeminate voices?)

scheming queen Semiramide, and the since forgotten Enrico of *La rosa bianca e rossa*[23] – showcases the necessity to shy away from a broad demarcation of gender lines within this repertory: there may be three male and four female parts at hand but in fashioning these heroes and heroines, very different ideas of masculinity and femininity come to light. Nina and Medea could be called polar opposites despite being located on the same side of the binary gender divide. Romeo's laments are a far cry from Tancredi's bravado, juxtaposed also in vocal style, between the slow legato showpiece of the Zingarelli/Crescentini *Giulietta e Romeo* and the swaggering coloratura of the early Rossini hit. All roles qualify as heroic, even if it is as the villainous mirror image of social ideas, as in Semiramide and Medea – who, as an addendum on gender and the heroic, are vilified in particular through their breach of gender-assigned demeanor. Questions of age, marital status and social acceptance are essential to the construction of a gendered idea of the heroic: the behavior accepted by the socially ostracized male figures such as Tancredi and Enrico differs from the expectations placed upon the similarly ostracized Medea.

Giuditta Pasta's repertoire opens up a gallery of roles that are, at times, linked more by age or social status than by sharing the same gender. This serves as a reminder that gender is a historically variant category, not a binary one, with shifting degrees of relevance, including in constructing images of the heroic.

The common ground Pasta's repertoire offers, if one was to try trace the singer's motivation beyond a selection of parts that made a good fit for her voice, is a wide scope of emotions, often extreme ones, to portray. Pasta excelled at dramatic acting and seems to have sought out roles that allowed her to showcase this ability. Pasta's "natural"[24] acting linked her to new dramatic developments of her time, though it is noteworthy that her core repertoire, including most of her male roles, is made up of older works. Paisiello, Zingarelli, and Rossini, for instance, also adhered to an older model of codification of emotion in song and onstage[25] that is not yet striving towards the readily available emotionality constructed by the romantic composers. Those composers tied the gendered heroic increasingly more closely to the singer's gendered body, as in the rise of the tenor to the hero of the main affirmative opera genre, and the different employment of a specifically *gendered* heroic voice that had the hero sound different than the heroine. This is put in place in addition to both of them – the hero and the heroine – not sharing the same soundspace any longer: the high-voiced realm in earli-

23 Giovanni Simone Mayr set the Felice Romani libretto into music, with the story based on René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt's *La rose blanche et la rose rouge*, which in turn draws from the English War of the Roses.

24 See Ebers, Seven Years (Fn. 2), p. 219.

25 On the registers of acting styles, see Gerda Baumbach, Schauspieler. Historische Anthropologie des Akteurs, Leipzig 2012.

er traditions equally peopled by the heroes and heroines of *opera seria* is left to the soprano heroine, while the hero sets up shop an octave below.[26]

The question of what a male or female hero sounds like on the opera stage and what renders a sound heroic heeds a different answer not just in different times, but also depending on the social conventions regarding gender within a limited geographic framework. London, Venice, and Rome knew at different times different casting conventions even within the relatively uniform aesthetic of the Italian-born, internationalized *opera seria* that adhered to the same ideal of sound: a refined, high-voiced tone capable of seemingly effortless mastery of breath, thus commanding the slow legato line as much as the realm of extensive ornamentation. Still, despite this shared *bel canto* aesthetic, different casting customs arose, tied also to different conventions of gender and representation. It is the bodies into which the sound of the heroic is placed that seem to make the difference. Yet, concerning the styling of gendered heroic sound, *opera seria* remains a readily accessible genre even while taking into account regional and historic casting variants, also because the ideal of the heroic tends to be linked more firmly with affirmative genres.

A comparable study on comic opera would lead to different results, particularly with regard to the gendered body, as the genre is traditionally linked to parody and the subversive mode. Gender in comic opera has an equal, at times perhaps even stronger bearing on the dramaturgy than in *opera seria* (where sometimes all that matters is that a person is aristocratic enough to join the narrative) because the common subversion of gender roles is tied to the very existence of those roles and their continuous reestablishment in the first place. Cross-gender casting, such as writing the type of the bawdy nurse for male singers with lower voices, or the young hero, as in Neapolitan *commedia per musica*, for a female singer,[27] is common, but rather than making gender not matter, it draws attention to gender as a binary category. As a narrative of power that places the male above the female, it is closely linked to other power narratives, such as that of age, which places seniority above youth, even while it keeps turning them on their heads.

It is no coincidence that the nurses marked by a lower man's voice are usually written as older women, while the high-voiced hero embodied by a female singer is codified as youthful. It is precisely this game of turnabout that destabilizes the figure of the heroic: a 'hero' or 'heroine' in comic opera is by definition subject to the subversion of their own heroic status.

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26 The development was echoed differently in France, where high tenors (*haute-contre*) had been used instead of castrato singers; those tenor voices, however, were also subject to change along with the castrati. For a more detailed look into singing traditions linked to the *haute-contre*, see the overview in Thomas Seedorf (Ed.), Gesang (MGG prisma), Kassel [et al.] 2001; Dagmar Hoffmann-Axthelm (Ed.), Singen und Gesangspraxis in der Alten Musik, Winterthur 2003; Corinna Herr, Gesang gegen die "Ordnung der Natur"? Kastraten und Falsettisten in der Musikgeschichte, Kassel [et al.] 2013.

27 See Treadwell, *Le zite 'n galera* (Fn. 10).

The already discussed casting differences of *primo uomo* and *secondo uomo* in *opera seria* as well as the different femininities and masculinities on display in the repertoire of Giuditta Pasta's London contract bring about another facet pertaining to the gendered heroic: the *order* of gender, particularly in a historical model not yet adhering to the contemporary tropes of the later nineteenth century. Rather than juxtaposing a male and a female heroic demeanor as evidenced in sound, affirmative opera up to the late eighteenth century revolves around a more vertical order. The idea, very prominently perpetuated in *opera seria*, of not a male versus a female kind of heroism, but rather of degrees of the heroic linked to degrees of gender, as seen, for instance, in the systematization of *primo uomo* and *secondo uomo*, allows for a more precise reading of the construction of the heroic within the operatic context.

The postmodern gender model of hegemonic masculinity as developed by Raewyn Connell[28] and Jack Halberstam[29] echoes this earlier organization of degrees of gender and lends a vocabulary to a current analysis of the gendered heroic. The hero is, then, the embodiment of heroic masculinity, which is defined through all other masculinities being 'less than'. The *primo uomo*, as the part featuring the greatest number of arias as well as the most spectacular, is thus differentiated from the *secondo uomo*, a figure in contrast marginalized and given less stage exposure. Echoed in an offstage constellation, one could argue within the aforementioned London context that a star castrato performing a *primo uomo* role, as a carrier of idealized masculinity, is 'more' masculine than a female star singer performing a *secondo uomo* part and operating within the same soundspace, even while both are perceived as masculine (an equation not to be confounded with the later critique of the castrato as less masculine than most other men, or even as not male at all).[30]

The gendered sound of the heroic is, in opera, at different times heralded by a refined or a powerful tone,[31] extreme vocal agility or an absence thereof, the governing of a high tessitura, or the refraining from accessing that tessitura at all.[32] In addition to this construction of heroic sound, other facets may play into it, such as – to summarize – a dramaturgical layout (e.g. the hero or the heroine should be given the largest number of arias) or the singer's body (e.g. heroic female roles being or not being accessible to male singers, and vice versa).

28 See Raewyn [formerly Robert] Connell, Masculinities, Berkeley, CA 1995.

29 See Judith [Jack] Halberstam, Female Masculinity, Durham, NC/London 1998.

30 A popular trope of early nineteenth-century castrato critique, in compliance with the tethering of figures perceived as ambiguous or feminine, as discussed in Herculine Barbin, Herculine Barbin dite Alexina B., ed. by Michel Foucault, Paris 1978.

31 The castrato singers were often framed as refined, yet powerful in sound, though refinement remained the deciding factor.

32 As often evidenced in the twentieth-century discussions on falsetto use, e.g. in Viktor Fuchs, Die Kunst des Singens. Musizieren mit der eigenen Stimme, Kassel 1967, p. 120.

Three examples of a mid-century opera – from 1647, 1737, and 1843 – all feature a high-voiced male hero and are all linked to the same ideal of singing within the general frame of affirmative, so-called 'serious' opera. This provides a larger context for the previously established thoughts and takes leave from the early nineteenth-century constellation of Giuditta Pasta and her repertoire, whose appropriation of the gendered voice of the heroic serves as a stepping stone to access the complexities regarding its construction. The works discussed do not only revolve around the singing hero but also around the singer *as* a hero, which, over the centuries, does lead to different repercussions regarding the hero's gendering.

In 1647, Luigi Rossi's elaborate stage affair *Orfeo* placed the mythical singer and demigod at its narrative center, sung by the castrato Atto Melani.[33] Pietro Metastasio's *Achille in Sciro*, set by Domenico Sarro in 1737, features a scene where the cross-dressed hero Achill, embodied by the female contralto Vittoria Tesi, is asked to sing and accompanies himself on a lyre, the instrument of Orpheus. Finally, Daniel-François-Esprit Auber's *La part du diable*, which premiered in Paris in 1843, employs some of the biography of the most famous of castrato singers, Carlo Broschi, with the stage name Farinelli. Carlo's voice, performed by female soprano Giovanna Rossi-Caccia, is central to the opera's plot.

Rossi's *Orfeo* places the soprano hero within the context of early internationalization of Italian-conceived opera, written for Paris at the insistence of Cardinal Jules Mazarin. *Orfeo* was not Mazarin's first attempt to import the opera style of his native Rome to Paris, where in the second half of the century, the *tragédie lyrique* employed an aesthetic that avoided the soprano hero altogether. Despite a lack of outward artistic reception, *Orfeo* became hugely influential for what was later to be known as the French Baroque operatic style,[34] even if the sound of the gendered heroic differed: the Italian castrato was replaced by the French *haute-contre*.

The *Orfeo* was a thoroughly Italianite affair, with the core singers imported from Italy, among them the well-established castrato Atto Melani, who was not the only castrato featured. Marc'Antonio Pasqualini, who was a protégé of the Barberini in Rome, sang the part of Orfeo's rival Aristeo, and two rising castrato stars who worked within French court music, Domenico del Pane and Marc'Antonio Sportonio, were also involved.

A look at the entire cast does not only reveal a rather numerous ensemble but also shows the tapestry of vocal registers employed: Among twenty-nine parts listed, seventeen are set for soprano voice, flanked by five contralto parts, four tenor parts and three parts written for bass. And of the twenty-two parts written for either soprano or contralto, it seems at least two thirds were initially taken on

33 See Roger Freitas, Portrait of a Castrato: Politics, Patronage, and Music in the Life of Atto Melani, Cambridge/New York 2009.

34 For a discussion of the stylistic implications, see Margret Murata, Why the First Opera Given in Paris Wasn't Roman, in: Cambridge Opera Journal 7, Issue 2, 1995, pp. 87–105.

by castrato voices (which did not mean fourteen castrati were involved, as parts were doubled).

The soprano voice appears in *Orfeo* not only as the voice of the hero, in the figure of the *primo uomo* (Orfeo) and *secondo uomo* (Aristeo), and as the voice of the heroine (sung by Margherita Costa), but also as the voice of graces, goddesses, and allegories, and even among the comic characters. It seems that in the mid-seventeenth century, while used as the sound of the heroic through stylistic and dramaturgical devices, neither the castrato, nor the soprano range, signal an exclusive gender, moral status, or class.

Still, a look at the voice ranges exemplifies the allegorical understanding of vocal timbre: low voices tend not only to be assigned to characters of lower social or moral standing but also to the topographically low, like figures pertaining to the underworld, and to voices of age and authority. The soprano range is more often than not used to codify deity, youth, or a higher moral standing. Youth, in an Early Modern figure of thought, also garners the assignation of the social context of love, which was seen as possibly destabilizing gender, rather than the more 'adult' offices of war or politics.[35]

The act of singing itself, especially in a lavish manner, is *not* seen as destabilizing gender, a trope that later is a common fixture of Enlightenment polemic against the castrato singers.[36] Rossi's castrato Orfeo is not feminized through his singing, but made heroic: His voice is the audible proof of his divine ancestry and his singing is, in accordance with the myth, powerful enough to gain passage to the underworld and warrant immortality. The part is characterized by sumptuous melisma styled to show both rhetorical process and vocal agility.

The sound of the heroic, independent of gender, is in later seventeenth-century opera written nearly exclusively for a soprano voice,[37] with instances of being taken on both by male and female singers – although the employment of castrato singers can further intensify this symbolic order of sound, as a physical embodiment of idealized, permanent youth. This, in turn, has to be understood in a context of sublimated sexuality: virtuosity means virtuousness. Moreover, virtuosity, as artful artifice demonstrating a governing of nature, is indicative of a higher moral standing. The high voice as a celestial voice ties back to medieval thought that superimposes a symbolic order of religious belief onto every aspect of life and also places the heroic within a metaphorical reading of the divine. In Early Modern and Baroque music, the high heroic voice is thus not yet gendered as female but as closest to God.

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35 Discussed in Roger Freitas, The Eroticism of Emasculation. Confronting the Baroque Body of the Castrato, in: The Journal of Musicology 20, Issue 2, pp. 196–249, here p. 209–210.

36 Gottsched complained about "das unverständliche Singen weibischer Kastraten" (the unintelligible singing of effeminate castratos), see Johann Christoph Gottsched, Der Biedermann, ed. by Wolfgang Martens, Stuttgart 1975, p. 178.

37 Understood within the contemporary, broader scope of 'soprano'.

This figure of thought still had consequences in casting the operatic hero in 1737, when contralto Vittoria Tesi-Tramontini took on the role of young Achilles in Domenico Sarro's version of Metastasio's *Achille in Sciro*. Tesi, who was renowned for portrayals of heroes[38] and older heroines,[39] celebrated one of the biggest triumphs of her career in this role, which vocally could just as well have been taken on by a castrato. It is however possible that the plot, which hinges on Achill wearing women's clothes for most of the opera, made the casting of a female singer a conscious, gender-related choice.[40] This would be an early instance of the performer's body being superimposed over the performed body, independent of a sound of the heroic that is still not prefigured by gender.

Differing from Rossi's *Orfeo*, singing is framed in *Achille in Sciro* not as the key feature of a superhuman hero but as less heroic than warfare – with 'less' being linked to femininity, on display through Achill's disguise as Pirra. In the pivotal reveal scene in Act II, 'Pirra' is asked by the King to sing to entertain the court. Pirra/Achill complies, but at the sound of fighting outside, 'Pirra' throws the lyre to the ground mid-song and reaches for weapons instead, showing his true colors. Singing, in this scene, is showcased as non-heroic in a man and has now been positioned as 'closer to femininity'. Achill directly plays into this dichotomy when he throws the lyre to the ground as a "vile instrument" in an agitated *accompagnato* – contrasting the leisurely lull of Pirra's song (a mandolin-accompanied number in 3/8 time)[41] – and calls the weapons provided by Odysseus "worthier".[42]

While *Achille in Sciro* discusses heroic male behavior in opposition to femininity in the figure of its lead character, it still illustrates the relatively similar treatment that hero and heroine in the form of the *prima coppia* receive in *opera seria*. Achill's love interest, Deidamia, is composed for a slightly higher tessitura, but the vocal idiom is the same: the heroic is not gendered through a different vocal

38 See the (retrospective) characterization by Johann Joachim Quantz in Friedrich W. Marpurg (Ed.), Historisch-Kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik, Vol. 1, Berlin 1755, p. 227.

39 See the example of Andromache detailed in Kurt Sven Markstrom, The Operas of Leonardo Vinci, Napoletano (Opera Series; 2), Hillsdale, NY 2007, p. 124.

40 Wendy Heller has taken on this libretto to discuss a shift from intentional gender ambiguity in *seicento* opera to a more stable, biologically founded idea of gender at large, also linked to questions of the heroic. See Wendy Heller, Reforming Achilles: Gender, *opera seria* and the Rhetoric of the Enlightened Hero, in: Early Music 26, Issue 4, 1998, pp. 562–581.

41 See the manuscript score (archived in the Rare Collection at the Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Naples (Rari 7.2.1), and available digitally: http://imslp.org/wiki/Achille_in_Sciro_(Sarro,_Domenico_Natale)), ff. 115–120, 8 January 2018.

42 "E questa cetra dunque è l'arme d'Achille? Ah no; la sorte altre n'offre, e più degne. A terra, a terra vile istromento. All'onorato incarco dello scudo pesante torni il braccio avvilito." (And this lyre is supposed to be the weapon of Achill? Oh no, fate offers him others, and worthier ones. To the ground, to the ground, vile instrument. To the honored duty of the heavy shield turn your debased arm.) Pietro Metastasio, Achille in Sciro, Vienna 1736, ll. 762–767.

range. Ornamentation and legato line are equally allotted to both, and the dramaturgical, rhetoric, and affective situating is likewise the same, as is the shared repertoire of aria types. In this, Achill and Deidamia echo the layout of *opera seria* at large, which does not make gender a distinctive feature of the heroic, much less use a gender dichotomy to establish the heroic in the first place. It may be a postmodern assumption, then, that the – in this instance female – body of the performer contributed to destabilizing the hero's masculinity onstage.

The opposite scenario is at play in Auber's *La part du diable*, conceived when the tradition of the *contralto musico* tradition was already drawing to a close, and male roles written exclusively for female singers – for instance after the demise of the castrati – did increasingly focus on the depiction of marginalized masculinities such as young pageboys or unrequited lovers, eschewing the heroic.

Auber's opera, belonging to the *opéra comique* as opposed to the *opera seria*, is, regardless of this genre difference, still employing a similar construction of the heroic through its sentimental set-up. The opera's lead character, Carlo, is written for soprano voice and not for the mezzo or contralto range that had by then taken over the castrato legacy of the masculine heroic sound. Carlo is supposed to be the famous castrato Farinelli, yet he is always referred to as a boy – thus never gaining the status of heroic masculinity – with a castration or a stage career never even being hinted at. The only thing reminiscent of the actual Farinelli is the plot device of Carlo's singing curing the melancholy of the ailing Spanish King. The music written for the part is richly ornamented, yet primarily sentimental, differing not at all from the sound of a 1840s heroine, but much from the sound of the newly refigured hero.

The actual *prima coppia* of Auber's opera are Carlo's sister Casilda (soprano) and the young soldier Raphaël (tenor), while Carlo's profession is that of a music teacher in a nun's convent. Even within the plot, Carlo's voice is framed as a woman's voice: the King had once tried to abduct Carlo's sister after falling in love with her singing voice. He thinks himself guilty of her death, which causes his melancholy. Carlo's voice is to him, and to the audience, merely the mirror image of this lost voice, seen through the prefigured lens of a female sound.

Carlo, the boy, is a hero only on paper: his patterns of behavior – chaste and without belligerence[43] – are among the ones typically ascribed to the nineteenth-century ideal of woman. And while the act of singing is not feminizing per se in *La part du diable*, the singer's office is only that of a boy, whereas the tenor hero is a warrior. Singing, in 1843, evokes the gendered hero or heroine, depending on vocal range, the performer's body and stylistic parameters: lavish embellishment and ornamentation or a surplus of coloratura are increasingly codified as feminine. The male hero, in turn, is signaled by a more powerful and less adorned sound, with more and more notes sustained in chest voice.

[43] In the libretto, the motherly figure of the Queen characterizes Carlo as "timide et doux" (timid and sweet), see Daniel F. E. Auber, La part du diable, London/Mainz n.d., p. 45.

The "two voices"[44] of Giuditta Pasta, who could still bridge the gap of the gendered heroic in the 1820s, had fallen silent by the mid-nineteenth century and the Baroque aesthetic of artifice as supremely governing nature, which is so prominently and audibly on display in *opera seria*, had disappeared. This shift in the idea of heroic sound, towards one strongly rooted in gender dichotomy, serves to illustrate the historically differing associations between not just gender and the heroic, but also between representation and performer in shaping the voice that is heard as fit to make a hero or a heroine.

44 "la voix de madame Pasta; elle n'est pas toute d'un seul métallo" (the voice of Madame Pasta, it is not all forged from the same metal), Stendhal, Rossini (Fn. 5), p. 142.

Untangling the Heroic from the Sacrifice

Malwida von Meysenbug's Attempt to Appropriate a Common Female Topos in and for her Political Novel *Phädra* (1885)

Birgit Mikus

Malwida von Meysenbug had an unusual life for a noblewoman of the nineteenth century.[1] Born into the Rivalier family in Kassel, her father gained the name of "von Meysenbug" in 1825 for his services to the crown as the personal advisor to William I of Hesse-Kassel. Meysenbug soon grew to feel constrained by her conservative family and the lack of educational and professional opportunities available to her. Through mostly autodidactic readings and conversations with the theologian Theodor Althaus, as well as through the writings of the Young Hegelians, she obtained a thorough knowledge of Hegel's philosophy. Meysenbug witnessed the Democratic Revolution and the National Assembly in Frankfurt am Main in 1848; it was during this period that her democratic convictions came to the surface, leading to a rather strained relationship with the rest of her family, who remained loyal to the royal family. To escape the growing estrangement, Meysenbug moved to Hamburg in 1850, where she enrolled as a student at the newly founded Hamburger Hochschule für das weibliche Geschlecht (Hamburg University for the Female Sex), founded by Johannes Ronge and Johanna and Karl Fröbel.[2] When the Hochschule was forced to close by the Senate of Hamburg in 1852 due to the democratic tendencies and suspected activities of its founders, Meysenbug fled to London into exile, since she risked being arrested after her flat had been searched for compromising political material or evidence of contact with already arrested democratic revolutionaries. Meysenbug lived in London for eight years, becoming friends with fellow exiles such as Johanna and Gottfried Kinkel, and meeting many European revolutionaries who had also been forced to come to London to avoid being prosecuted in their

1 The following biographical information is taken from Martin Reuter, 1848, Malwida von Meysenbug und die europäische Demokratiegeschichte: Die Politik einer aristokratischen Demokratin im 19. Jahrhundert, Kassel 1998, and Debbie Pinfold / Ruth Whittle, Voices of Rebellion: Political Writing by Malwida von Meysenbug, Fanny Lewald, Johanna Kinkel, and Louise Aston (Britische und irische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur; 40), Oxford 2005.

2 See also Catherine M. Prelinger, Religious Dissent, Women's Rights, and the Hamburger Hochschule fuer das weibliche Geschlecht in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany, in: Church History 45, Issue 1, 1976, pp. 42–55.

homelands, such as Alexander Herzen, Giuseppe Mazzini, Carl Schurz, Ferdinand Freiligrath, Lajos Kossuth, Stanislav Worcell, and Giuseppe Garibaldi. In London, she also met and remained in contact with Thomas Carlyle, whose writings on heroism, together with the ideas of Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche, left a palpable mark on Meysenbug's concept of the heroic. Meysenbug adopted Herzen's youngest daughter, Olga, and moved with her to Paris in 1860. There she met Wagner for the first time and began to engage with Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy. Meysenbug anonymously published the first volume of her memoirs, *Mémoirs d'une idéaliste* (Memoirs of an Idealist), in 1869 in French.[3] In 1870, she moved to Bayreuth to be closer to Wagner and his family, having become close friends with all of them. It was in Bayreuth in 1872 that she met Nietzsche at the cornerstone laying ceremony for Wagner's theatre. They subsequently became close friends as well, until Wagner and Nietzsche had their falling out in 1878, whereupon Meysenbug sided (mostly) with Wagner, though she and Nietzsche remained in contact. In 1874, Meysenbug moved to Sorrento, Italy for health reasons, after Olga Herzen had married the historian Gabriel Monod the year before. In 1875–76, Meysenbug published her memoirs in German, a translation of the first volume and a new second volume covering the time until Olga's marriage, this time under her name and to great acclaim. In 1876–77, Meysenbug invited Nietzsche and Paul Rée to Sorrento to stay with her. They stayed in a shared house for a year and participated in her philosophical and political salon. In 1885, Meysenbug published her novel *Phädra*, which she considered her *opus magnum*, and was distraught by the resounding silence with which it was received by both its readership and critics. Meysenbug met Romain Rolland in Rome in 1890; she became his mentor, and they kept up a correspondence until her death. In 1898, Meysenbug published an addendum to her memoirs, entitled *Der Lebensabend einer Idealistin* (Sunset Years of an Idealist), which once again was well-received. Meysenbug died in 1903 in Rome, where she is buried in the Protestant Cemetery (Cimittero acattolico). In addition to the publications already mentioned, she left behind numerous novellas and reflective essays, as well as a substantial correspondence amounting to close to 18,000 letters.[4]

Meysenbug was a staunch feminist and political thinker of her time, even if in today's modern view of feminism, her ideas and suggestions appear very conservative or even downright dowdy. The volumes of her *Memoiren einer Idealistin* made her famous across Germany, if not Europe, and they inspired many of the bourgeois political activists of the 1880s and 1890s to take up the task of cam-

3 Mémoires d'une idéaliste, (anon), Geneva/Basle 1869.

4 See Annegret Tegtmeier-Breit [et al.] (Ed.), Die Korrespondenzen der Malwida von Meysenbug, Teile 1–3, Briefregesten 1827–1903 (Veröffentlichungen der staatlichen Archive des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Reihe C, Quellen und Forschungen; 46), Detmold 2000/2001.

paigning for equal rights, education, and access to the job market. A political element is always present in Meysenbug's writings, and her female characters and protagonists are usually designed as role models for women to emulate so they can develop their individuality, in accordance with Hegel's and Nietzsche's concepts of the individual. Meysenbug operated and wrote at a time when the social norm was a strict gender binary with very clear divisions between acceptable female and male behaviour, which also extended to what was appropriate for the portrayal of female and male heroic figures in arts and literature. Subverting, transgressing, or even flouting this binary was almost conceptually impossible, and if it happened in literature that a woman presumed to be heroic – that is, performed masculine/male actions and took on male status – it almost always resulted in her punishment and death.[5] This has to be kept in mind when analysing the hero, and the heroic deed, in Meysenbug's *Phädra*.

As already stated, Meysenbug was a close and long-time friend of two of the most influential personages of the second half of the nineteenth century, Wagner and Nietzsche. In their correspondence, Wagner and Meysenbug exchanged their ideas and ruminations on concepts such as the individual, the role of the nation state in world history, the need for a cultural genius to shape society at a fundamental level, and similar topics also found in Wagner's theoretical writings such as *Oper und Drama*[6] (first published 1851) and *Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde*[7] (1851). Wagner's and Nietzsche's (as well as Hegel's) influence on Meysenbug's political thinking is fundamental, and has been traced in minute detail by the historian Martin Reuter.[8] But these influences are also very present in Meysenbug's literary texts, and we will see a scene from the novel *Phädra* of quite Wagnerian composition in the following. Wagner's concept of the hero and the myth, as presented and played out in his operas, is, of course, also shaped by Hegel, who says the following about heroes:[9]

> These are the great men of history whose own particular purposes include the substantial, which is the will of the world spirit. They are heroes in the sense that they have never drawn their purposes and occupation from the calm, well-ordered course of the world sanctified by the established system, but from a source whose content is hidden and which has flourished to current existence, from the inner spirit which is yet subterraneous, which knocks against the outside world as against a shell and bursts it, because it is a different core than the core of this shell, – who, therefore, appear to draw from

5 See Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, Beauty or Beast? The Woman Warrior in the German Imagination from the Renaissance to the Present, Oxford 2010, pp. 183–211.

6 Richard Wagner, Gesammelte Schriften, 14 Vols., ed. by Julius Kapp, Leipzig 1914, here Vol. 11.

7 Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 57–173.

8 See Reuter, 1848, Malwida von Meysenbug (Fn. 1).

9 For a detailed discussion of Hegel's influence on Wagner, see Peter Ackermann, Richard Wagners "Ring des Nibelungen" und die Dialektik der Aufklärung (Frankfurter Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft; 9), Tutzing 1981.

> themselves and whose actions have brought forth a condition and global circumstances which seem to be only their cause and their work.[10]

In my reading of this passage, a hero is someone who lives in an established system of values, hierarchies, and social norms and expectations, but who transgresses the rules of such a system, expanding and transforming them beyond the scope of what was thought applicable and even possible. The recognition (*Erkenntnis*) of the potential for transformation and transmutation, as well as the courage to act on it, is what makes these individuals heroic. While Hegel saw these qualities in the famous political and military leaders of world history, Wagner interpreted them as the core of artistic creation. For Wagner, the artist was the one who would eventually lift society, if not humankind as a whole, to the next higher plane:

> The creator of the artwork of the future is no other than the artist of the present who anticipates life in the future and yearns to be included therein. He who fosters this yearning within himself by his ownmost ability already lives a better life: – only one, however, can do so: – the artist.[11]

Meysenbug followed a similar trajectory in her thinking, in that the artist is the ideal hero and a fundamental change in society is only possible with the artist-hero to guide the masses in forming a nation:

> What was the crucial point, then? Not to elevate the raw mass as such to sovereignty, as democracy had flatteringly promised, but to clear the paths, to define the laws, to shape the institutions, to provide work and income for everyone, to bring the uplifting light of true education into the hollow wasteland of the beast of burden's life. This was and is necessary, but must not only be aimed at those below, but also at those above, in order to unify all classes into one nation that flocks around its geniuses and heroes in joyous recognition and basks delightedly in their blessed light; just as it is the greatest thing, after the genius itself, to recognise and love the genius.[12]

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10 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "Dies sind die großen Menschen der Geschichte, deren eigene partikuläre Zwecke das Substantielle enthalten, welches Wille des Weltgeistes ist. Sie sind insofern Heroen zu nennen, als sie ihre Zwecke und ihren Beruf nicht bloß aus dem ruhigen, geordneten, durch das bestehende System geheiligten Lauf der Dinge geschöpft haben, sondern aus einer Quelle, deren Inhalt verborgen und zu einem gegenwärtigen Dasein gediehen ist, aus dem inneren Geiste, der noch unterirdisch ist, der an die Außenwelt wie an die Schale pocht und sie sprengt, weil er ein anderer Kern als der Kern dieser Schale ist, – die also aus sich zu schöpfen scheinen und deren Taten einen Zustand und Weltverhältnisse hervorgebracht haben, welche nur ihre Sache und ihr Werk zu sein scheinen." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte, in: ibid., Werke in 20 Bänden, Theorie-Werkausgabe des Suhrkamp Verlags, Frankfurt am Main 1970, Vol. 12, pp. 45–46.

11 "Der Erzeuger des Kunstwerkes der Zukunft ist niemand anderes als der Künstler der Gegenwart, der das Leben der Zukunft ahnt und in ihm enthalten zu sein sich sehnt. Wer diese Sehnsucht aus seinem eigensten Vermögen in sich nährt, der lebt schon jetzt in einem besseren Leben: – nur einer aber kann dies: – der Künstler." Richard Wagner, Oper und Drama, in: Gesammelte Schriften, Leipzig 1871–83, Vol. 4, pp. 1–285, here p. 229.

12 "Worauf kam es also an? Nicht darauf, die rohe Masse, als solche, zur Herrschaft zu erheben, wie die Demokratie es ihr schmeichelnd versprach, sondern die Wege zu öffnen, die

How, then, did Meysenbug depict this act of the artist-hero to unify the nation – or *a* nation, in any case – in her novel, and what did she consider the role of women, or female heroes, in this understanding of shaping the world?[13] Apart from Wagner, another influence on the way she thought of the hero as a transformative power of society was the British philosopher and historian Thomas Carlyle, whom Meysenbug met during her exile in London and with whom she maintained a casual, friendly correspondence. In his 1841 book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*,[14] based on a lecture series he had given in May 1840, Carlyle detailed his belief in heroic leadership as the primary force in the development of nations and societies. In the six lectures, he examined different types of heroes and illustrated them with examples from history, ranging from Odin to Muhammad to Dante, Luther, Cromwell and Napoleon. In Carlyle's view, only the "Great Man" is able to withstand the pressures and contradictions of his time and follow his chosen path to a heroic existence for the betterment of society. Once a "Great Man" has emerged in this manner, he rallies followers around himself and in effect becomes the founding father of a society:

> Faith is loyalty to some inspired Teacher, some spiritual Hero. And what therefore is loyalty proper, the life-breath of all society, but an effluence of Hero-worship, submissive admiration for the truly great? Society is founded on Hero-worship. […] In all epochs of the world's history, we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable saviour of his epoch; – the lightning, without which the fuel never would have burnt. The History of the World, I said already, was the Biography of Great Men.[15]

As we shall see, the protagonist Philipp in Meysenbug's *Phädra* is just such a Great Man. He emerges from the catastrophic events of the second book of the novel to become the founding father of an ideal, humanistic society in Corfu in the third volume. In addition, Philipp's attributes throughout the novel correspond to two of Carlyle's conceptions of the hero, namely the Poet and the Man of Letters. It is Philipp's poem that makes him a hero and worthy to be followed in the eyes of his counterpart, young Bianka, in the third book of the novel – a poem which speaks to his trustworthy nature and inspiring soul. It fits into Carlyle's classification as such:

Rechte festzustellen, die Institutionen zu gestalten, damit Arbeit und Verdienst für alle da sein und in die dumpfe Öde der Lasttierexistenz der beglückende Strahl wahrer Bildung dringen könne. Dieses tat und tut, aber nicht nur nach unten, sondern auch nach oben hin, not, um alle Stände zu vereinen zu einem Volk, das sich in freudiger Anerkennung um seine Genien und Heroen schare und in ihrem segenspendenden Lichte beglückt lebe; wie es denn ja, nach dem Genius selbst, das größte ist, den Genius zu erkennen und zu lieben." Malwida von Meysenbug, Memoiren einer Idealistin und ihr Nachtrag: Der Lebensabend einer Idealistin, 2 Vols., Berlin 1881, pp. 54–55.

13 For an in-depth analysis of Meysenbug's political thought expressed in this novel, see Birgit Mikus, The Political Woman in Print: German Women's Writing 1845–1919 (Women in German Literature; 19), Oxford 2014, pp. 87–105.

14 Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, London 1841.

15 Ibid., pp. 15–17.

> Poetry, therefore, we will call *musical Thought*. The Poet is he who *thinks* in that manner. At bottom, it turns still on the power of intellect; it is a man's sincerity and depth of vision that makes him a Poet. See deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of Nature *being* everywhere music, if you can only reach it.[16]

The connection to music which Carlyle stipulates might also have influenced Meysenbug's thoughts on and regard for Wagner's ideas.[17] In the novel, Philipp develops from Poet to Man of Letters over the course of the third book. This not only results in him turning into an almost larger than life role model for his family, friends, and acquaintances, but also enables him to effortlessly build up the ideal community with the locals once he reaches Corfu. It is his mere presence which awes people and inspires them to better themselves, be it in education or formation of character, just as Carlyle writes:

> If Hero be taken to mean genuine, then I say the Hero as Man of Letters will be found discharging a function for us which is ever honourable, ever the highest; and was once well known to be the highest. He is uttering-forth, in such way as he has, the inspired soul of him; all that a man, in any case, can do. I say inspired; for what we call 'originality', 'sincerity', 'genius', the heroic quality we have no good name for, signifies that. The Hero is he who lives in the inward sphere of things, in the True, Divine and Eternal, which exists always, unseen most, under the Temporal, Trivial: his being is in that [...].[18]

These conceptions of the hero clearly inform Meysenbug's portrayal, or construction, of one of the main protagonists in her novel. However, I argue that there is a second hero in the novel in the figure of Bianka, Philipp's stepmother, the focal point of the Phaedra plot and, structurally, the element of conflict in the first two books of the novel. However, for Bianka to emerge as a heroine, or show and fulfil her heroic potential, she has to undergo a transformation first, before she can stand at Philipp's side as an equal.

In the novel, the Phaedra story arc is confined to the second volume. It is loosely based on Euripides' version of the myth, in which Phaedra (Phaidra), Ariadne's sister, is the second wife of Theseus and stepmother to Hippolytus (whose mother was the Amazon Antiope/Hippolyta). Phaedra falls in love with Hippolytus but she manages to keep her desire secret, only confiding in her former nurse. However, Hippolytus learns Phaedra's secret from her nurse – but as a proud and virginal acolyte of Artemis, he rejects her. Phaedra spitefully writes a letter to Theseus, claiming that Hippolytus has raped her. Two versions are known from here on: in the first one, Phaedra hangs herself after writing the letter to reinforce her claim and bring Theseus' revenge upon Hippolytus. Theseus

16 Ibid., p. 99.

17 Wagner, Carlyle, and Nietzsche were, of course, not the only intellectual influences on Meysenbug as an author, but are the focus of this article due to their writings on the hero and the heroic. A detailed analysis of Meysenbug's intellectual development can be found in Reuter, 1848, Malwida von Meysenbug (Fn. 1).

18 Ibid., p. 185.

then curses his son with one of the three curses given to him by Poseidon. Hippolytus is dragged to death behind his chariot when his horses are frightened by a sea monster. In the second version, Theseus kills his son after reading Phaedra's letter, and she hangs herself out of remorse, since she did not intend for Hippolytus to die.[19]

Meysenbug's *Phädra* is a novel in three books, following two main protagonists: the nobleman Alfred and his illegitimate son, Philipp. Book I narrates Alfred's adult life, his unhappy marriage with the noblewoman Bianka, and Philipp's childhood, ending with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Alfred, estranged from his wife, enlists as a medical officer, while Philipp is sent to college in England to keep him safe. In Book II, the role of protagonist shifts to Philipp. The second book depicts Philipp's young adult life and is the core of the Phaedra narrative, playing out between Philipp and his stepmother Bianka. The book culminates in Bianka's suicide and the 'volcano scene' in which Philipp is 'reborn' as a hero, enabled by Bianka's sacrifice. Book III finds the older Philipp on his way to Corfu, where he wants to set up a new society in the spirit of idealistic humanism. He has written the epic poem "Phädra" as a redemptive act to enshrine Bianka's sacrifice. In Corfu, he meets Bianka's reincarnation, 'young Bianka', who has sworn to love no other man than the author of the poem "Phädra", since they share the same ideals. United in their spiritual love and plans for a utopian society, the novel ends with Philipp and Bianka in the midst of a small group of like-minded friends, preparing to launch their humanistic life in their self-founded society.

In contrast to the Phaedra myth, Bianka the stepmother does not know her stepson. Since he is an illegitimate son, Bianka finds his very existence an affront to the strict moral code which she, as a noblewoman, has been raised to observe at all costs. Bianka is repulsed when Philipp's name is mentioned, and she has not even seen him, which makes the slightly convoluted plot, including false identity and name changes, possible. Philipp is in Paris as a soldier at the end of the Franco-Prussian War and he witnesses the rise of the Paris Commune; but when political power shifts and he finds himself wearing the wrong uniform, he flees the city and wanders north until he reaches the sea, where he breaks down from exhaustion in a cave on the beach. He is saved by a mysterious, beautiful woman who brings him into the house of her noble great-aunt. As he recovers from his experiences in the war, he falls in love with this woman who calls herself Madeleine. After several weeks, they spend their first night together in the same cave in which Madeleine had found him unconscious, but the next morning, Alfred appears on the beach. Alfred has returned from the war (where he had been working as a medic) and was searching for Philipp when he was directed to the castle by the sea. Once Alfred sees Madeleine, he unmasks her as

[19] After: Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie (47th edition, 1902), Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (Ed.), Vol. 3, Section 2, pp. 2220–2232.

Bianka. Philipp breaks down at this discovery and Bianka commits suicide. But also in contrast to the original myth, in which Phaedra calculatingly kills herself to bring her husband Theseus' wrath down on her stepson Hippolytos, Bianka leaves a suicide note for Alfred in which she claims all responsibility and guilt.

> You were honest with me and wanted to set right the transgressions of youth. I believed unspoiled virtue to be more worthy than merciful, compassionate love – this was my error and this confession is my atonement. Farewell, save yourself for your son, preserve him for the ideal! Let this beautiful being never soil himself with common happiness![20]

Alfred keeps her death secret from Philipp by immediately taking him to Italy so he can recover. It is only after a year that Philipp learns of Bianka's suicide. He and his father have hiked up to the top of Mount Vesuvius to witness the ongoing lava flow. (Meysenbug is referring to a historical event here, the eruption of 26 April 1872 which destroyed the towns of Massa di Somma and San Sebastiano.) Philipp asks his father whether he has heard anything from Bianka since the fateful day. The scene that follows is one of *anagnorisis* (the moment of critical recognition or discovery) and *peripeteia* (the unexpected reversal or turn of events, usually towards decline, though Meysenbug subverts this in her narrative) in the classic Aristotelian sense. It is also heavily imbued with Wagnerian imagery and rhetoric:

> The young man remained silent and Alfred saw only, in the light of the subterranean flames, a tear rolling slowly down his cheek. Then suddenly, he cried out, extending a hand defensively against the flaming gorge: "Silence, demons of the night, you are vanquished! But you, pure light," he cried, turning towards the moon, which appeared in tranquil clarity from behind a cloud and radiated silver across the land to their feet – "all hail the messenger of conciliation; you, gleaming stars, sing in heavenly choirs: 'Peace on earth! May love absolve humanity of evil and may the holy deed lift the guilt from us'. Father," he continued, gripping his father's hand and pulling him away, "Come, come! Away – away from the spirits of the depth – away and towards the redemptive deed!" […] Deeply moved, Alfred stood and joyfully marvelled at his beautiful son who stood before him, exaltation in his eyes, cheeks aflame, resembling a demigod.[21]

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20 "Sie waren offen gegen mich und Sie wollten das Vergehen der Jugend gut machen. Ich glaubte, dass unbefleckte Tugend höher sei als erbarmende, mitleidsvolle Liebe – das war mein Irrtum und dies Geständnis ist meine Sühne. Leben Sie wohl, retten Sie sich dem Sohn, retten Sie ihn dem Ideal! Dass diese schöne Gestalt sich nie beflecke mit gemeinem Glück!" Malwida von Meysenbug, Phädra, Berlin/Leipzig ^{2}1907, p. 328.

21 "Der Jüngling schwieg und Alfred sah nur, beim Schein der unterirdischen Flammen, dass eine Träne langsam über seine Wangen rollte. Plötzlich aber rief er, indem er die Hand wie abwehrend gegen den flammenden Schlund ausstreckte: 'Schweigt, Dämonen der Nacht, ihr seid besiegt! Du aber, reines Licht,' rief er, sich gegen den Mond wendend, der eben in ruhiger Klarheit hinter einer Wolke hervortrat und das Land zu ihren Füßen mit Silberglanz überstrahlte, – 'sei gegrüßt als ein Bote der Versöhnung; ihr, leuchtende Sterne, singt in Himmelschören droben: "Friede sei auf Erden! Die Liebe erlöse endlich die Menschheit vom Übel und die heiligende Tat nehme die Schuld von uns". Vater,' fuhr er fort, indem er des Vaters Hand ergriff und ihn fortzog, 'komm, komm! Fort – fort von den Geistern der Tiefe – fort zur erlösenden Tat!' […] Tief gerührt und beglückt staunte Alfred den schönen

The redemptive act, it turns out, is Philipp's composition of the epic poem "Phädra". The religious connotation introduced in this passage goes even further. When Alfred reads the poem he remarks, "Your 'Phädra' is a divine poem; a new gospel that absolves from guilt and teaches true love."[22] Such terminology strongly alludes to Meysenbug's social as well as political ideals: this social ideal sees Bianka in the role of Philipp's (heroic, Christ-like) saviour. Philipp is only now, through her sacrifice, enabled to create a new, better world, first in writing, then, as the novel progresses, also as the creator of a new society which he develops during his travels, thus becoming the apostle of Bianka's sacrifice for love and the humanist spirit.

It is safe to assume that Meysenbug knew Jean Racine's play *Phèdre* (1677), either in the original version or in the German translation published by Friedrich Schiller in 1805, based on Euripides' version of the myth.[23] Meysenbug slightly adjusted the setting for her version of the story: Bianka has not met Philipp before they meet at the beach, and her motivation for previously avoiding him lies not in her desire for him, but in a misplaced sense of virtue which led her to shun her husband's illegitimate child. Racine lets the tragedy unfold even though Phèdre never acts on her love for Hippolytus – as Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly has pointed out, Phèdre's confession of her desire as she is face to face with Hippolytus is enough to set the tragedy in motion.[24] In contrast, Meysenbug lets Bianka consummate her desire for Philipp, but this manifestation of her sexuality is immediately punished – Bianka must take her own life in order to absolve Philipp, so that he can overcome the conflict and live on. Interestingly, Meysenbug has Bianka kill herself not by hanging, but by throwing herself off a cliff into the sea, like Phèdre's nurse Oenone in Racine's play. In Bianka's case, the sacrifice and its intent is heroic because of the tragic entanglement in guilt and the intent to abrogate this guilt, but it also eventually results in creating an individual (Philipp) who is fit to reshape society. In *Phädra*, Meysenbug takes her female hero to a metaphysical level: it is her suffering and sacrifice that brings out Philipp's true individuality. Invoking Wagner's concepts, it is the birth of an artist-hero who, with the epic poem "Phädra" along with the formation of a new, idealistic society (the settlement in Corfu), creates a new life, a new future, for humankind; and invoking Hegel's concepts, this hero draws his strength to do so from a source that, for

Sohn an, der, Begeisterung im Auge, mit flammenden Wangen, einem Halbgott gleich, vor ihm stand." Ibid., pp. 340–341.

22 "Deine 'Phädra' ist ein göttliches Gedicht; ein neues Evangelium, das von der Schuld erlöst und die wahre Liebe lehrt." Ibid., p. 343.

23 Jean Racine, Phèdre, Edward D. James / Gillian Jondorf (Ed.), Cambridge 1994; Friedrich von Schiller, Phädra. Trauerspiel, Tübingen 1805.

24 See Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, Tod und Weiblichkeit. Phädra – Weibliche Identität zwischen Göttern und Männern, in: Programmheft zu 'Phädra', Salzburger Festspiele, Salzburg 2010.

the remainder of the novel, is hidden, unseen, yet central – transformed by him from a subterraneous source into a force in art and society.

In this, Meysenbug is also aligned with Nietzsche's concepts of the hero and the heroic. As Karl Jaspers explains, Nietzsche saw in human beings the (universal) potential to improve themselves, though they were also always endangered by their reality, and the need to overcome themselves in order to better themselves. In contrast to Carlyle, Nietzsche not only saw the surrounding society as the danger, but also the inherent insecurity, the self-awareness of one's shortcomings and failings, and humans' need to belong as dangers which could prevent someone from becoming a better version of one's self.

> Images of the human being are either descriptions of types of his reality or they are sketches of his potential. The images drawn by Nietzsche lie on both levels. […] The essential point is that even in psychological depiction, there is already a deficit: the gaze pushes toward the 'higher humanity'. The second level, therefore, shows figures who outgrow their mere existence as human beings. Humans appear either as an embodiment of decency, but one which is so constantly under threat that it permanently fails when confronted with reality; or they torment themselves over their own deficiency, which also manifests in miscarried deeds and must be overcome. Thus Nietzsche sees one last possibility on a third level, beyond all higher human beings, and on which the actual aim of humankind is to be found: the *Übermensch*.[25]

This is not to say that Meysenbug constructs Bianka as an example of the *Übermensch*, but rather that she reflects on Nietzsche's earlier writings regarding heroic existence. Meysenbug focuses on the role a female hero might play in the improvement of society in her very own, idiosyncratic way, namely as a powerful enabler (of men). She presents the potential of a female hero, not as a Great (Wo)Man, but in the framework of heroic existence as the state of preparation, of transition from one state (of humankind, society) to the next, better one. In Bianka, Meysenbug attempts to transform, or even reclaim, the death of Phaedra, the female hero, into the foundation of a new, better order (of the world, of society), whose first representative is a Great Man able to continue the initiated transformation in real, practical terms.

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25 "Bilder vom Menschen sind entweder Beschreibungen von Typen seiner Wirklichkeit, oder sie sind Entwürfe seiner Möglichkeit. Die von Nietzsche gezeichneten Bilder liegen auf beiden Ebenen. [...] Das Wesentliche ist, daß schon bei der psychologischen Darstellung jedesmal ein Ungenügen mitspricht: der Blick drängt zum 'höheren Menschen'. Die zweite Ebene zeigt daher Gestalten des Hinauswachsens der Menschen über ihr bloßes Dasein. Die Menschen erscheinen entweder wie ein Wohlgeratensein, das aber so gefährdet ist, daß es durchweg an der Wirklichkeit scheitert, oder sie verzehren sich in einem Ungenügen an sich selber, das auch in der Tat sich verirrt und das überwunden werden soll. Daher erblickt Nietzsche noch über alle höheren Menschen hinaus eine letzte Möglichkeit auf einer dritten Ebene, auf der erst das eigentliche Ziel des Menschen liege: den Übermenschen." Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens, Berlin/Leipzig 1936, pp. 139–140.

> Since for Nietzsche, the existence of humankind as such is not final but something that needs to be overcome, and since human beings can only pave the way and themselves be passage, humankind must perish. A person can be aware of this necessity and incorporate it into their will. Thus Nietzsche calls 'heroic greatness' the 'only state of those paving the way'. He sees in them the 'pursuit of the absolute demise as a way to endure themselves' (14, 267). 'Heroism is the willingness for self-demise' (12, 295). Yet, the basis of heroism is not the yearning for demise as such, but the One Goal which alone matters: 'Heroism – the attitude of a human being who seeks a goal even though he himself is no longer of significance' (12, 295).[26]

In the same way as Jaspers interprets Nietzsche's idea of the human, Meysenbug presents Bianka as the female hero, or at least a human becoming aware of her flawed existence and, by recognising the necessity of her own death in order to overcome and improve the state of her world, entering into heroic existence. Only through this process, leading in the third book of the novel to the rather strange incarnation of young Bianka, is it possible for the female hero to become an equal to the world-changing, society-founding Great Man, the male hero, and take part in the formation of society. It has to be said, however, that Nietzsche rejected and rebuked the worshipping of heroes. As Jaspers points out, Nietzsche saw hero-worship as demeaning to the worshipper – for he would have to lie to himself constantly in order to keep the illusion of a perfect human being, the hero, alive. On the other hand, such worship would also demean the proclaimed hero himself, who, as a consequence of being worshipped, would be isolated from and placed under immense scrutiny by society, basically stripping the hero of the very humanity which has to be continually overcome.[27] As such, the third book of Meysenbug's *Phädra* constitutes a clear break from Nietzsche's conception of the hero and the heroic, and remains faithful to the ideas of the hero as a nation-building, society-forming man who almost demands worship through his mere existence, and who employs his genius to the admiration and loyalty of his worshippers. In the writings of Hegel, Wagner, and Carlyle, the female hero does not appear; it seems a forgone conclusion that the hero can only be male. In contrast, Nietzsche's conception, especially that of heroic existence, does leave room for imagining a female hero, even though Nietzsche, too, always speaks of the male hero. It is in this imaginative space that Meysenbug constructs her female hero and plays out her fate in becoming an equal to the Great Man.

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26 "Da das Dasein des Menschen als solches für Nietzsche nicht endgültig ist, sondern überwunden werden soll, der Mensch nur vorbereiten und Übergang sein kann, muß er zugrunde gehen. Diese Notwendigkeit kann er wissen und in seinen Willen aufnehmen. Daher nennt Nietzsche 'heroische Größe' den 'einzigen Zustand der Vorbereitenden'. In ihnen ist das 'Streben nach dem absoluten Untergang als Mittel, sich zu ertragen' (14, 267). 'Heroismus ist der gute Wille zum Selbstuntergange' (12, 295). Der Grund des Heroischen aber ist nicht das Untergehenwollen als solches, sondern das Eine Ziel, an dem alles liegt: 'Heroismus – das ist die Gesinnung eines Menschen, welcher ein Ziel erstrebt, gegen das gerechnet er gar nicht mehr in Betracht kommt' (12, 295)." Ibid., pp. 301–302.

27 See ibid., pp.144–145.

Strikingly, it appears that women's sexuality does not have a place in Meysenbug's ideal society; on the contrary, only through Bianka's death, as penance for her desire, is it possible for Philipp to undergo his last, necessary transformation. In the incarnation of young Bianka, Meysenbug places her idea of a progressive woman at Philipp's side: young Bianka is able to subordinate her sexuality in favour of an idealized, abstract love for the (to her) unknown author of the poem "Phädra". Only when this abstract love is proven true and pure is young Bianka allowed to fall in love with Philipp, the embodiment and enactor of the ideal concepts she loves for their own sake. Throughout the third book, the origin of Philipp's ideal individuality is always present but unseen: the poem "Phädra" functions as a connection between Philipp and young Bianka, who is marked as his worthy counterpart in her unwavering loyalty and sympathy to the (to her unknown) author and his fate. The heroic sacrifice necessary for women, Meysenbug seems to suggest, is to set aside their interest in the well-trodden path of marriage, family, and not least sexuality, in order to become the second half of a new society. This goes directly against the grain of the common way of thinking in the second half of the nineteenth century, according to which women should use their inherent power as mothers of the next generation to instil the values of a better society in their children.[28] However, according to Meysenbug, only if women are able to extricate themselves from society's expectation that they should seek fulfilment in marriage and motherhood, and from their own maternal as well as physical desires, will they be able to be a heroic, formative force.

Unfortunately, Meysenbug's attempt to imbue the woman who sacrifices herself for the sake of a higher ideal (brought about by men) with a heroism equal to that of the male hero, does not work. It is a very common topos in literature that the woman dies while the man repents and lives to do great deeds, especially if the woman harbours guilt in one form or another, and even more so if one of these forms is of a sexual nature. Meysenbug's take on this topos reflects her idea of an enabling power in women, which can, and must, be used for the betterment of society. But obviously, with Bianka's death and reincarnation, Meysenbug does not create an equal female force, nor an equal image to that of the male hero, but only fulfils the topos according to the patriarchal requirements of the existing, established literary image of the female hero, which lies under the control of female sexuality. Meysenbug's ideas and constructs of the female hero and female heroic existence conflate with the patriarchal notion of women's sacrifices for men.

28 For detailed discussions of this topic, see, for example, Ann Taylor Allen, Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914, New Brunswick, NJ 1991; id., 'Feminismus und Eugenik, im historischen Kontext', in: Feministische Studien 9, Issue 1, 1991, pp. 46–68; Georg Dörr, Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung um die Jahrhundertwende bei den Kosmikern, Stefan George und in der Frankfurter Schule (Epistemate / Reihe Literaturwissenschaft; 588), Würzburg 2007; Peter Davies, Myth, Matriarchy and Modernity: Johann Jakob Bachofen in German Culture, 1860–1945 (Interdisciplinary German Cultural Studies; 7), New York 2010.

I would like to end on a thought that goes beyond the scope of the novel discussed here and in the time frame of the late nineteenth century. I posit the following: In the essay *Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno describe the *Odyssey* in terms of the formation of the bourgeois subject.[29] In flouting the power of language and names, and controlling his desires, the hero Odysseus is able to withstand mythological forces and temptations. In discovering and mastering the mechanisms of this trick (*die List*), he establishes control and governance over mythological forces, tames them, and renders them impotent. Horkheimer and Adorno see in this the basis of patriarchal rule and the inherent potential of both fascist and capitalist power structures. It is essential that the hero here is a male hero; the formation of his bourgeois subjectivity also hinges on the control not only of his sexual desires, but also on that of the female mythological figures he encounters (the Sirens, Circe).[30] In this context, the question arises whether a female hero can actually exist on her own merits, in the enlightened, bourgeois idea of a hero, or whether the very notion of heroic action, the formation of a heroic subjectivity/individuality – since it is a patriarchal concept – limits her to only a handful of sites within the heroic discourse. Those places that are open to female heroism are deliberately kept open by an enlightened, bourgeois discourse which bases its defining concept of the enlightened subject on the heroic overcoming of mythological, chaotic forces in favour of rationality and rational order. These places are furthermore designed to include heroic death as a mechanism of control of female heroic action; female heroes might go against established social systems or systems of rule and power, but they seem (perhaps by definition) to lack the power to overthrow or change them, as many male heroes might do.

29 Max Horkheimer / Theodor W. Adorno, Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente, Frankfurt am Main [21]2013, pp. 50–87.

30 This has been thoroughly criticized by Helga Geyer-Ryan / Helmut Lethen, Von der Dialektik der Gewalt zur Dialektik der Aufklärung, in: Willem van Reijen / Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Ed.), Vierzig Jahre Flaschenpost: Dialektik der Aufklärung 1947–1987, Frankfurt am Main 1987, pp. 41–72. For a discussion of the problematic bourgeois hero, see also Bettina Plett, Problematische Naturen? Held und Heroismus im realistischen Erzählen, Paderborn 2002.

Heroes and Anti-Heroes

Reformulating the Heroic at the Accademia degli Apatisti in Seventeenth-Century Florence

Eva Struhal

This article traces different concepts of heroism present within the Accademia degli Apatisti, one of Florence's dominant literary academies of the seventeenth century. Epic literary models played an important role in forming ideals of military heroism. However, the Apatisti significantly reshaped the figure of the chivalric hero by merging it with ideas of civic ethics. The academy's re-adaptation of models for male heroism took into account the social status of its members, who were mostly young Florentine men from aristocratic or bourgeois background preparing for their lives as employees of the Medici State System. The general development that I will delineate is the gradual establishment of heroic models that could be acquired by male citizens in an urban setting by uniting aspects of predestination such as aristocratic birth or intellectual brilliance with a responsible and diligent development of virtues.

The Accademia degli Apatisti

Founded by the Florentine intellectual Agostino Coltellini as a *conversazione letteraria* in 1631, this literary circle of young educated men quickly expanded, until it established itself with the name Accademia degli Apatisti as one of Florence's leading literary academies around 1638.[1] Although often belittled as milieus of idle leisurely activities or as instruments of Medicean political power, literary academies served a central cultural and civic purpose in seventeenth-century Florence. During that time, literary academies became important social spaces for Florence's tightly knit intellectual male communities, which also illustrated the complex interplay between the courtly world and the world of Florentine citizens. Dedicated to the study of local (Tuscan and Florentine) language, history, and literature, as well as science, academies created spaces for homosocial exchange that rendered fluid separations between the city's social classes by uniting

[1] On the Accademia degli Apatisti see: Edoardo Benvenuti, Agostino Coltellini e l'Accademia degli Apatisti a Firenze nel secolo XVII, Pistoia 1910; Alessandro Lazzeri, Intellettuali e consenso nella Toscana del Seicento. L'Accademia degli Apatisti, Milan 1983; Michele Maylender, Storia delle Accademie d'Italia, Vol. 4, Bologna 1929. See also the eighteenth-century history of the Accademia degli Apatisti, Antonio Francesco Gori / Anton Maria Salvini, Origine dell' Accademia degl' Apatisti con molte Giunte del can. Salvini, in Cod. A. 36 (Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence: 1754).

aristocrats and bourgeois (*cittadini*) in studying their own culture. From the beginning, Coltellini intended his academy to serve a civic purpose by providing instructions to young Florentines preparing them for employment in the Medici State.[2] Similar to other European states, where mastering one's mother tongue elegantly played an important role in the self-fashioning and construction of social identity of pre-modern men, linguistic and rhetorical teaching played an essential role within the Accademia degli Apatisti.[3] Although the academy's seventeenth-century records are lost, a variety of sources help in reconstructing this gathering's many intellectual and rhetorical activities. For example, the academy regularly organized *lezzioni* (lectures) and *dubbi* (doubts), which were lectures presented by academicians as guidelines for fellow academicians.[4] Since the *dubbi* and *lezzioni* identified ethical models, they are also indicators for the academic consensus on the status of heroes as ethical prototypes.

Yet, unlike the scenario described by Michèle Cohen, in which men fashion their identity in dialogue with women, the construction of masculinity at the *Apatisti* took place in the absence of women. The academy's program of talks and discussions offered its male members models for individual self-fashioning that neatly fit the academy's corporate concept of ethical and civic behavior.[5] Women – in their physical absence – were epitomized and analyzed through their literary representations. A case in point is a *cicalata* (humorous speech) by Coltellini in which he analyses Francesco Berni's burlesque sonnet *Chiome d' argento finno, irte e attorte*.[6] In this sonnet, Berni mocks the style of Petrarchan love poetry by describing his beloved as physically unattractive. Coltellini's *cicalata*, which was presented to a group of young members of this academy and (exceptionally) their female dance partners, is written as if taking Berni's literary parody at face value and, therefore, as being an encomiastic poem lauding the beloved's unattractive exterior. Coltellini's poem *was* addressed to a masculine audience only. Through a reading of literary texts that resembles Anthony Grafton's analy-

2 Salvino Salvini, Fasti Consolari dell' Accademia Fiorentina, Florence 1717, p. 609. On the civic importance of education, see also Agostino Coltellini, Il Cittadino Accademico riconosciuto nella Vita del Signor Zanobi di Giuliano Girolami Gentiluomo Fiorentino di Agostino Coltellini Accademico Apatista al serenissimo Principe Leopolodo di Toscana, Florence 1656, p. 8.

3 Michèle Cohen, Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century, London 1996, pp. 17–21.

4 The academy's records of the seventeenth century are lost. There are, however, copies of extracts of these records from the eighteenth century. The academy's intellectual program is also documented by a selection of talks contained within the *Discorsi Academici* of the Accademia degli Apatisti for the seventeenth century, which have been preserved in Anton Maria Salvini's edited volume; see also Benvenuti, Agostino Coltellini (Fn. 1), p. 53.

5 On the complex relationship between individual self-fashioning and corporate entity, see Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare, Chicago/London 1980, pp. 11–73; 157–192.

6 Ostilio Contalgeni (=Agostino Coltellini), Lezione ovvero Cicalata sopra il Sonetto di M Francesco Berni Chiome d'argento fine irte, & attorte, Florence 1651.

sis of how the neo-stoic philosopher Justus Lipsius approached literature of the past by turning 'philology into philosophy' in an effort 'to make classical studies serve practical ends', young members of this academy were warned about problematic behavior or violating ideals within their own gender. The underlying argument of Coltellini's *cicalata* is that of the lover's blindness, and despite the fact that it is a literary analysis, the *cicalata* shifts the focus away from a literary to a moral argument.[7]

Although the Apatisti are usually not considered as neo-stoics, their name derives from the Greek term *apatheia*, describing the rational, emotionally detached attitude towards life upheld by the stoics and neo-stoics. One of the academy's prominent literary figures and founding members, Benedetto Fioretti mentions that the spirit of the Apatisti was one of impartial analysis of linguistic, scientific, and moral questions.[8] In conjunction with the academy's title and didactic mission, Coltellini also devised an *impresa*, called "l'impresa dello specchio piano," for his academy. The *impresa*, arranged around a mirror, was inspired by a motto from Dante's *Purgatorio*, Canto 33, verse 27 "Che la figura impressa non trasmuta".[9] The *impresa* appeals to the reader's literary memory by inviting him to recontextualize the sentence written around the mirror into its original literary scene, which is Dante's and Beatrice's dialogue in the *Purgatorio*. There, Dante admits that his mind, similar to a wax seal, has been "stamped" by Beatrice's thoughts, which will faithfully retain its imprint. This *impresa* therefore marks the importance attributed by the academy to its didactic program, educating citizens *intra muros* for the outside world. The fact that so much importance is attributed to the academy's symbolical decoration with a mirror highlights this academy's focus on themes of identity and ethical self-perfection. According to Deborah Shuger, the Renaissance mirror does not reflect the beholder's subjectivity, therefore merging the reflection of the individual with a system of abstract values, in a similar way as described by Greenblatt.[10] Therefore, the mirror at the Accademia degli Apatisti exceeded its basic function of reflecting a specific physiognomy by imprinting the moral and intellectual lessons learned at the academy into the conscience of its beholder, as made explicit by its inscription.

7 Anthony Grafton, Renaissance Readers and Ancient Texts: Comments on Some Commentaries, in: Renaissance Quarterly 38, Issue 4, 1985, p. 640.

8 Benvenuti, Agostino Coltellini (Fn. 1), p. 270.

9 Gori / Salvini, Origine dell' Accademia degl' Apatisti (Fn. 1), c. 15. Benvenuti, Agostino Coltellini (Fn. 1), pp. 269–270.

10 Deborah Shuger, The "I" of the Beholder: Renaissance Mirrors and the Reflexive Mind, in: Patricia Fumerton / Simon Hunt Fumerton (Ed.), Renaissance Culture and the Everyday, Philadelphia 2008, pp. 26–27; Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning (Fn. 5), pp. 11–73.

Heroes, Anti-Heroes, and Their Readers

Against this background, I am going to take a closer look at literary ideals of heroism and their impact on concepts of masculinity and ethics within the Accademia degli Apatisti, whose members were very familiar with such contrasting concepts of the hero as Tasso's *Gerusalemme* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.

In his *Discorsi del Poema Eroico* (1594), Torquato Tasso tied an indissoluble knot between the heroic action presented in the epic "as a narration of a memorable and possible human action" and the moral education of its readers: "I say that the heroic poem is an imitation of an action noble, great, and perfect, narrated in the loftiest verse, with the aim of giving profit through delight, so that the delight may get us to read more willingly and thus not lose the profit."[11] As Giovanni Careri has stressed, Tasso wants his influential poem *La Gerusalemme Liberata* (1582), in whose defense the *Discorsi* were written, to be understood as a representation of the totality of human experience, describing a large variety of actions and passions that have particular appeal to the Christian reader.[12] The emotional impact of Tasso's poem, which describes the historical combat between Christian and pagan soldiers for Jerusalem, is based on his text's rhetorical structure, which appeals to the senses. Careri has underscored that Tasso's *Gerusalemme* constructs a world that is at the same time verisimilar and evokes strong emotions in the reader by turning the act of reading into a sensation of first-hand experience.[13] That a vast number of Early Modern readers indeed read Tasso's influential epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* with the expectation of drawing parallels between its literary world and experienceable reality, is demonstrated slightly later by Galileo Galilei's profoundly skeptical reactions to this text: apart from aesthetic criticism, for example, by ridiculing the uninspiring, unrealistic dryness and artificiality of Tasso's characters. Galileo's insistence on a new kind of verisimilitude in poetry that takes into account the physical reality of the world also leads to his disappointment with Tasso's lack of rendering visual reality and spatial perception experienceable.[14] All in all, these different views represent a profound change regarding the constituencies of literary realism in which Galileo stands for a new generation of readers for whom experienceability is a key feature of literature.[15]

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11 Torquato Tasso, Discourses on the Heroic Poem, trans. Mariella Cavalchini / Irene Samuel, Oxford 1973, p. 14. For the Italian text, see Discorsi del Poema Eroico di Torquato Tasso, Società Tipografica de' Classici Italiani (Ed.), Milan 1824, pp. 20–21: "Io dico che il poema eroico è una imirazione d'azione illustre, grande e perfetta, fatta narrando con altissimo verso, a fine di giovar dilettando, cioè a fine che il diletto sia cagione ch'altri leggendo più volentieri non escluda il giovamento."

12 Giovanni Careri, Gestes d'amour et de guerre: La Jérusalem délivrée, images et affects (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle) (L'histoire et ses présentations; 5), Paris 2005, pp. 11–15.

13 Ibid., p. 13.

14 Galileo Galilei, Scritti Letterari, Florence 1943.

15 On the importance of experience as a basic cultural matrix, see Ezio Raimondi, La dissimulazione romanzesca: Antropologia manzoniana, Bologna 2004, pp. 17–30.

Critics of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* have attested to the fact that this text, like Tasso's *Gerusalemme*, aims to be a comprehensive representation of human experience. David Quint identifies Cervantes' contrasting modes of narration – straightforward and fragmentary – as a way to underscore the differences between literature and real life.[16] More recently, Anthony J. Cascardi has described *Don Quixote* to represent the human experience through the genre of the novel. Cascardi points out that "in the early modern age, literature was regarded as having the potential to think both speculatively and with skeptical criticism about larger questions."[17] The central theme of *Don Quixote* is to delineate a discrepancy between reading and reality by underlining the outdated nature of chivalric, literary ideals for contemporary society.

Both texts promote literary role models for their readers. The impact of Tasso's work on seventeenth-century Florentine aristocratic culture has been studied.[18] Although the impact and dissemination of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in seventeen-century Florentine culture has been less mapped out, recent studies, such as Crystal Hall's *Galileo's Reading*, attribute a significant impact of the Spanish novel on the city's intellectual culture, as it was translated into Italian in the 1620s.[19] In fact, *Don Quixote* renders the relationship of reader and literary example more complex by establishing the model of an anti-hero, whose extravagant and crazy actions take place in a "world on paper" that differs dramatically from the readers' lives, thus inviting the reader to recognize the impossibility of imitating chivalric models. The decline of the appeal of the chivalric epos and, therefore, also of its function as implicit conduct literature is – among other things – to be attributed to an increased demand for literature to be compatible with the experience of the real life of its readers. The middle of the seventeenth century also sees the rise of a new type of astute reader who demands literature to be based on real life experience in order to prepare him for reading texts similar to the always ambivalent meaning presented by the "book of life".[20]

Discourses on the Heroic at the Accademia degli Apatisti

Benedetto Fioretti's *Proginnasmi Poetici*, a five-volume poetic treatise that defines literary models to follow and criticizes faults of authors for the benefit of future writers, sheds light on the richness of literary discourse in this academy.[21] In each of the volumes, Fioretti discusses various aspects regarding the representation of

16 David Quint, Cervantes' Novel of Modern Times, Princeton, NJ 2003, pp. 26–27.
17 Anthony J. Cascardi, Cervantes, Literature, and the Discourse of Politics, Toronto 2012, p. 7.
18 M. Rossi / F. Gioffredi Superbi, L'arme e gli amori: Ariosto, Tasso and Guarini in Late Renaissance Florence, Florence 2001.
19 Crystal Hall, Galileo's Reading, Cambridge 2013, pp. 102–112.
20 Raimondi, La dissimulazione romanzesca (Fn. 15), p. 18.
21 Udeno Niesely (=Benedetto Fioretti), Proginnasmi Poetici, 5 vols., Florence 1620–1639.

literary heroes by ancient and contemporary writers. In volume three, he defines the hero as an "uomo illustre" – an illustrious man – who is "perfect in all sublime virtues like Tasso's Goffredo, who is described as young, noble, strong, just, prudent, generous and nearly a saint."[22] Fioretti therefore merges social status with moral and military values to underscore his strongly moralistic and elating vision of the hero.

Most of the *Proginnasmi* alert authors not to violate the necessary decorum for describing the perfect and sublime hero, who, in a literary representation, should not be tainted by the weaknesses of everyday men. Fioretti chastises authors such as Ariosto and Homer, who, in their representation of male heroes, undermine their military, masculine, and ethical superiority by humanizing them. When writing about heroes, authors must respect the obligation of the "eroico decoro" (heroic decorum) by representing heroes as superior to ordinary men.[23] Fioretti criticizes Homer for his representation of Odysseus as fraudulent.[24] He criticizes Ariosto for creating heroic characters that contaminate the concept of the heroic by rendering them too human. For Fioretti, the hero exceeds what is possible for others to accomplish, both in military action and in ethical conduct.[25] The social status of Fioretti's heroes is defined as that of princes, whose rank is consequently superior to that of typical men. Fioretti's concept of the heroic therefore follows Torquato Tasso's, who, in his *Discorso della virtù feminile e donnesca* (Venice, 1582), limits the accessibility to the heroic status to representatives of imperial or regal blood.[26] In fact, Tasso insists that heroism generally lies outside the domain of civic virtue and that heroes therefore do not live in cities.[27] But while civic culture allows men sometimes to commit heroic deeds within public offices, civic regulations for women that confine them to the house eliminate any access to heroism. That such a concept of heroism lies at the foundation of Fioretti's literary analysis becomes clear from the fact that he exclusively focuses on male heroes. Rather than being an ethical model, the military hero therefore turns into a symbol of mainly literary perfection, demanding from its literary creator the highest rhetorical prowess.

Fioretti appended a collection of poems by anonymous members of the Accademia degli Apatisti to the third volume of the *Proginnasmi*, which suggest that the academy trained its members to read literature with a critical eye, avoiding models that are morally problematic through a deeply engrained system of ethical choices. The anonymous poem *Orlando vicino al suo furore* describes Orlando's

22 Niesely, Proginnasmi Poetici, Vol. 3, Florence 1627, p. 345.

23 These reminders occur frequently in Fioretti's text. See, for example, Proginnasmi Poetici, Vol. 1, Florence 1620, pp. 34–35: "Proginn. 11: Obbligo d'imitare altamente i costumi di persone principalissime."

24 Ibid., p. 22.

25 Ibid., p. 38.

26 Torquato Tasso, Discorso della Virtù femminile e donnesca (Delle Opere di Torquato Tasso; 8), Venice 1738, pp. 222–230.

27 Ibid., p. 224.

reaction when he finds Angelica's and Medoro's carvings in the cave and on several trees that testify to their love:[28] the anonymous author compares the hero Orlando to a raging bull, who still cannot escape his fate; he compares Orlando's face to that of Gorgon. In order to emphasize the unrestrained wildness of the passion that grips Orlando, the author underscores his blindness and deafness and describes the physical intensity with which he fought against trees. It appears therefore that the Accademia degli Apatisti deconstructed the exemplarity of the figure of the male literary hero for its academic members by simultaneously underscoring the superiority as well as the unattainability of heroes and undermining the credibility of certain literary heroic figures.

This development ran counter to contemporary tendencies in seventeenth-century Florentine court culture, which displays a multifaceted and profound affinity with the heroic models offered by epic poetry.[29] The preference for the encomiastic rhetoric of chivalric and heroic imagery as the surroundings of the Medicean prince informed not only the court's theatrical culture but also the decoration of the prince's courtly habitat. During these years, Ferdinando II commissioned Pietro da Cortona to decorate the suite of the *Sala dei Planeti* at the Palazzo Pitti with scenes featuring ancient gods, heroic Roman and Greek statesmen, and mythological heroes such as Hercules. Cortona's frescoes testify that the traditional identification of the prince with the heroic model was fully functional within the aristocratic context and that Cortona's own Baroque stylistic idiom emphasized it additionally.[30] The interconnection between heroic contents of the ceiling decorations and the Medici family is also underscored by the *stucco* portraits of Medici family members inserted into the lower border in the *Sala di Venere* (Image 1).

Satirizing the Military Hero: Lorenzo Lippi's Il Malmantile Racquistato

Several written sources authored by members of the Academia degli Apatisti suggest that the academy considered the ethical model of the military hero as outdated and even morally dangerous during the 1640s and 1650s. An important document that illustrates this view is the mock-epic *Il Malmantile Racquistato*

28 Udeno Niesely (=Benedetto Fioretti), Proginnasmi Poetici, Vol. 3.1, Florence 1695, p. 512.

29 There are several studies that underline the profound affinity between epic poetry and the Medici princes such as: Anna Maria Testaverde, Epica Spettacolare ed Etica Dinastica Alla Corte Medicea, in: Rossi / Superbi, L'arme e gli amori (Fn. 18), pp. 231–253.

30 Malcolm Campbell, Pietro da Cortona at the Pitti Palace: A Study of the Planetary Rooms and Related Projects, Princeton, NJ 1977. Giulio Briganti, Pietro da Cortona o della pittura barocca, Florence 1962.

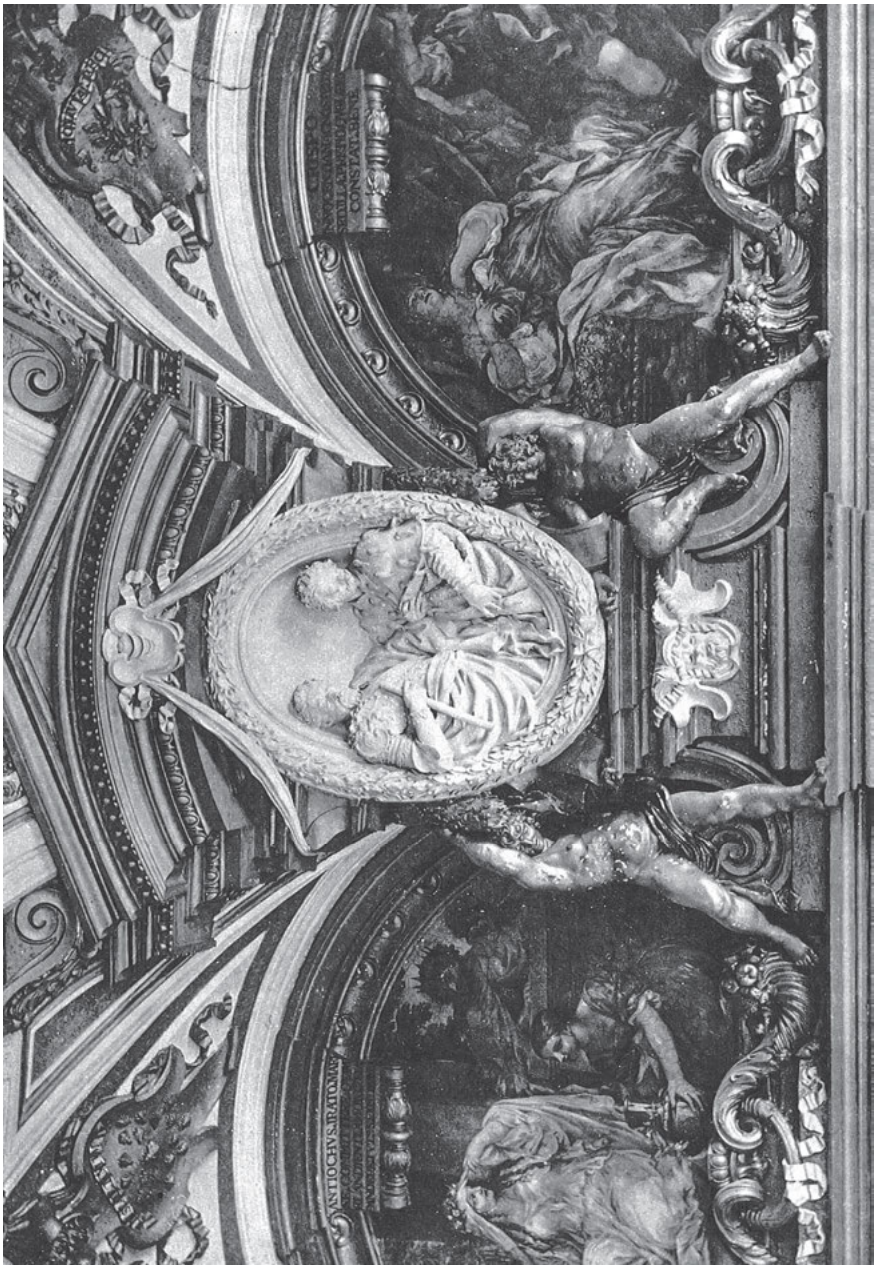

Image 1: Pietro da Cortona, Stucco portraits of Ferdinand I and Cosimo II, 1642, Sala di Venere, Palazzo Pitti.

written by the Florentine painter Lorenzo Lippi (Image 2).[31] As has been long recognized, the academy had a significant impact on Lippi's art and poetry.[32] Lippi started writing the *Malmantile* in 1643–44, during a sojourn in Innsbruck in order to defeat his loneliness and also to entertain the Archduchess, Claudia de' Medici.[33] However, while the context of Claudia de' Medici's court in Innsbruck may have been the birthplace of the *Malmantile*, the contents and its protagonists are tightly connected to the Accademia degli Apatisti, where it was read publicly for the first time in October and November 1649.[34] The mock-epic's numerous lazy soldiers are portraits of Lippi's contemporaries, mostly members of the Apatisti, thinly disguised by anagrammatic names. The plot evolves in twelve cantos describing the conquest of Malmantile (which is also the name of a ruinous fortress from the fifteenth century near Florence) by the troops of General Baldone, who tries to reestablish the righteous reign of his cousin Celidora by overthrowing her usurper Bertinella with the help of an army of lazy, cowardly soldiers. These general features of the plot are as much a parody of epic poetry as the poem's protagonists satirize the literary ideal of the military, the princely hero, and his elevated actions. Lippi's burlesque picture of the chivalric world and its ethics seems to camouflage a critical view of war since the epic frequently alludes to the brutal reality of the Thirty Years' War. References to this bloody military conflict are always disguised through humorous wordplays. For example, in his military career prior to the battle of Malmantile, General Marchese di Gubbiano has "extinguished the French and buried the German" in the "conflitto della Magna", a term that plays on the similarity between the Italian words for Germany ('Allemagna') and eating ('mangiare').[35] Lippi's friend, the poet Antonio Malatesti, who appears as General Amostante Latoni in the mock-epic, left the calves of his legs in Flanders ("ha lasciato le sue polpe in Fiandra"), a formulation which simultaneously engages in a play of words with the Florentine mode of saying "matto spolpato", denoting a complete fool.[36]

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31 Lorenzo Lippi, Il Malmantile Racquistato: Poema di Perlone Zipoli, con le note di Puccio Lamoni, Florence 1688. On the *Malmantile*, see Arnaldo Alterocca, La Vita e l' Opera poetica e pittorica di Lorenzo Lippi, Catania 1914; Eva Struhal, "La Semplice Imitazione del Naturale": Lorenzo Lippi's Poetics of Naturalism in Seventeenth-Century Florence (Johns Hopkins University, 2007), UMI 2007; Maria Cristina Cabani, Testo e Commento nel Malmantile Racquistato, in: Elena Fumagalli [et al.] (Ed.), Firenze milleseicentoquaranta: Arti, lettere, musica, scienza, Venice 2010; Lucia Di Santo, L'eroicomico fiorentino di Lorenzo Lippi, Milan 2013.

32 See Chiara D'Afflitto, Lorenzo Lippi, Florence 2002.

33 On the circumstances of the creation of the *Malmantile*, see Paola Barocchi (Ed.), Filippo Baldinucci, Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua, Vol. 5, Florence 1974–75, pp. 264–266.

34 Gori / Salvini, Origine dell' Accademia degl' Apatisti (Fn. 1), p. 114; Alterocca, La Vita e l'Opera Poetica (Fn. 31), p. 23.

35 Lippi, Malmantile (Fn. 31), c. I, st. 36, p. 31.

36 Ibid., c. I, st. 61, pp. 49–50.

Image 2: Frontispiece of Lorenzo Lippi's (known as Perlone Zipoli) *Il Malmantile Racquistato*, 1750, Florence.

Lippi's armies are pitiful, disorderly groups of decidedly unheroic men: For example, an army of blind beggars in Canto I has collection boxes and crutches as their only weapons. They follow their guide dogs, recite prayers, and play rebecs.[37] In line with the deplorable state of the soldiers is the lack of moral integrity of their military captains, who Lippi equals to charlatans, astrologers, and other bluffers who seduce soldiers for their armies with their words. In consequence, these armies lack morale and decorum. For example, General Palamidone is followed by men dressed in clothes full of fat-splatters and crumbs from "ciambelli" (bakeries), who are purse-snatchers in their civilian life. These denigrating descriptions of soldiers may adhere to the reality of the Thirty Years' War as their visual predecessors – the prints of the French engraver Jacques Callot, which were well known and highly adored in Florence (Image 3) – were likely familiar to Lippi.[38] By conflating grotesque depictions of beggars with his ideas of the fallacy of military bravery, Lippi satirizes the low level of ethical behavior for which the mercenaries of the Thirty Years' War were known.[39] Lippi's soldiers decidedly lack military ethics and heroism: military bravery is easily capsized by hunger, which – as Lippi states in Canto IX – is more powerful than love or heroism.[40] Just like Jacques Callot in his series of engravings *Les Misères de la Guerre* (listed in the inventory drawn up at his death as *La Vie des Soldats*) documents the brutalities of the *soldatesca* during the Thirty Years' War, Lippi – albeit in a more humorous voice – highlights the negative side of the brave and glorious military hero (Image 4). Lippi's mocking descriptions of battles invert the epic canon and entertain through their burlesque nature. For example, during the invasion of *Malmantile* in Canto IX, women who are defending the castle throw down at the enemy everything they can lay hands on: bed sheets that have been urinated on and boiling hot laundry water. One of them invents a highly novel weapon in tying a cat by its tail to a rope and whirling it around against the hostile soldiers, who are thus scratched and bitten.[41] Another source for such a satirical presentation of chivalric ideals is Miguel de Cervantes' earlier mentioned *Don Quixote*, translated into Italian by Lorenzo Franciosini with the title *Dell'ingegnoso cittadino don Chisciotte della Mancia* (Venice 1622–25). Lippi's familiarity with this text is documented by his reference to Don Quixote's spear.[42] Thus,

37 Ibid., c. I, st. 38, p. 32.

38 Callot's life by the Florentine art theorist Filippo Baldinucci testifies the Florentine admiration of Callot, see Paola Barocchi (Ed.), Filippo Baldinucci, Notizie de' Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua, Vol. 4, Florence, 1974–75, pp. 372–390.

39 For a description of the state of destitution of the soldiers active in the Thirty Years' War, see Bernhard K. Kroener, "The Soldiers Are Very Poor, Bare, Naked, Exhausted": The Living Conditions and Organisational Structure of Military Society During the Thirty Years' War, in: Klaus Bussmann / Heinz Schilling (Eds.), 1648: War and Peace in Europe, Vol. 1: Politics, Religion, Law and Society, Münster 1999, pp. 285–292.

40 Lippi, Malmantile, (Fn. 31), c. IX, pp. 419–461.

41 Ibid., c. IX, st. 17–23, pp. 431–435.

42 Ibid., c. VIII, st. 33, p. 395.

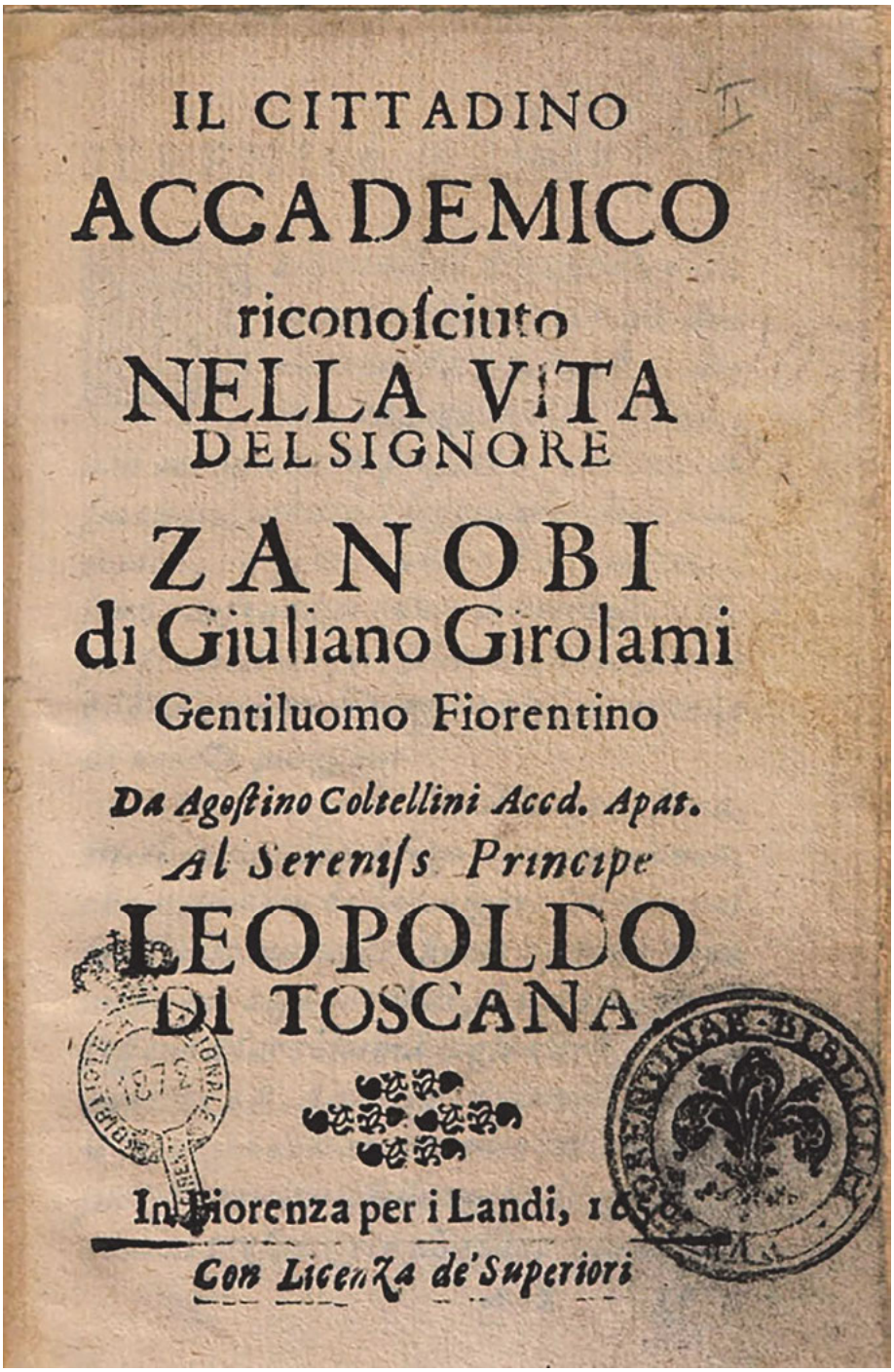

Image 3: Frontispiece of Agostino Coltellini's *Il Cittadino Accademico*, 1656, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence.

Image 4: Jacques Callot, *Frontispiece of The Paupers*, British Museum (inv. X,4.211), 1622–23, ©Trustees of the British Museum.

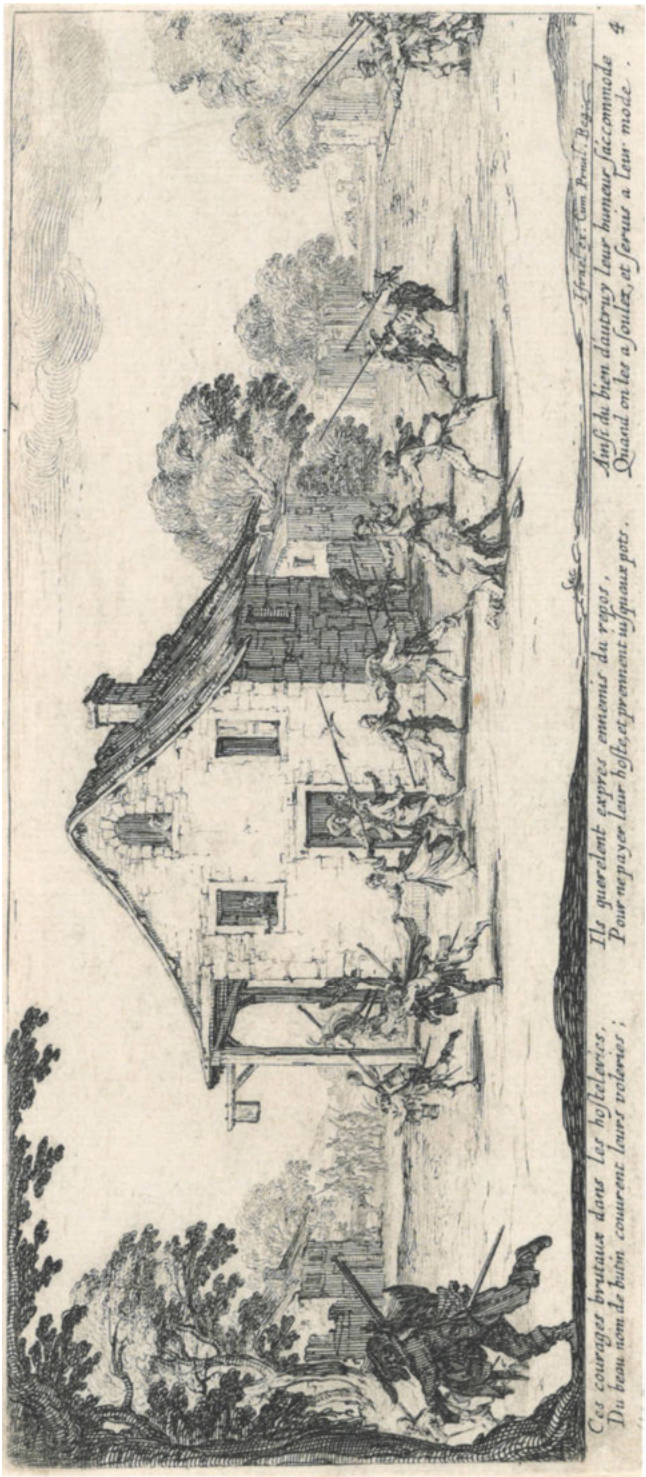

Image 5: Jacques Callot, *Village*, *The Large Miseries of War*, Plate 4: *Rogue Soldiers Escaping from an Inn They Have Just Looted*. c. 1633, British Museum (inv. 1861,0713.767), 1633, © Trustees of the British Museum.

the *Malmantile* is also informed by an intertextual dialogue with Cervantes' influential text and is the result of the idea that the heroic canon is no longer in correspondence with contemporary life as upheld by Don Quixote. However, the relationship between both texts is a complex one. In line with the canon of the mock-epic, Don Quixote has been called a "hero-upside-down", or he has been situated between a hero and a fool.[43] However, Cervantes and Lippi create very different concepts of the hero. While Don Quixote is certainly a heroic figure in that he is courageous and endowed with extraordinary gifts, his misinterpretation of reality leads to the effect that his heroic action metamorphoses into the genre of the comic. Lippi's anti-heroes avoid any action that could be labeled as heroic and, by doing so, appear rational and act according to common sense. For example, in following the call for battle, Canto IV describes several soldiers going off to search for food rather than engaging in battle.[44] While the *Malmantile* and *Don Quixote* share a similar literary goal of undermining the predominant role of epic poetry, they go about this aim in very different ways. Although *Don Quixote* is conceived of as incorporating essential characteristics of the hero by transgressing the ordinary limitations of normal men, he cannot be a hero, because his vision of reality stands in constant conflict to a general understanding of the real world and the role he performs within it.[45] In a way, Lippi's characters take the process of deconstruction of the heroic model a step further than Don Quixote, since they are in no way 'superior' to other human beings and behave according to laws of natural instincts and self-preservation. Their behavior is the result of the realization that readers will not be able to follow the moral example of the heroic protagonists introduced by the literary body of epic poetry. The *Malmantile* and *Don Quixote* have, therefore, in common that their protagonists cannot serve as behavioral models for their readers. However, they profoundly differ concerning the empathetic structure established between literary protagonist and reader. While Don Quixote invites the reader's empathy, the lazy soldiers of Lippi's *Malmantile* are grotesque caricatures created by their author's brilliant use of Tuscan proverbs and phrases. They evoke laughter and derision, mixed with admiration for their creator's linguistic prowess. Despite these differences, both texts invite the reader to behave differently than the literary characters described.

One of the lazy and un-heroic soldiers is the author's literary self-portrait under an anagrammatic name of Perlone Zipoli. In the beginning of the poem, Perlone leaves the battlefield for a while, because he is hungry, only to return to hand out

43 J. M. Sobré, Don Quixote, The Hero Upside-Down, in: Hispanic Review 44, Issue 2, 1976, pp. 127–141. More recently on the complex combination of differing ideals of heroism in Don Quixote, see Stephen Rupp, Heroic Forms: Cervantes and the Literature of War, Toronto 2014.

44 Lippi, Malmantile (Fn. 31), c. III, pp. 130–186.

45 On general characteristics of the epic hero, see the still useful C. M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry, London 1964, pp. 91–131.

the final blow against the giant Biancone.[46] He is therefore a hero, who performs a heroic deed only by accident. After pointing out that Perlone's character is extravagant and crazy, Lippi briefly describes his appearance: he is skinny, has long and thin legs, and wears an old ragged jacket which he claims dates back to a legendary Florentine hermit from the Quattrocento.[47] Perlone's lack of heroic ethics matches the lack of masculinity in his appearance. Lippi denigrates not only his exterior, but also describes his state of mind as confused. Lippi's *effictio* does not share the least parallel with the outward appearance or character of the male military hero. Instead, it is based on canonic conventions of auto-representations employed by burlesque poets. By emulating figures such as Socrates, whose brilliant mind surprised even more as it was masked by an unappealing exterior, they take up the basic idea of "piu savi ed ingegnosi li brutti che Ii belli" (the ugly ones are wiser and more ingenuous than the beautiful ones).[48] The self-representation of burlesque authors is therefore only seemingly humble. In reality, it is instead the proud claim of a subversive intelligence that by thinking along unconventional lines uncovers hidden and uncomfortable truths. Lippi's mockery of the heroic model likely has a moralistic dimension, which parallels the satire *La Guerra* in many aspects, which Salvator Rosa wrote contemporaneously during his stay in Florence.[49] Rosa bitterly condemns the lure of military glory and the violence of war that informs European politics. Rosa's third satire, which celebrates the Neapolitan popular hero, the fisherman Masianello who revolted against the Spanish occupation and aristocracy, was presumably a spontaneous response to the Neapolitan revolution. It is also a reflection on the general political situation of an Italy torn between the super powers of France and Spain. Much like Lippi, Rosa deplores the seductive power of the image of the military hero, which allured multitudes to participate in the massive bloodshed of the Thirty Years' War.[50] Rosa also explicitly vociferates against the ideal of the military hero, "who gives his blood, soul and body for a few coins".[51] In fact, Rosa is so bitter about the bloodshed brought about by this war that Peter Tomory characterized this satire as "a powerful indictment of war as a vehicle for hero worship".[52] While Rosa's condemnation of the violence of wars turns into a profound criticism of rulers, Lippi's

46 Lippi, Malmantile (Fn. 31), c. XI, pp. 491–520. The giant Biancone is Bartolomeo Ammanati's statue of Neptune from the Piazza della Repubblica.

47 Ibid., c. IV, st. 7, p. 190.

48 Silvia Longhi, Lusus. Il Capitolo Burlesco al Cinquecento, Padua 1983, pp. 113–137. All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

49 Uberto Limentani, La Satira nel Seicento, Milan 1961, pp. 180–189. On Rosa as satirist, see Wendy Wassyng Roworth, Pictor Succensor: A Study of Salvator Rosa as a Satirist, Cynic, and Painter, New York 1978.

50 Salvator Rosa, La Guerra, in: Satire di Salvator Rosa con le note d'Anton Maria Salvini, Amsterdam 1788, pp. 102–128.

51 Ibid., p. 113. My translation.

52 P. A. Tomory, Battles, War and Soldiers: Salvator Rosa as Moralist, in: Storia dell'arte 69, 1990, pp. 256–267, here p. 265.

Malmantile, although denouncing similar ideals, ends on a more optimistic note: the lazy soldiers reinstate Celidora, the righteous queen of Malmantile, who marries their military anti-hero, General Baldone. Unlike Salvator Rosa's outright condemnation, Lippi's mockery of wars and military heroes does not fundamentally oppose political order as we know it. In contrast to Rosa's satires which were published posthumously and read in small literary contexts, Lippi's *Malmantile* was part of much wider 'public sphere', through public readings in the Accademici degli Apatisti.

Lippi's humor and his brilliant use of the Florentine dialect in his *Malmantile* are also a display of his self-fashioning and intellectual identity. Linguistic performance played an intrinsic role for Lippi's self-fashioning in a way that was far from common in the Early Modern era, since he was famous for entertaining his contemporaries with his "bizarre and capricious temper" and for his sharp-witted jokes during dinner parties.[53] He was also frequently active as an actor. His linguistic bravura is therefore part of the performative dimension of his masculine identity.

Il Cittadino Accademico: The Citizen as Hero

While Lippi's *Malmantile* only mocks the ideal of the military hero without offering alternative behavioral ideals, the writings of Agostino Coltellini, the academy's founder, outline alternate valuable prototypes of the heroic of creating masculine identity. This becomes apparent in Coltellini's adaptation of the concept of the 'illustrious' to Florentine 'everyday life'. In his treatise *Il Cittadino Accademico* (The Academic as Citizen), Coltellini expands the possibility of performing outstanding actions within everyday life by lauding the exemplarity of the Florentine intellectual and nobleman Zanobi di Giuliano Girolami.[54] He is blind and not a military hero, but Coltellini heroises his pursuit of knowledge and education in astronomy. He hails from one of Florence's old aristocratic families, glorified by poets and historians, and one of his forefathers was the 'Santissimo eroe', Saint Zanobi, Florence's first Bishop.[55] Coltellini's *cittadino accademico* is distinguished through God's gift of wisdom and is presented as a model in his pursuit of knowledge as a quasi-heroic, illustrious activity, which is an essential component in diminishing ignorance and helping Florentines to develop according to God's destiny for man, distinguishing him from animals. He also vehemently protests that academic knowledge is only of theoretical nature. For example, Zanobi puts his studies in agriculture and science to practical ends by improving the agricultural revenues of his villas. Zanobi is distinguished by many virtues, but never vanity. Similarly,

53 Baldinucci, Notizie de' Professori del Disegno (Fn. 33), p. 269.
54 Coltellini, Il Cittadino Accademico (Fn. 2).
55 Ibid., p. 19.

when Girolami and his wife die unexpectedly from a fever, the process of heroisation and sacralisation is completed by transforming the *cittadino accademico* into an *academico del Paradiso*.[56] This new kind of hero acknowledges the exemplarity of mankind by learning to develop his God-given intellect. Turning the acquisition of knowledge into an illustrious activity for Florentine men, Coltellini promotes a behavioral model for young men that deviates from the ideals of masculinity associated merely with chivalric bravery on the battleground. Coltellini's construction of Girolami as a hero unites traditional elements such as aristocratic social status with novel ones such as the acquisition and implementation of knowledge. Coltellini therefore constructs the image of a complex hero, borrowing from literary, scientific, and religious models, through the evocation of Girolami's afterlife in paradise. As Barbara M. Benedict has shown, the culture of curiosity in educated circles of the seventeenth century encapsulated a tendency to represent scientific inquiry through a heroic optic and rhetoric.[57] This strategy was amply developed by Galileo Galilei, whose writings presented scientific disagreements through the lens of heroic military combat.[58]

While the Accademia degli Apatisti's move away from the traditional heroic model fits into the pattern of the general decline of the epic poem, it also exemplifies a search for a stronger overlap between everyday culture and heroic ideals that are considered typical for the seventeenth century. The reinforcement of such models for heroic behavior can be associated with demands for attainability and realism of heroic ideals that informs Lorenzo Lippi's deconstruction of the model of the military hero.[59] That the merging of heroism and education must have been a long-running theme in this academy is also demonstrated by Benedetto Averani's lecture entitled *Se nelle donne si trovi eroica virtu* (Is heroism to be found in women?) and presented at an unknown date several decades later to the Accademia degli Apatisti.[60] Averani suggests that neither social status nor gender should automatically prevent anyone from becoming a hero. Rather, it is necessary that the hero's soul be filled with *sovrumano furore* (superhuman furor).[61] Since heroism is a gift given by God, it can also be present in women. Like Coltellini, Averani considers education as a necessary precondition for heroism and concedes that if heroic vir-

56 Ibid., p. 26.

57 Barbara M. Benedict, Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry, Chicago 2001. See, for example, her discussion of shaping scientific discoveries and biographies within the framework of heroic narrative, pp. 116, 195.

58 See the excellent Hall, Galileo's Reading (Fn. 19), pp. 44–70.

59 In fact, several authors identify the literary genre of mock-epic as a specifically bourgeois literary genre. See Barbara Simerka, Discourses of Empire: Counter-Epic Literature in Early Modern Spain, University Park, PA 2003. See also Gregory G. Colomb, Designs on Truth: The Poetics of the Augustan Mock-Epic, University Park, PA 1992.

60 Lezzione Decimaterza di Benedetto Averani detta nell' Accademia degli Apatisti "Se nelle Donne si trovi eroica Virtù", in: Raccolta di Prose Italiane contenente Lezioni, Vol. 3, Venice 1730, pp. 111–114.

61 Ibid., p.112.

tue is found less frequently in women, it is due to cultural custom to bar women from education.[62] Averani claims that not biology – but the cultural circumstance that women are not raised like men – is responsible for their lack of ability for rationale in discourse and the fact that they are less frequently found in the role of heroes. Like Coltellini's treatise, Benedetto Averani's presentation at the Accademia degli Apatisti highlights the connection between heroism and education, cautioning that if a city does not provide good education, men that distinguish themselves through outstanding, heroic actions, will be in decline.

Conclusion

A comparison of Fioretti's, Lippi's, Coltellini's, and Averani's texts, each formulated within the context of the Accademia degli Apatisti, highlights the development of normative ideals concerning heroism that increasingly focus on a deconstruction of the figure of the martial hero and instead embrace models of heroism that can be emulated by male and even female citizens. In comparison to Fioretti, who indissolubly ties heroic status to masculinity and social status, Coltellini and Averani define heroism as a mix of (God-given) disposition and characteristics that can be diligently developed by education. The fact that both academicians understand heroism to be achieved through superior innate qualities in combination with diligently developed education establishes a parallel between their concepts of the 'heroic' with that of 'genius'.[63] This junction pushes the concept of heroism onto an intellectual level that is consequently combined with the idea of social attainability for everyone. In many ways, institutions such as the Accademia degli Apatisti incorporate essential aspects described by Jürgen Habermas' establishment of the bourgeois public sphere.[64] Like Habermas' model, which suggests that the bourgeoisie replaced the court and undermined its monopoly of public representation, academies such as the Apatisti were key institutions in establishing a new 'public' based on a reorientation and transformation of traditional cultural patterns.

62 Ibid., p. 113. On the concept of 'heroic virtue' (*virtus heroic*), see Martin Disselkamp, Barockheroismus: Konzeptionen 'politischer' Größe in Literatur und Traktatistik des 17. Jahrhunderts (Frühe Neuzeit; 65), Tübingen 2002, pp. 24–54.

63 See for example the definition of 'genius' and its link with heroism in Philip P. Wiener (Ed.), Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Vol. 2, New York 1973, pp. 293–297.

64 Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, Cambridge, MA 1989.

Image credits

Image 1: Malcolm Campbell, Pietro da Cortona at the Pitti Palace: a Study of the Planetary Rooms and Related Projects, Princeton, NJ 1977, ill. 22.

Image 2: Perlone Zipoli, Il Malmantile Racquistato colle note di Puccio Lamoni e d'altri, Florence 1750, Frontispiece.

Image 3: Agostino Coltellini, Il cittadino accademico riconosciuto nella vita del signore Zanobi di Giuliano Girolami gentiluomo fiorentino da Agostino Coltellini accd. apat. Al sereniss. principe Leopoldo di Toscana, Florence 1656, Frontispiece.

Image 4: Jacques Callot, Frontispiece of The Paupers, British Museum (inv. X, 4.211), 1622–23, ©Trustees of the British Museum.

Image 5: Jacques Callot, Village, The Large Miseries of War, Plate 4: Rogue Soldiers Escaping from an Inn They Have Just Looted. c. 1633, British Museum (inv. 1861,0713.767), 1633, © Trustees of the British Museum.

The Dramatic Hero in the Gendered Imaginary of Early Modern Germany

Judith and Holofernes

Barbara Becker-Cantarino

In Early Modern Europe the typical hero was an exceptional ruler or warrior: a man characterised by greatness, courage, strength, and power. His community deemed him a hero by attribution of heroic status, historians have celebrated him and later scholars investigated or dismantled him and continue to do so to this day. What about the heroine, that truly exceptional and rare woman to gain the attribute 'heroic' in the early modern era? 'Heroine', the feminine derivative of 'hero', describes an unstable, oscillating category that does not really fit into prevailing notions of heroism – as the multiple re-inventions and re-interpretations of that rare and mythical woman warrior Joan of Arc illustrate. I would like to address the binary of hero/heroine by turning to the heroic pair Judith and Holofernes and look at their representations in early modern German drama, at heroisation techniques, practices, and structures with an eye to gender as an analytical tool. I am using the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes in selected dramatic works (by Sixt Birck and Martin Opitz).

Literary representations are embedded in a gendered social imaginary. The dramatic hero and all persons in a drama must relate in some way to this imaginary in order to be recognizable to, and appreciated by, the audience as a tragic hero. Studying the construction of the dramatic hero and heroine helps to explore ethical values and their relationship to the gendered early modern imaginary. It uncovers the story's ambiguity and embeddedness in the gendered literary and intellectual fabric as transmitted in texts. With the story of the warrior Holofernes and his murderess (albeit for a good cause) Judith, I will focus especially on the cultivation and sublimation of male-coded violence and the emerging theme of female-coded sexuality. A look at later dramatisations of this story (Hebbel) reveals a continuing tradition of gender categories in literary representations and in the theatre as a social institution.

The Dramatic Hero/Heroine in Aristotle's Poetics

Drama as a literary genre is to be performed or acted out, which requires human or human-like protagonists, that is to say a distinct individual or group acting along with an ensemble or a group of individuals. Creating veritable, believable, convincing figures lies at the centre of a successful drama. Aristotle, the founding father of European drama theory, famously suggested in his *Poetics* that a

tragedy shows "men in action, and does not use narrative, and through pity and fear effects relief of these and similar emotions".[1] Aristotle's concepts of *mimesis* (imitation) and *katharsis* (purification) explicitly tie ethical considerations to the hero's actions and character traits. Aristotle presumes a web of ethical/moral values within which the drama functions.

Aristotle defines tragedy as "the representation of an action that is heroic and complete and of a certain magnitude"; it "represents men in action"[2] and foregrounds the protagonists' character and the heroic action or plot:

> One should not show worthy men passing from good fortune to bad. […] Nor again wicked people passing from bad fortune to good. […] Nor again the passing of a thoroughly bad man from good fortune to bad fortune. […] There remains then the mean between these. This is the sort of man who is not pre-eminently virtuous and just, and yet it is through no villainy of his own that he falls into the fortune, but rather through some flaw in him […] like Oedipus and Thyestes and the famous men of such families.[3]

There is, of course, no explicit mention of gender, but the reference to "famous men" providing the protagonists for a drama reveals the gendered slant. The hero or protagonist ('heros' in the Homeric epics) is termed 'anthropos', the generic 'man' standing in for all mankind. Moreover, Aristotle's text implicitly conceives and foregrounds the hero as a male individual when he moves from theory to example, to actual heroic stories in Greek tragedy: his prime examples of dramatic heroes are Oedipus and Creon, while Jocaste or Antigone are mere tragic victims, they are instrumentalised in the dramatic action, suffering the action's consequences, but are only very secondary players in the dramatic scenario, not active driving forces. Aristotle's text does not mention a 'heroine' per se, but offers a cautionary sideline with reference to women and heroic character:

> Concerning 'character' there are four points to aim at. The first and most important is that the character must be good. […] But this is relative to each class of people. Even a woman is 'good' and so is a slave, although it may be said that a woman is an inferior thing and the slave beneath consideration, quite worthless. A second point is that the characters should be appropriate. A character may be manly, but it is not appropriate for a woman to be manly or clever.[4]

Gender as a marker underpins Aristotle's text that focuses on the male individual, on a masculine-coded character and his actions, a heroic figure that is clearly gendered *masculine and elite.* This perception then dominated the intellectual horizon and social order as represented in early modern literary texts.

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1 Aristotle in 23 volumes, Vol. 23, translated by W.H. Fyfe, Cambridge, MA 1932, Section 1449b: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0086,034:1449b, 7 June 2018.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., Section 1453a.

4 Ibid., Section 1454a.

The *Poetics*' textual reference to 'the slave' also references the particular class system in antiquity. Similarly, for the early modern social order a well-articulated and observed class – feudal – system was in operation, assigning to each individual his/her particular place in this order. The Shakespearean "All the world's a stage" was an apt metaphor for the early modern worldview; this metaphor's extended inscription above the Amsterdam Schouwburg theatre more explicitly read: "De weerelt is een speeltooneel, Elck speelt zijn rol en krijght zijn deel": the world is a stage, each player has a role and a text (gets his part) in this *theatrum mundi,* that is to say, each individual was believed to have a station in real life and play his/her part accordingly in the moral and social order.[5]

Gender and Heroisation in Early Modern Germany

Gender is much more than 'female experience' though in present-day German academia gender is often reduced to being 'by, about, and for women'. Gender studies investigate "how men and women assimilated or altered gender norms and how they interacted with each other […], the dynamics of gender experiences, politics and everyday life".[6] Sociology defines gender as a system of social practices, a system that creates and maintains gender distinctions, organises relations of both sexes including inequalities and differences; gender is considered to be enacted or reproduced, is "done" (performed) and not only talked about.[7] Monika Mommertz refines this paradigm by regarding gender "as a *marker* not only for 'men' and 'women' but rather for a difference that produces these categories"; she suggests investigating the "meanings associated for that difference and their role in the construction of both the male and the female hero". [8] With

5 See Peter Eversmann, "Founded for the Eyes and Ears of the People". The Amsterdam Schouwburgh from 1637, in: Jan Bloemendal / Peter Eversmann / Elsa Strietman (Ed.), Drama, Performance and Debate. Theatre and Public Opinion in Early Modern Europe, Leiden 2013, pp. 269–298, here p. 279, note 21.

6 Ulinka Rublack (Ed.), Gender in Early Modern German History, Cambridge 2002, p. 2. Articles in this volume convey "the multifacetedness and dynamics of gender experiences, politics and everyday life across early modern Germany" (p. 2), by concentrating on experiential vagaries of (historically documented) individuals like men in witchcraft trials (Labouvie), women in midwifery (Rowlands), or the "multiple identities of Maiden Heinrich" (Lindemann) – these are historical examples of impressive, often sensational exceptions – outliers (in modern statistical terms) – that flaunted prescriptive gender norms.

7 Amy S. Wharton, The Sociology of Gender. An Introduction to Theory and Research, London 2005, pp. 7–8. Gender is described here as a system of social practices, a process and a fixed state; as occurring at all levels of social practices, far-reaching and interlocking; gender is considered as existing independently of individuals; as being of importance in organising relationships.

8 Monika Mommertz, Geschlecht als *Markierung, Ressource* und *Tracer.* Neue Nützlichkeiten einer Kategorie am Beispiel der Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit, in: Christine Roll / Frank Pohle / Matthias Myrczek (Ed.), Grenzen und Grenzüberschreitungen. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Frühneuzeitforschung, Köln/Wien/Weimar 2010, pp. 573–594, here pp. 574–576.

reference to early modern society, Mommertz points to mono-gender areas, institutions occupied by only one sex – the male – like the early modern university, the army, the church hierarchy, and she looks in these seemingly homogeneous and unstratified fields for gender as a *tracer* and as a *resource* in understanding early modern cultures of knowledge. This approach allows the use of gender as an analytical category on multiple levels when addressing the complex and asymmetrical heroisation of men and women.

"Meanings of gender are historically situated",[9] Ulinka Rublack asserts for the historical perspective, and it does bear repeating that, different from today's secular views, the early modern moral and social order was believed to be supported by the Bible, albeit in often diverging and debated theological (but not social) interpretation of the Great Book. The polarisation of gender attributes was by no means an invention of the late eighteenth century, nor did the belief in two sexes arise only around 1800, as is sometimes implicitly assumed by modernists without consideration of earlier developments.[10] With respect to the gender order, the Story of Creation (especially in Genesis II) and the Fall from Paradise provided the basic paradigms, just as biblical stories served as *the* material for weekly sermons in church, evening readings in the home, and countless religious, devotional, and fictional texts.[11] These contributed to and informed the social and moral order, a frequently articulated set of ideas about how a person should act, and why the social world was arranged in the way that it was. The Early Modern social imaginary presumed a system of gendered duties, capacities, and functions, imagining men and women as actors taking on set roles. The Early Modern worldview was dominated by a perceived gender polarity of men and women and in practice had different respective roles at all levels of society. This manifested itself in divergent roles and asymmetrical status of men and women with respect to life-cycles, the economy, literacy and learning, the creation of culture, the position in religion and church, legal status and laws, roles in politics and power, as extensive recent historical research has documented and Merry Wiesner has presented succinctly.[12]

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9 Rublack, Gender (Fn. 6), p. 1.

10 Karin Hausen, Die Polarisierung der "Geschlechtscharaktere": Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben, in: Werner Conze (Ed.), Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas: Neue Forschungen, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 363–393: https://archive.org/stream/HausenPolarisierungDerGeschlechtscharaktere/Hausen-Polarisierung_der_Geschlechtscharaktere_djvu.txt, 7 August 2017. Karin Hausen's foundational text is often mistakenly applied to earlier periods and Thomas Laqueur's sweeping generalisations in: Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, MA 1990), claiming that a one-sex theory originated around 1800, have obfuscated historical specificity, and not only in regard to the early modern period.

11 For a summary, see my: Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit. Frauen und Literatur in Deutschland von 1500 bis 1800, Munich 1989, pp. 19–51.

12 See the excellent chapters in Merry Wiesner, Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe, Cambridge 1993, 2nd revised edition 2000.

Masculinity studies have created many new perspectives on gender roles, relations, and especially on gender and power in the Early Modern era. They have shown how male domination (now termed *hegemonic* masculinity) perpetuated itself by invisibility and was further upheld by a traditionally assumed male/female binary as the cornerstones of the early modern religious and social imaginary. Hegemonic masculinity was also the ideal that informed structures in all other aspects of society including division of labour, structures of power, religious doctrine, education, learning, book culture, and entertainment like the theatre.[13] Powerful men formed the basis of political and social institutions; powerful – if not heroic – men assumed a privileged place in the collective identity with a large measure of consent to its ideals.[14] Hegemonic masculinity was (and is) constructed through the social interplay of *various masculinities and femininities*, it always contains "contradictions, compromises and sources of instability".[15]

Hegemonic masculinity in the texts of the cultural elite – theology, philosophy, and literature in its traditional sense – has made gender all but invisible in the Early Modern social imaginary. The conflation of man with human, of male individuals as the human norm, the generalisation from male to generic human experience has caused an invisibility, as it were, of human beings as *gendered individuals* in the texts of the cultural elite whose works we read and study.[16] Once the masculine order has achieved the appearance of neutrality, it maintains dominance by exempting itself from gendered discourses, as Pierre Bourdieu observed: "The strength of the masculine order is seen in the fact that it dispenses with justification: The androcentric vision imposes itself as neutral and has no need to spell itself out in discourses aimed at legitimating it."[17] For centuries of literary criticism, gender as a category of analysis appeared thus ahistorical and alien for traditional scholarship on German drama – until about fifty years ago, when perspectives and interests shifted away from elite academic learning mostly oriented towards hegemonic male culture to a more inclusive view of humanity and its different cultures. In terms of Early Modern research: interest shifted from heroising antiquity in the learned products of the Renaissance to investigating the *conditio humana* at *all* levels of society and its cultures; historians then skirted earlier periodisations like The Renaissance, Humanism, and The Baroque and renamed the period 'the Early Modern' (for the centuries from the discovery of the New World 1492 to the French Revolution 1789).

13 Cf. Raywyn [formerly Robert] Connell, Masculinities, St. Leonards 1995, esp. pp. 67–85.

14 Raywyn Connell, Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics, Stanford, CA 1987, pp. 184–190.

15 Anthony Fletcher, Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship, and the Household in Early Modern England, in: History 84, 1999, p. 420.

16 Cf. Harry Brod (Ed.), The Making of Masculinities. The New Men's Studies, Boston, MA 1987, pp. 2–3.

17 Pierre Bourdieu, Masculine Domination (1998), translated by Richard Nice, Stanford, CA 2002, p. 9.

Heroes and Heroines in Early Modern German Drama: Judith and Holofernes

Quite different from Spanish drama or 'heroic tragedy' in England, the prominent texts of Early Modern German drama that have entered and somewhat endured in the literary canon were school dramas in the humanist tradition of (neo-Latin) drama. Sixteenth and seventeenth century German tragedy was foremost a 'school' drama written and performed as a rhetorical exercise for Latin School boys (not for performances at court – more about court theatre later). The plays and stories were to incalculate Christian-Stoic Lutheran ethics and politics (e.g., Gryphius in Breslau) or Catholic tenets and politics (e.g., the Jesuit Balde's *Jephtes,* performed 1637 in Ingolstadt). Latin School teachers and clergy authored these plays that were memorised and performed in Latin or German respectively by *school boys* (not by adults or professional actors, nor were there female participants) to an audience of teachers, fathers or guardians, and distinguished citizens.[18] Playbills explained the (often intricate) plot for the urban-patrician, academic, rarely aristocratic audience who were as a rule literate and relatively well-read. These, for modern ears rather restrictive, conditions need to be considered when looking at the play's protagonists and heroisations presented on stage that found their way into contemporary publications after passing censorship. Many of "such texts reflect an aesthetic no longer appreciated or well understood […] [and may] defer to a set of now archaic values […] that seem alien to our sensibilities today," as Judith Aikin has observed in her fine study on "A Ruler's Consort" (2014).[19] Shrovetide and Carnival Plays may be more appealing to modern sensibilities, but the Thirty Years' War finally put an end to that tradition as well as to the English wandering troops of whose textual heritage very little has survived. Values, perspectives, heroes shift and mutate with time and individuals, they are not really "elusive",[20] but they are changeable in time and history: just as the social imaginaries are mutating, so are their heroes.

When considering heroisation in German school drama, we encounter a seemingly all-male space – in text production, dramatic protagonists, actors and stage,

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18 Helen Watanabe O'Kelly (and others) have used the position of the female spectator to flesh out the purpose and effect in heroisation techniques of sixteenth-century German drama. See Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, Das weibliche Publikum und die soziale Funktion des deutschen Dramas im 16. Jahrhundert, in: Wolfram Mauser (Ed.), Verbergendes Enthüllen: Zu Theorie und Kunst dichterischen Verkleidens, Würzburg 1995, pp. 67–75.

19 Aikin's remarks refer to devotional literature but also apply to much of Early Modern German drama; Judith P. Aikin, A Ruler's Consort in Early Modern Germany. Aemilia Juliana of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, Farnham 2014, p. 12.

20 Ronald Asch, The Hero in the Early Modern Period and beyond: An Elusive Cultural Construct and an Indispensable Focus of Social Identity?, in: helden. heroes. héros. Special Issue 1, 2014: Languages and Functions of the Heroic, p. 5. DOI: 10.6094/helden.heros./2014/QM. It seems to me counter-intuitive to construct an *Idealtypus* for the hero.

and, to a large extent, also audience and critical reception – in which tracing gender and heroisation leaves much to be desired and to be explored.[21] Sara Colvin's perceptive study *The Rhetorical Feminine* (1999)[22] has carefully examined exoticism and the oriental in a large number of dramatic texts and concludes that playwrights, librettists, and even composers were using rhetorical techniques to construct, reinforce and perpetuate heroes and heroines in binary oppositions between male and female, white and black, western and oriental, and reason and passion. Colvin could show how in these binary pairings, the positions of male, white, Western, and reason are valorised and dominate, while the respective others are devalued. Colvin's findings underline once more the historical mission of early modern German drama: to teach in the service of the moral and social order. Heroisation then stood in the service of male dominance and masculinity and of religious and political issues, but it was not intended as a social critique (of the feudal or gender system), nor was it a mode of rebellion; any troubling aspects in the social imaginary were displaced into oriental costume, comedy, fancy rhetoric, and theatricality (elaborate theatre machines).

Classical literature und the Bible provided the models for dramatic heroes. The complex, colourful story of Judith and Holofernes appears in the apocryphal Book of Judith in the Septuagint. The biblical narrative has all the trappings for great tragedy: war, conquest, victory, hubris, drinking, lust, violence, and eventual punishment and death – are the lot of the warrior Holofernes; divine calling, chastity, feminine beauty, self-sacrifice for her city, cleverness, deception, disguise, betrayal, transgression and murder, albeit for a just cause, are assigned to Judith. The biblical passage reads (in Luther's translation):

> She grabbed him [drunk Holofernes] by his hair and thus spoke, Lord give me strength in this hour. And she stabbed his throat twice with great force, then she cut off his head and rolled the body from the bed and took the blanket with her.[23]

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21 Cornelia Plume, Heroinen in der Geschlechterordnung. Weiblichkeits-Projektionen bei Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein und die "Querelle des femmes" (Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung; 42), Stuttgart 1996 is one of the very few studies on Early Modern German drama that include aspects of gender in discussing male heroes *and* female heroines, focusing on what feminine / masculine traits or coding would be appropriate for, to stay with the best-known German dramatist of the Baroque, Lohenstein's combative women in *Sophonisbe*, *Epicharis*, *Agrippina* and *Cleopatra*, all models of extraordinary theatrical villains, or at best multivalent, labyrinthine characters that defy any pinning down of meaning, as Jane Newman has claimed in: The Intervention of Philology. Gender, Learning, and Power in Lohenstein's Early Plays, Chapel Hill, NC 2000. Newman's retreat to postmodern ambiguity and polyvalence only reveals our difficulties with historical research and subject matter.

22 Sara Colvin, The Rhetorical Feminine. Gender and Orient on the German Stage 1647–1742, Oxford 1999.

23 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "Sie ergriff ihn [den betrunkenen Holofernes] beim Schopf und sprach abermal Herr Gott stärke mich in dieser Stunde. Und sie hieb zweimal in den Hals mit aller Macht, danach schneidet sie ihm den Kopf ab und weltzet den Leib aus dem Bette und nahm die Decke mit sich." Luther's

Judith even escapes with the help of her maid, taking Holofernes' head along in a bag. The head is displayed on the city wall and frightens the attacking enemy army into surrender. Judith is honoured with a triumphal procession in Jerusalem, but returns to a quiet life in her hometown and declines all marriage proposals. In the biblical story, Judith is clearly the heroine as saviour of her country, while Holofernes is the villain.

In his preface to the Book of Judith, Luther saw in Judith a typological figure representing wider politico-religious implications:

> For Judith means "Judea", that is to say the Jewish people, a chaste, holy widow. […] God's people are always a deserted widow […] Holofernes means leader or governor, a heathen, godless or unchristian lord or prince […] Bethulia, an unknown city, means to signify a virgin, that during that time the faithful, pious Jews were like a pure virgin […] therefore they remained invincible.[24]

Judith as a religious model, as an emblem for Israel[25] – this signals the Protestant theological view as the just cause and legitimate church.[26] Luther likened his then fledgling and weak church (in the 1530s) to a 'holy, chaste' widow, a heroisation of the weak underdog and potential martyr with a strong encouragement of faith in victory and invincibility. The warrior Holofernes serves as a fallen hero on the wrong side, as an anti-hero, and stands in for an indictment of armed conquest and military violence. Judith and Holofernes became a popular theme in art and literature from the Middle Ages into the twentieth century. [27]

translation (in modern orthography) quoted from Robert Hanhart, Text und Textgeschichte des Buches Judith, Göttingen 1979.

24 "Denn Judith heisst 'Judea', das ist das Jüdisch volck, so eine keusche, heilige Widwe ist: Gottes volck ist jmer eine verlassene Widwe. [...] Holofernes heisst 'Prophanus dux vel gubernator', Heidnischer, Gottloser oder unchristlicher herr odder fürst [...] Bethulia (welche Stadt auch nirgend bekand ist) heisst 'eine jungfraw', anzuzeigen, das zu der zeit die gleubigen, fromen Jüden sind die reine jungfraw gewest [...] dadurch sie auch unüberwindlich blieben sind." Quoted from Martin Sommerfeld, Judith-Dramen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts (Literarhistorische Bibliothek; 8), Berlin 1933 , pp. 2–3.

25 See Adelheid Straten, Das Judith-Thema in Deutschland im 16. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Ikonographie – Materialien und Beiträge, Munich 1983, p. 140.

26 The catholic interpretation saw Judith as a prefiguration of Mary, her victory over Holofernes as a victory of chastity. Judith became an allegory for chastity's victory over sin or humility's over pride, see Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, Judith und ihre Schwestern. Konstanz und Veränderung von Weiblichkeitsbildern, in: Annette Kuhn / Bea Lundt (Ed.), Lustgarten und Dämonenpein. Konzepte von Weiblichkeit in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, Dortmund 1997, p. 347.

27 Among many studies, see the broad thematic overview in Marion Kobelt-Groch, Judith macht Geschichte. Zur Rezeption einer mythischen Gestalt vom 16. bis 20. Jahrhundert, Munich 2005. A comprehensive philological study of Medieval renderings of the Judith theme is Henrike Lähnemann, "Hystoria Judith". Deutsche Judithdichtungen vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert (Scrinium Friburgense; 20) Berlin/New York 2006, for Birck's *Judith* (German version), see pp. 315–370.

Hero/Heroine in Sixtus Birck's Judith *(1539)*

Sixteenth-century Lutheran school drama dutifully heroises Judith as God's instrument, as in Sixtus Birck's *Judith* (1539).[28] Under the fear and stress of religious wars and the Turkish invasions, the author Birck modernises the exemplarity of his heroine: "Fraw Judith mag uns lernen wol / Wie man den Türcken schlagen sol. / Mit bet schlecht man den Gottes feind." (Lady Judith can teach us how to conquer the Turks; with prayer we conquer the enemy).[29]

The author has to dress up his typological figures with some references to contemporary notions of masculinity/femininity in line with contemporary gender sensibilities. Birck has Judith describe to her maid how she was able to overcome the warrior in his drunken stupor, for the beheading of Holofernes by a female hand was not appropriate for a staging; Judith later shows the head to the citizen's assembly: "Here I have Holofern's head / so that it is more believable / I also have the linen / that in his drunkenness / he had spread over his bed / with it the female hands / have killed him with God' help."[30] Birck does not imbue his female character with any emotions or subjective feelings or actions, it is Holofernes' fate that 'teaches' the audience. Judith serves as an exemplary, humble Christian figure. Holofernes is to evoke pity and fear and the audience should learn from the fallen villain's mistakes. Holofernes had been warned of women's treachery by his servant: "Herold: [...] jr kennend noch nicht recht, / Herr Hauptmann mein, das weiblich geschlecht, / Ir vntrew seind all Bücher voll" (Servant: […] you don't really know, / My Captain, the female sex, / Their infidelity fills books).[31]

In terms of gendered virtue, the author admonishes the audience to 'masculine' courage: "Seid mannlich für ewr vatterland!" (Be manly for your fatherland).[32] Birck modifies his heroine's valour that is apparently inappropriate for a woman with a reference to her weak sex, as he has Judith explain modestly to be a mere instrument of God: "Ich bin ein armes Instrument, / Durch das die sach

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28 Birck's *Judith* was performed first in Basle at Carnival time in 1534, then in Birck's hometown Augsburg, after he became rector of the St. Anna Latin School in Augsburg, most likely in the school's courtyard. The German text was printed in 1539. Birck wrote the Latin version after the German one. I am using the German version, all quotes by verse number from Manfred Brauneck / Manfred Wacht (Ed.), Sixtus Birck. Sämtliche Dramen, vol. 2, Berlin/New York 1976, pp. 55–165. I am referring here to my earlier work on Judith dramas: Gewalt und Leidenschaft: Zu Sixtus Bircks und Martin Opitz' "Judith", in: Anselm Steiger [et al.] (Ed.), Passion, Affekt und Leidenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit (Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung; 43), Wiesbaden 2005, pp. 719–739.

29 Birck, Judith (Fn. 28), p. 60, v. 37–39.

30 "hie hab ich Holofernis haupt / Darmit der glaub deß grösser sey / das leylach hab ich auch darbey / Das er in seiner trunckenhait / an seinem bett hat under gsprait / Darmit in [ihn] die weyblichen hend / durch Gottes hilff erschlagen hend", ibid., p. 143, v. 2122–2128.

31 Ibid., p. 137, v. 2005–2007.

32 Ibid., p. 147, v. 2229.

Gott hat volendt" (I am a poor instrument / through which God has completed the affair). [33]

With the beleaguered urban Protestants fighting for survival in the 1530s, the dramatic hero as heroine is cast as a warrior in God's (the young Church's) service; in this typology, individual character traits and feelings are suppressed in favour of telling a heroic, exemplary story to fit the time and its gender expectations: a mighty, braggart warrior is conquered by a courageous and cunning underdog, a woman. Birck has somewhat humanised the male hero who variously exhibits ambition, hatred, anger, pain, hope and fear, but he left the heroine (and her female companion Abra) a mere instrument devoid of feelings and allegorised her. As a dramatic heroine, Judith may today appear strangely ambivalent,[34] but within the play other women clearly acknowledge Judith's model heroic character: "Anhydria: Thus we do not have to thank any man / Men are weaker than a woman / Lady Judith has a heroic body / Through her virility she has / bestowed great honour upon us women."[35] The character Ozias likewise acknowledges that Judith's 'chivalrous' (heroic) action ("Ritterschaft")[36] should be acknowledged because she "mehr hat geschafft dann yederman" (has achieved more than any man)[37], she risked her life and her 'chastity' (Judith is a "raine witwe", a pure widow,[38] and God selected her as an instrument because of her "keuschhait" (chastity).[39] Birck heroised his figure in accordance with the audience's perception of gender dichotomy and expectation of heroism that is to be a man's, not a woman's attribute: "Fraw Judith soll ain vortail han, / sy ist kain fraw, sy ist ain man" (Lady Judith has an advantage / she is not a woman, she is a man)[40], Birck fashioned his heroine into a man. In one of the final scenes of the drama, Judith receives, as is the victor's privilege, the spoils of war: "Der schilt und helem und das schwert / darmit sond ir von uns gehrt" (The shield and helmet and the sword / with these we honour you).[41]

An identifiably female figure can only serve as a 'hero' when she is imbued with male-coded heroic attributes like weapons and when her traditional female characteristics are subdued. The biblical story of Judith and Holofernes is anchored in sex difference; a sex role change of Judith and Holofernes would be inappropriate, ludicrous for a sixteenth-century school theatre: imagine for a moment Holofernes

33 Ibid., p. 164, v. 2561.
34 Lähnemann, Hystoria Judith (Fn. 27), p. 351.
35 "Anhydria: Wir hond drumb zdancken kainem man / Die mann seind bleyger dann kain weib / Fraw Judith hatt ain helden leib / Sy hat mit jrer manligkeit / vns weybern grose ehr geleit", Birck, Judith (Fn. 28), p. 154, v. 2358–2362.
36 Ibid., p. 144, v. 2156.
37 Ibid., p. 153, v. 2348.
38 Ibid., p. 159, v. 2492.
39 Ibid., p. 159, v. 2489.
40 Ibid., p. 161, v. 2541–2542.
41 Ibid., p. 161, v. 2549–2550.

on stage represented as a chaste widower and Judith as a victorious warlord commanding an army – such a sex role reversal would go against all probability and serve, at best, for a slapstick comedy, but not for a tragedy when the narrative of Judith and Holofernes is part of the social imaginary since Medieval times.

Birck's dramatic heroisation of a woman into a hero – she becomes a *miles christianus*, a model Christian in defence of her city and faith – entails gender crossing and gender conflation, it is a thoughtful interpretation of the gendered biblical story for Reformation times, a religious sublimation.[42] But the drama is not a call for rebellion against, nor a criticism of, perceived gender differences and roles. Rather, it serves as an exhortation to the believers to defend their faith; the figure of Judith is a model hero for men (not to be outdone by a woman's courage) and women (to sacrifice themselves for their church). Birck's text entails markers for 'men' and 'women', signalling meanings of gender difference inherent in tradition and alive in the era's social imaginary. The text skilfully navigates and blends heroisation and gender assumptions in the dramatic presentation of Judith and Holofernes appropriately, and considering the lively reception, successfully.

A Baroque Hero/Heroine in Martin Opitz' Judith *(1635)*

Martin Opitz took up the story of Judith a hundred years later in his opera libretto *Judith* (1635).[43] It is a very early example of the reception of Italian Opera in Germany, a new genre different from school drama because it required musicality for the text and accomplished singers, and the content was to be appropriate for court festivities. Opitz' libretto has three concise acts, uses only eight actors, but five choirs (Captive Kings, Watchmen, Hebrews in the City, Hebrew Women, Soldiers) and musical intermezzos adaptable for student performances.[44] In the dedication to Margarethe von Kolowrath,[45] Opitz compared his patroness with Judith, praising her "männliche Hertze in einem weiblichen Leibe" (manly heart in a female

[42] This aspect is fleshed out in Kai Bremer, Religiöse Dimension, Geschlechtlichkeit und Politisches Moment. Zu Sixt Bircks *Judith,* in: Daphnis. Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literatur 35 (Issue 1/2), 2006, pp. 321–334.

[43] In 1629, Opitz adapted for the Saxon court conductor Heinrich Schütz the libretto of Florentine court poet Andrea Salvadori *Guiditta* (1626) that originally celebrated the Barberini family. Opitz modified the Italian text considerably, see Anton Mayer, Quelle und Entstehung von Opitzens Judith, in: Euphorion 20, 1919, pp. 39–53. However, Schütz did not use Opitz' libretto, it probably was not suitable enough for the wedding festivities in Copenhagen.

[44] Very little is known about the performance history, except for a documented performance in 1651. Andreas Tscherning reworked Opitz' text in 1646 for student performances. See Mara Wade, The Reception of Opitz's "Judith" During the Baroque, in: Daphnis 16, Issue 1/2, 1987, pp. 147–165, here pp. 154–157.

[45] Margarethe von Kolowrath, née Baroness von Redern, belonged to two influential Silesian noble families, specifics about this dedication are not available. Opitz wrote dedications in hope of remuneration, usually the recipient had to give approval beforehand.

body) and stating his intention a "keusche vngeschmückte Judith auff den Schauplatz führen und in solcher Tracht wie es die Deutsche Sauberkeit mit sich bringt" (to present a chaste, unadorned Judith on the stage and in a way as required by German purity).[46] The moral didactic tone, civic-oriented content and patriotic connotations must have appeared relevant to the beleaguered citizenry in the war-torn country at the time of the Thirty Years' War.

Opitz outfitted his heroine with feminine attributes (beauty and passion) suitable for an aristocratic and patrician audience. He portrayed Judith as an individual clearly coded female. Mythological references emphatically underpin this binary coding when Holofernes is likened to Mars and Judith to Venus: "Wie blicken doch ausß ihrerr Luft herfür / Der Mars und Venus Stern! Die Judith gleicht der Venus selbst an Zier / Vnd Mars ist Holofern" (How do gaze from on high / Mars and the star of Venus! / Judith resembles Venus herself / and Holofern is Mars) (II,4), observes one of the soldiers.[47] Opitz foregrounds the conflict between war and violence and passionate feelings in the opening scene and transforms the heroic warrior Holofernes into a mighty Baroque ruler exhibiting anxious masculinity that is "already its own worst enemy":[48] "Holofern: Many a king felt my power / Now I cannot govern myself / You have won, you Hebrews / You conquer my senses / As high as I might stand / A woman from your city stands higher."[49] The entire second act elaborates Holofernes' passion, the paradox of a mighty ruler and victorious conqueror being conquered by a humble woman, as Holofernes responds to Judith's (feigned) consent: "O Edel Fraw, du Außbund aller Zier, / Du findest jetzt nicht Mayestät allhier, / Nicht Waffen sondern Liebesflammen" (Noble Lady, pinnacle of all beauty / You do not find a ruler here / Not arms, but flaming love).[50] Opitz enhances the exceptionality of his hero Holofernes with Baroque rhetoric by exploiting gender difference to the fullest in order to motivate his hero's tragic fall. This flaw is the hero's inability to control his passion for a woman. Judith is cast in the role of the temptress Eve, though for a good cause that also justifies Judith's murderous action.

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46 Sommerfeld, Judith-Dramen (Fn. 24), here p. 116–117. All quotes are taken from this edition noting act and scene in the text. This text is the basis for the digital version: http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Opitz,+Martin/Drama/Judith, 7 June 2018.

47 Elaborate references to classical mythology became fashionable in the seventeenth century, the mix of Christian themes with 'heathen' gods and heroes was the bone of contention in the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*. Opitz championed the *modernes* for German literature; his other three dramatic works, all adaptations of Italian or French dramas, feature female protagonists from classical antiquity: *Die Trojanerinnen* (1625), *Dafne* (1627), and *Antigone* (1636).

48 Cf. Mark Breitenbach, Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England, Cambridge 1996, p. 128.

49 "Holofern: Es muste mein Geboth so mancher König spüren, / Jetzt aber kan ich selbst mich nicht regieren. / Du hast gewonnen, du Hebreer; / Du zwingest meinen Sinn: / Wie hoch ich bin, / So ist ein Weib aus deiner Stadt doch höher", Opitz, Judith (Fn. 46), p. 118 (I,1).

50 Ibid., p. 123 (II,3).

Opitz' hero is destroyed by his lust and passion, doubly shameful because the instrument of his failure is a female generally thought to be inferior to the male; Opitz' hero is vulnerable, he let his senses and intellect submit to the erotic attraction of the female body, to femininity: "[…] these words, this laughter, / The eye's evil deception delights me / The hair ensnares my mind and courage / The mouth hinders my mouth from utering a single word."[51] Opitz constructs his heroine Judith as a powerful woman because of her bodily beauty (not only her chastity). Judith is "mächtig [...], die Götter selbst zu binden / Und durch der Schönheit glantz den Himmel anzuzünden" (powerful […] to overcome even gods / And to set the heavens on fire with her beauty's sparkle) (I,2). Opitz transformed the biblical Judith into a feminised heroine with the modesty appropriate for a servant (*Magd*) who obeys his wishes: "Sein Wollen ist mein Glücke, / Sein Wincken mein Gesetze" (His desires are my fortune / His commands my obedience).[52] Judith' dissimulation and cunning comes in the guise of coy submission as a woman. The following scene continues the theme of feigned submission, with Abra the maid reminding Judith of her chastity. Lamenting their fall from power and fortune, The Choir of Captured Kings prays for the plot's success: "May heaven grant that the eyes / Captivate this insolent mind / May her golden hair / Become chains / And hurl to the ground / The leader of the proud army!"[53] The pathos of prayer and high style (required for choral passages) raises the bar and heightens the expectations of a heroic deed by a woman; the paradoxical use of gender expectations – that one-time powerful male kings now must rely on a female's use of her body and her cunning to bring about a reversal of fortune for them – adds to the dramatic suspense.

Opitz' drama is commonly read as an admonition to constancy and civic-minded virtue in adversity and sacrifice. The heroine Judith serves as a container for this, but she serves also as a vessel of seduction, a significant shift away from God's instrument into the vicinity of the temptress Eve as an allegorical figure. At the same time, the author imbued his hero Holofernes with awe-inspiring grandeur, reminiscent of the powerful generals in the (contemporary) Thirty Years' War. Judith was hardly intended to serve as a model character for contemporary women, nor the drama as a gender-sensitive interpretation of the biblical story, but rather as a lesson and consolation in troubled times for the male public.[54]

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51 " [...] diß Reden, dieses Lachen, / Der Augen Vnstern ists, der mein Gesicht' entzückt, / Das Haar, das mein Gemütt' vnd allen Muth bestrickt, / Der Mund, der meinen Mund kein gantzes Wort leßt machen." Ibid., p. 119 (I,1).

52 Ibid., p. 120 (I,2).

53 "Ach Himmel laß die Augen / Diß Freche Blutt außsaugen! / Gieb daß diß Güldne Haar / Zu Stricken müsse werden, / Vnd stürtzen zu der Erden / Das Haupt der stoltzen Schaar!" Ibid., p. 122 (I,3).

54 Students of the Magdalena Latin School in Breslau performed the drama at the residence of the protestant Duke of Oels in Görlitz in 1677 when the re-catholicising of Silesia started; see Konrad Gajek, Christian Funckes Prosafassung der *Judith* von Martin Opitz. Do-

Opitz outfitted his heroine Judith, within his era's social imaginary, with "emphasised femininity", a specific form of femininity defined by its orientation around principles of hegemonic masculinity as well as "accommodating the interests and desires of men".[55] This Judith also exhibits "strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance" in a complex form of femininities, "complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and cooperation."[56]

Heroisation and Gender Polarity: Sublimation of Male-Coded Violence into Female-Coded Sexualisation in German Drama

Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith* (1840) transformed Judith into a sexualised *femme fatale* (an aspect Lutheran school drama had carefully suppressed). Hebbel characterised his heroine with the line: "Meine Schönheit ist die der Tollkirsche; ihr Genuß bringt Wahnsinn und Tod" (My beauty is poison, it brings madness and death)[57] and constructed her as a love-crazed woman who lures her victim to his death and seemingly goes mad in the end. The author feminised the heroine indisputably by making her fear to be pregnant, indicating remorse/punishment for a lustful sexual reunion (such a stance would be impossible for a male hero). Hebbel exploited nineteenth-century sensibilities and removed any divine sublimation by having the heroine believe that she did not have the divine calling she pretended, and begs the high priest to kill her – a final self-sacrifice and dismantling of the heroine into a subversive figure undermining female heroism. Hebbel's play shows „an unbridgeable polarity between the sexes and reveals male fears about female sexuality and desire, as well as about female autonomy".[58] Hebbel's *Judith* belongs squarely, as his numerous privately and publicly expressed opinion pieces document, into the social fabric and imaginary of the nineteenth century when the "Frauenfrage" became a moral, medical, political, and social issue. Hebbel opined: "Das Weib und die Sittlichkeit stehen in einem Verhältnis zueinander, wie heutzutage leider die Weiber und die Unsittlichkeit" (Woman and morality are linked together as are today, unfortunately, women and immorality) and "Das Weib muß nach Herrschaft über den Mann streben, weil sie fühlt, daß die Natur sie bestimmt hat, ihm unterwürfig zu sein" (Woman

kumentation einer Aufführung auf dem Görlitzer Schultheater, in: Daphnis. Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literatur 18, Issue 3, 1989, pp. 421–466.

55 Alexandra Howsen, Embodying Gender, London 2005, pp. 183.

56 Ibid., p. 184.

57 Act 3, scene 2: http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/judith-2650/3, 2 January 2018.

58 Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly has recently looked at this fascinating, complex biblical story identifying questions of gender, sex, murder, and terrorism in the Judith story: Beauty or Beast? The Woman Warrior in the German Imagination from the Renaissance to the Present, Oxford 2010, esp. pp. 130–132.

must seek to dominate man, because she feels that nature has destined her to submit to him).[59]

Hebbel's sexual imaginary assigns blame, guilt, heroism in confusion and anxiety over shifting gender boundaries, shifting concepts of masculinity and femininity, and over real social changes in gender status and roles. The resulting imagined *femme fatale* became a favourite in German authors' literary texts. As Melanie Unseld has shown for the operatic theatre around 1900, such a sexualised, powerful heroine (like Lulu or Salome) who overpowers then kills the lover becomes a fascinating, titillating stage attraction and reverse call for arms: "Man töte dieses Weib!" (Kill this woman!) The battle of the sexes, as perceived by and turned into (unassailable) art by male authors/artists is heroised on the grand stage. High art, it seems, has replaced religion in solidifying traditional gender concepts around 1900.

This appears to be a trajectory for the German stage that is quite different from the English. Ina Schabert summarised her findings thus:

> The physical commitment of the armoured male or female knight, who guards the established order, is countered by the ideal power of a female knight, who drops her armour, who eventually exchanges the realm of combat for a life of love and motherliness and who starts a new human race with her lover.[60]

Such a conciliatory trend in gender relations – as represented on the stage – seems to be absent from dramatic heroisation in nineteenth-century Germany (and its imaginary) but is supplanted by a heroisation of sexuality in the *femme fatale* and a sexual 'battle of the sexes'.

Heroes (in literature, historiography or the real world) are not an absolute entity, need the acceptance and consensus of the society they are viewed in, need a common code or understanding of norms in the social imaginary. They are affected by historical change and changing perceptions of gender roles and interactions. Literature's changeable heroes reflect and mirror social changes and sensibilities, they entail the possibility of being multivalent and a discussion piece. However, the hero (on the German stage) was (and is) first and foremost an author's construct who embodies the author's views and perceptions and who guides viewers who follow, sympathise, empathise or possibly reject the imagined fantasies.

It is important to note that Early Modern literary texts – dramas in my example – reflect and are situated within the social imaginary of the *elite*, the literate public of predominantly male academics, theologians, patricians, aristocrats – the movers and shakers in the Early Modern World (contrary to our notion of

59 Ibid., p. 130.

60 "Dem physischen Einsatz des gepanzerten männlichen oder auch weiblichen Ritters, der die etablierte Ordnung absichert, steht die ideelle Macht einer Ritterin gegenüber, die sich ihrer Rüstung entledigt, die schließlich dem Kriegsgeschäft zugunsten der Liebe und Mütterlichkeit entsagt und mit ihrem Geliebten ein neues Geschlecht gründet." Ina Schabert, Weiblicher Held oder Heldin? Die heroische Frau in der Imagination der Shakespeare-Zeit in: Achim Aurnhammer / Manfred Pfister (Ed.), Heroen und Heroisierungen in der Renaissance, Wiesbaden 2013, pp. 27–44.

equality in our modern social imaginary). Heroisations in these texts were to be exemplary, to teach ethics and politics, to influence and sway the mostly male recipients and to shape the imaginary community they addressed. Heroisation (or demonisation) played to meanings of gender that were historically situated but did not challenge perceived gender perceptions and at best complicated and confused assigned gender roles. The sublimation of male-coded violence into female-coded sexuality as observed in the transformation of the Judith and Holofernes story from Birck to Hebbel echoes the uneasiness over the dismantling of the masculine warrior and the rise of the sexualised, destructive female – it still harkens back to the story of Adam and Eve expelled from paradise – in the gendered imaginary. It does neither fully represent nor adequately reflect the social reality of men and women in these centuries, but it nevertheless touches, perhaps modulates, concepts of gender identity and gender relations of the time.

Gendering Fear

Heroic Figurations and Fearful Imagination in Restoration Drama

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In European cultures, concepts of the heroic are closely interrelated with concepts of fear. Fear, to different degrees, is something the hero or heroine not only experiences, but – as a transgressive and perplexing figure – might also inspire. Variously, critics have assumed that a climate or background of collective fear is one of the potential factors associated with the cultural production of and demand for heroic figures. Fear, moreover, intersects with frameworks of awe and admiration, with the poetics of tragedy and the pathetic, and is thus closely linked to the shifting aesthetic paradigms within which heroic figures are (re)shaped. Yet, instead of proposing an essentialist explanation of how fear functions within a cultural syntax of heroic figurations, my essay will adopt an emphatically historical perspective by outlining how cultural negotiations of the heroic in Restoration England made use of contemporary concepts of fear and fearlessness. Focusing on the intersection of heroic concepts with the shifting poetics of the stage, it will single out a distinctive and – as will be argued – crucially important aspect: the interrelation of fear and imagination.[1] In line with the concept of gender as a 'tracer',[2] it will be suggested to use the category of gender, and the relationality it implies, to lay bare the entanglements of fear and fearful imagination with constructions of (heroic) exceptionality.

To that end, samples from prototypical English royalist drama of the early 1670s – John Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* and *Tyrannick Love* – will be compared to plays of the early 1680s, most importantly, Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*, which under the impression of political and aesthetic crisis already exemplify a strong drift towards pathetic tragedy. Understanding the later Stuart stage as a key site of 'cultural negotiations' in Stephen Greenblatt's sense,[3] I will show how fear, in its imaginative dimension, and its gendering in particular, is exploited in dramatic negotiations of the heroic. As Restoration drama moves from representing heroic

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1 As has recently been demonstrated by Andreas Bähr, this interrelation is essential to the Early Modern discourse on fear (Furcht und Furchtlosigkeit: Göttliche Gewalt und Selbstkonstitution im 17. Jahrhundert [Berliner Mittelalter- und Frühneuzeitforschung; 14], Tübingen 2013).

2 The methodological background is detailed in Monika Mommertz, Theoriepotentiale 'ferner Vergangenheiten': Geschlecht als Markierung/ Ressource/ Tracer, in: L'Homme. Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft 26, Issue 1 (2015), 79–97.

3 Stephen Greenblatt, Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England, Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA 1988.

courage to investigations of fear and cowardice, gender is used to re-evaluate heroic agency, and to reshuffle the poetics of admiration, pathos and pity.

While fear appears to be a universal human emotion, situated in the limbic system, fear in human societies has always been subject to cultural encodings and semantic interpretations. Fear is applied to ideas of human nature, to the legitimation of political organisation, and the relation of humankind to conceptions of the Divine – making the cultural history of fear, as Hartmut Böhme phrased it, not so much a history of reason and emotion but rather a history of politics.[4] While Jean Delumeau's study *La Peur en Occident* (1978),[5] rooted in a history of mentality, has drawn attention to fear as a focal point of Early Modern European culture, more recent research has highlighted how negotiations of fear in the seventeenth century were positioned within central discourses of cultural and social norms. In that context, cultural interest was not so much in quantitative experiences of fear than in qualities, attempting to distinguish acceptable, righteous fear from fear as a destructive, mentally dislocating and enslaving power.[6] In later seventeenth-century England, fear was discussed extensively in philosophical studies on the 'passions' (such as Robert Burton, or later Thomas Willis), in sermons, political treatises and in historical writings. Obviously, fear functions as a key point in the anthropology and political theory of Thomas Hobbes, famously characterising the state of nature as one of "continuall feare"[7] which is to be monopolised and legalised by the sovereign. Hobbes even envisaged himself – prominently enough, in the opening passage of his *Vita* – as being born a twin to fear: "And hereupon it was my Mother Dear / Did bring forth Twins at once, both Me, and Fear."[8] This image is striking not least for its very explicit gendering: Fear, brought into the world by a woman, induces a fundamental change of the human condition, on the notion of original sin or Pandora's box.

4 Hartmut Böhme, Vom Phobos zur Angst. Zur Begriffs- und Transformationsgeschichte der Angst, in: Michael Harbsmeier / Sebastian Möckel (Ed.), Pathos, Affekt, Emotion. Transformationen der Antike, Frankfurt am Main 2009, pp. 154–184, here p. 174.

5 Jean Delumeau, La Peur en Occident (XIV.–XVIII. siècles): Une Cité Assiégée, Paris 1978.

6 This is analysed in detail in Bähr, Furcht and Furchtlosigkeit (Fn. 1); see also William G. Naphy / Penny Roberts (Ed.), Fear in Early Modern Society (Studies in Early Modern European History), Manchester 1997.

7 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan I.13, Revised student edition, Ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge 1996, p. 89. Hobbes draws on Cicero's description of the barbarous (De Inventione I.2), but, decisively, inserts the concept of 'fear'.

8 Thomas Hobbes, The Life of Mr. Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury. Written by Himself in a Latine Poem, London 1680, p. 2; Thomas Hobbes, Opera philosophica quæ latine scripsit omnia, 5 Vols., Vol. 1., London 1839, pp. LXXXIII–XCIX, here p. LXXXVI. On fear in Hobbesian philosophy, see Andreas Bähr, Die Furcht vor dem Leviathan. Furcht und Liebe in der politischen Theorie des Thomas Hobbes, in: Saeculum 61, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 73–97; id., Furcht und Furchtlosigkeit (Fn. 1), pp. 100–120; and Christopher Tilmouth, Passion's Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester, Oxford 2007, pp. 213–371, who also deals with the legacy of Hobbesian thought in Restoration libertinism.

While the historical situation of seventeenth-century England – characterised by violent confessional oppositions, regicide and civil war – might have fostered a preoccupation with fear, the Restoration settlement of 1660 proved anything but an exhaustive answer. It goes almost conspicuously unchallenged that the plays of the Restoration stage were set to reflect a "traumatised society",[9] with "deep-seated and unresolved anxieties",[10] shaped by "a traumatic *collective* experience"[11] and the "[f]ear of being thrown again into the maelstrom of such a war",[12] which "haunted the Restoration age".[13] As these issues became ever more explosive within the changing political frameworks of the 1670s and 1680s, the heroic was caught in a crossfire of fictions of state on the one hand and countermemorial efforts on the other. An emerging literary culture was a key element in both (re-)scripting royal power and negotiating human exceptionality: The public theatres, which had been closed during the Commonwealth and were re-opened in 1660, and especially the Heroic Play, proved a central instrument – not least as theatricality was perceived as a perplexingly dominant constituent of political culture, pointing – as Mita Choudhury states – to a "larger, more expansive landscape of irrepressible performativity that extends from within to beyond the theatre".[14]

Political Fearlessness: The Conquest of Granada

My first test case, Dryden's two-part *Conquest of Granada* – first staged by the King's Company in 1670 and 1671, and printed in 1672 – self-confidently presents itself as the defining example of the Heroic Play, a sub-genre of serious drama which enjoyed a short boom of popularity on the Restoration stage.[15] Implementing the spectacular visual artifice the new playhouses provided, the Heroic Play could be described as

9 Anne Hermanson, The Horror Plays of the English Restoration, Farnham 2014, p. 33.
10 Ibid.
11 Jonathan Scott, England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context, Cambridge 2000, p. 163.
12 Susan Staves, Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration, Lincoln, NE [et. al.] 1979, p. 1.
13 Kevin Sharpe, Rebranding Rule: The Restoration and Revolution Monarchy, 1660–1714, New Haven, CT [et al.] 2013, p. 35.
14 Thus Mita Choudhury, Interculturalism and Resistance in the London Theater, 1660–1800: Identity, Performance, Empire, Lewisburg, PA, 2000, p. 17. See John Spurr, England in the 1670s. 'This Masquerading Age' (A History of Early Modern England), Malden, MA [et al.] 2000; Elaine McGirr, Heroic Mode and Political Crisis, 1660–1745, Newark, DE 2009; Paula R. Backscheider, Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England, Baltimore/London 1993; Matthew Jenkinson, Culture and Politics at the Court of Charles II, 1660–1685 (Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political and Society History; 9), Woodbridge 2010.
15 John Dryden, The Conquest of Granada, in: The Works of John Dryden, Vol. 11: Plays: The Conquest of Granada. Marriage à-la-mode. The Assignation, ed. by John Loftis [et al.], Berkeley, CA 1978, pp. 1–218.

> a kind of grand opera without music, a splendid artifice in which monarchs, nobles, and generals of astonishing virtue or evil endured momentous conflicts of love and honour while nations quaked and audiences admired the magnificence of the thought, language, scenes, and costumes.[16]

Set against the background of the fall of Moorish Granada to the Spanish, Dryden's play focuses on the conflicts between the factions of the Abencerrages and the Zegrys during the final days of the Moorish court. Almanzor, the central hero of the play, fights in service to Boabdelin, king of the Moors. Insistently, he is presented as courageous, fierce, bold, fearless, and brave: "Vast is his Courage; boundless is his mind".[17] This corresponds to Dryden's almost apologetic presentation of his character in the dedication of the play, where he claims that "I have formed a Heroe, I confess, not absolutely perfect, but of an excessive and overboiling courage, but *Homer* and *Tasso* are my precedents."[18] Almanzor's infinite courage is thus traced back to the epic paradigm, that is, to more recent aesthetic contexts in which fear is prototypically used to differentiate between the fearless Christian hero and his opponent, the fearful Heathen.[19] Emphatically, Dryden relates the fearlessness of the hero to questions of genre: Unfailing courage is tied to the reappropriation of epic heroism in the Heroic Play, which aims to bypass the aesthetics of tragedy in favour of admirative frameworks, and, as Chua phrases it, "anchors political obligation in the idealistic, literary idiom of the courtly romance".[20]

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16 Richard W. Bevis, English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660–1789, London 1988, p. 40. For general discussions of Heroic Drama, see Derek Hughes, Dryden's Heroic Plays, Lincoln, NE 1981; id., English Drama, 1660–1700, Oxford 1996; Susan J. Owen, Restoration Theatre and Crisis, Oxford 1996; Nancy Klein Maguire, Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660–1671, Cambridge 1992; John Douglas Canfield, Heroes and states. On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy, Lexington, KY 2000; Brandon Chua, Ravishment of Reason: Governance and the Heroic Idioms of the Late Stuart Stage, 1660–1690 (Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650–1850), Lewisburg, PA 2014, pp. 111–129.

17 Dryden, Conquest of Granada (Fn. 15), Part I, I.i, l. 253.

18 Ibid., p. 6.

19 For medieval epics, this is demonstrated in detail by Annette Gerok-Reiter, Die Angst des Helden und die Angst des Hörers. Stationen einer Umbewertung in mittelhochdeutscher Epik. in: id. / Sabine Obermaier (Ed.), Angst und Schrecken im Mittelalter. Ursachen, Funktionen, Bewältigungsstrategien (Das Mittelalter; 12, 1), Berlin 2007, pp. 127–143. Fearlessness, of course, is also characteristic of the heroic characters of Corneille; the influential paratexts to *Nicomède*, for instance, characterise the protagonist as "un prince intrépide, qui voit sa perte assurée sans s'ébranler" (an intrepid prince, who unshakenly foresees his ruin). (Pierre Corneille, Nicomède, in: Œuvres Complètes, Vol. 2, ed. by Georges Couton. Paris 1984, pp. 637–712, here p. 643). All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. On this play, see Jakob Willis, Emotions and Affects of the Heroic. An Analysis of Pierre Corneille's Drama Nicomède (1651), in: helden. heroes. héros. Special Issue 1, 2014: Languages and Functions of the Heroic, pp. 24–35. DOI: 10.6094/helden.heroes.heros./2014/QM; and more generally, André Stegmann, L'Héroïsme cornélien, 2 Vols., Paris 1968.

20 Chua, Ravishment of Reason (Fn. 16), p. 111. On genre and tragic theory, see Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy. Form and the Process of Change, Westport, CT 1978, pp. 3–23;

Against the backdrop of a disintegrating, allegedly 'effeminate' Moorish court, Almanzor's exceptional courage appears as decisively masculine. Significantly, he is introduced as a stranger of unknown birth, a status which implies that he does not acknowledge any worldly or divine authority. This becomes most obvious in the much-quoted passage of the opening act, where Almanzor declares to be "as free as Nature first made man / 'Ere the base Laws of Servitude began / When wild in woods the noble Savage ran",[21] associating heroic valour and savage masculinity with a notion of residual otherness. Moreover, Almanzor rejects majestic splendour as "Pomp and greatness",[22] insisting instead to be a "private man"[23] guided by nothing but his sense of honour. His exceptionality is also reflected in the cosmic imagery exploited in the play: Almanzor, as Abenamar observes, "moves excentrique, like a wandring star; / Whose Motion's just; though 'tis not regular":[24] As opposed to the symbolism of the sun, or more generally fixed stars which were conventionally used to represent kingship, these images underscore the exceptional status but also the irregularity, and lacking predictability, of the heroic figure.

While Dryden hence construes Almanzor as an Achillean figure outside political legitimation, with human imperfections and an excessive emotionality in particular, he is not characterised by episodes of fear. On the contrary, he unequivocally discredits fearfulness, warning against its potential for mental dislocation and loss of honour, and declares other alleged virtues such as modesty to be little more than symptoms of dishonourable fear. An unbroken enthusiasm for military action is put forth as the quintessence of his heroic status:

> The minds of Heroes their own measures are,
> They stand exempted from the rules of War.
> One Loose, one Sallye of the Heroes Soul,
> Does all the Military Art controul.
> While tim'rous Wit goes round, or foords the shore;
> He shoots the Gulph; and is already o're:
> And, when th'Enthusiastique fit is spent,
> Looks back amaz'd at what he underwent.[25]

In this passage, the mindset of the hero is rendered as an image of crossing a chasm, which is revealing in its implications of space and time. Timorous wit, a

more recently, Zenón Luis-Martínez, The Motives of Tragedy, 1677–1682. Theory and Practice, in: Pilar Cuder-Domínguez (Ed.), Genre in English Literature, 1650–1700: Transitions in Drama and Fiction, Amherst, NY 2014, pp. 101–147.

21 Dryden, Conquest of Granada (Fn. 15), Part I, I.i, ll. 207–209. See on the status of the 'savage' in the political imaginary of the later seventeenth century Ingo Berensmeyer, 'Angles of contingency': Literarische Kultur im England des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts (Buchreihe der Anglia; 39), Tübingen 2007, pp. 177–256; Christopher F. Loar, Political Magic. British Fictions of Savagery and Sovereignty, 1650–1750, New York, NY 2014.

22 Dryden, Conquest of Granada (Fn. 15), Part I, III.i, l. 36.

23 Ibid., Part I, IV.ii, l. 474.

24 Ibid., Part I, V.i, l. 207–208.

25 Ibid., Part II, IV.ii, ll. 11–18.

combination of fear and cultivated reason, anticipates and minimises risk.[26] The hero, by contrast, is characterised by a complete lack of anticipation: He "is already o'er", drawing from a sudden outburst of enthusiasm beyond rational modulation. Therefore, what appears as heroic courage is unveiled as a specific blindness, omitting any imagination of dangers, consequences or potential failure. Even the hero himself, when his "enthusiastic fit" subsides, marvels at what he has achieved. Heroic greatness is, thus, restricted to a retrospective view; the immediate action is perplexingly evanescent.[27]

His fearlessness comes into even sharper relief when contrasted with Ozmyn, who – being taken prisoner by the Zegry leader Selin – repeatedly articulates his fears, but claims that enduring patience is superior to courage – an attitude clearly reflecting a stoic heroism of endurance, which gained momentum as an alternative to military heroic models in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[28] It is against such inflections of heroic concepts that Almanzor's fraught relation to royal authority is examined in the play: In his state of almost 'savage' liberty, Almanzor is free from what Early Modern scholarship – following Augustine and Thomas Aquinas – discredited as *timor servilis,* slavish fear, but also of what was labelled *timor filialis*, denoting a loving, righteous fear towards a fatherly God – or the monarch as his worldly representative.[29] If one follows Victoria Kahn's assertion that such constructions of obligation implied a gendering of the docile subject as femi-

[26] Loar points out that in Davenant's discussion of poetry and government (as outlined in the *Preface to Gondibert*), 'wit' is not only used as an opposition to the aesthetics of inspiration but also as a property of civilisation (Political Magic [Fn. 21], p. 53); see also Chua, Ravishment of Reason (Fn. 16), pp. 15–22.

[27] The passage is usually read as the expression of a "somnambulistic trance of battle", highlighting the impulsiveness and irrationality of the character which might conspicuously associate him with the prototypical villain (thus, for instance, Hughes, Dryden's Heroic Plays [Fn. 16], p. 97). However, I would argue that Almanzor's transgressivity is in this passage not so much framed in terms of battle frenzy but, decisively, explained as a lack of fearful imagination.

[28] Dryden, Conquest of Granada (Fn. 15), Part I, III.i, ll. 288–293. This juxtaposition of two heroic prototypes has of course not gone unnoticed. Prominently, Mary Beth Rose (Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature, Chicago, IL [et al.] 2002) has argued that the Early Modern distinction between the heroism of action and a heroism of endurance, towards the end of the seventeenth century, is rendered as a gender difference, with the latter model achieving "sufficient prestige to become the primary model of literary heroism" (p. 86). More importantly, however, the given passage seems to map onto the poetics of heroic impact, as Selin's daughter Benzayda – revealingly, a female character – comes to praise Ozmyn's "manly suffering" (ibid., Part I, V.i, l. 75), which she claims to move her esteem, her compassion, and – ultimately – love. Benzayda's response, however, is not depicted as admirative.

[29] See Bähr, Furcht und Furchtlosigkeit (Fn. 1), pp. 79–95; id., Furcht vor dem Leviathan (Fn. 8); and Stephen Loughlin, The Complexity and Importance of Timor in Aquinas's Summa Theologiae, in: Anne Scott / Cynthia Kosso (Ed.), Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; 6), Turnhout 2002, pp. 1–16; Chua, Ravishment of Reason (Fn. 16), pp. 111–118.

nine,[30] the 'heroic' masculinity attributed to Almanzor decisively contributes to exposing this problematic status of the heroic in structures of political authority.

Conversely, both the king's decision to expel Almanzor from court (in the final act of the first part) and his decision to call him back (in the second act of the second part) are rendered within the conceptual framework of fear. He announces that "With him go all my fears"[31], but reluctantly calls him back in order to appease the disquietingly "deaf madness in a People's fear",[32] reflecting that he is "forc'd to stoop to one I fear and hate".[33] Fear and fearlessness thus paradigmatically crystallise the relational quality of the heroic figuration, and the modes of emotional projection and polarisation which processes of heroisation imply. The fearlessness of the hero both threatens established structures of order and authority and becomes indispensable to their maintenance, as it re-couples the emotionality of the hero with his audience's collective anxieties and shared emotional response: By externalising and projecting a centrifugal experience of disorder onto the fearless hero, the heroisation process consolidates an imagined community by means of exclusion.

In the play, it is only after it emerges that Almanzor is in fact the son of the Spanish Duke of Arcos, and hence a member of the Christian world, that the hero can be integrated into consolidated hierarchical structures of society. Revealingly, his duty within the victorious Spanish monarchy is then redefined as to subdue the "*Moors* in woods and mountains",[34] suggesting he is ultimately to overcome and externalise the 'savage' traits of his own identity. As he happily agrees to serve the Spanish king, the fearlessness of the stranger as a 'private man' seems to be transformed into a responsible *timor filialis,* thus domesticated into a concept of secular and (ultimately) divine authority: He might still be fearless, but is no longer to be feared.

Staging Female Fearlessness: Tyrannick Love, or The Royal Martyr

Emphatic attributions of 'female fears' and 'manly courage' are ubiquitous in Restoration drama, which uses fear to emphasise gender difference and to establish a notion of female deficiency, implying an exclusion from heroic virtue. Prototypi-

30 In particular, Kahn has drawn attention to the influence of treatises on domestic duties, love and marriage in the formation of Early Modern political theory, which decisively influenced this gendering of the political subject ('The Duty to Love': Passion and Obligation in Early Modern Political Theory, in: Representations 68, 1999, pp. 84–107); see id., Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640–1674, Princeton, NJ 2004.

31 Dryden, Conquest of Granada (Fn. 15), Part I, V.i, l. 490.

32 Ibid., Part II, I.ii, l. 64.

33 Ibid., Part II, I.ii, l. 85. This pattern of withdrawal and return is of course derived from the Achillean paradigm, prominent in the Renaissance epic (see John M. Steadman, Milton and the paradoxes of Renaissance heroism, Baton Rouge, LA [et al.] 1987, pp. 46–50).

34 Dryden, Conquest of Granada (Fn. 15), Part II, V.iii, l. 342.

cally, potential fears of the male hero are transferred onto female characters surrounding him, highlighting the dangers of the heroic venture. Fear is also used to draw attention to ephemeral, 'un-manly' frailties which a hero might articulate, but ultimately overcome. While excessive courage seems to be acceptable in male figures of early Restoration plays, true female virtue allows for, and even requires, a certain degree of fearfulness. Prominently, in his preface to *Aureng-Zebe* (1676), Dryden outlines how he has made his heroine – Indamora – beautifully virtuous, and "fearful of death".[35] Female aspirations to 'masculine' courage are usually shown as either delusive or degenerating into villainy. The fearlessness of prototypical female tyrants, as in Elkanah Settle's *Empress of Morocco* (1673), is a function of their ultimate ruthlessness, often framed as a feigned masculinity, and associated with a perverted, invariably destructive agency. Repeatedly, these characters are claimed not to deserve the name of woman. Effeminacy, on the contrary, is typical of the male villains of the Restoration stage, such as the prototypical 'Oriental' tyrants: these characters regularly experience intense episodes of fear, often culminating in madness, which prove their detachment from divine salvation.[36] In distinctive combinations with gender, fear and fearlessness are thus used to indicate to the audience how a given character should be judged.

Notions of admirable fearlessness in women are largely restricted to the martyr paradigm, which on the early Restoration stage is – suggestively – rare, one prominent example being Dryden's *Tyrannick Love, or The Royal Martyr* (first performance 1669, print 1670). This play presents Saint Catherine of Alexandria as she is subjected to martyrdom by the Roman Emperor Maximin.[37] The representation of female courage and constancy thus relies on the contrastive juxtaposition of a fearlessly triumphant martyr and a fearful male tyrant, who acts a slave to his excessive emotions. While the *Conquest of Granada* highlights the interrelations of heroic virtue and courage, the arrangement in the slightly earlier and much less acclaimed martyr play is almost complementary in structure, insistently pushes at figurations of anticipation and anxiety, and futile human endeavours to gain insights into the future. Most significantly, the play establishes a sharp contrast between Catherine's calm expectation of torture and death, and the

35 John Dryden, Aureng-Zebe, in: The Works of John Dryden, Vol. 12. Plays: Amboyna. The State of Innocence. Aureng-Zebe, ed. by Vinton A. Dearing, Berkeley, CA 1994, pp. 147-250, here p. 156.

36 In some cases, Restoration drama depicts fear as leading to conversion, as in Settle's *Ibrahim, The Illustrious Bassa* (1677).

37 John Dryden, Tyrannick Love, in: The Works of John Dryden, Vol. 10. Plays: The Tempest. Tyrannick Love. An Evening's Love, ed. by Maximilian E. Novak, Berkeley, CA 1970, pp. 105–193. While literary criticism has often rejected the play, most typically on the notion that it was compiled rather quickly and only vaguely connects ideas with dramatic structure (thus, for instance, Hughes, Dryden's Heroic Plays (Fn. 16), p. 59), Jack M. Armistead has recently argued for its re-evaluation as a "paradigm for Restoration culture at a crucial moment" (Otherworldly John Dryden: Occult Rhetoric in His Poems and Plays, Farnham 2014, p. 58).

fearful tyrant's attempts to gain control over future events – prophecies, visions, hidden signs of the future are deployed as (more or less primitive) means to control human fear. At the same time, the dramatisation of the tyrant's violent love for Catherine, the frequent allusions to her beauty and the very physical reality of torture mark her as distinctly feminine. In particular, the infatuated tyrant's gendered perspective on Catherine collides with her explicit self-perception as a Christian philosopher and martyr, and with her exceptional composure when facing death. Although she admits that "my sex is weak, my fear of death is strong",[38] fear is not so much experienced but used to rhetorically underscore her constancy and agency as she transcends a process of physical victimisation. Evidently, such unfailing piety has little in common with Almanzor's "overboiling courage": Catherine does not reject the possibility of death but proves capable of integrating anticipations of physical pain with anticipations of heavenly glory. Her fearlessness is not framed as an "enthusiastic fit" but, on the contrary, as a conscious and emphatically static condition, which is clearly indebted to (neo-) stoic ethics. She is, in addition, not guided by a private sense of honour but proves to be aware of the publicity of her suffering, claiming that she is "placed, as on a theatre, / Where all my acts to all mankind appear, / To imitate my constancy or fear".[39] Juxtaposing fear and constancy, she conveys a sense of exemplary responsibility, but also of a distinctive artificiality: By envisaging herself not so much as a human being but as a character put on stage, she establishes a sense of radical transfiguration which is characteristic of heroic and theatrical practices respectively.[40]

Experiences of fear are transferred from the saintly martyr to her mother – Felicia – and Berenice – the tyrant's wife – who has recently converted to Christianity, and is also awaiting execution. Berenice's fear is represented as a strongly physical experience of radical estrangement, especially affecting the elementary sensory system:

> Now death draws near, a strange perplexity
> Creeps coldly on me, like a fear to die:
> Courage uncertain dangers may abate;
> But who can bear the approach of certain fate?[41]

Virtuous courage, as a specific way of dealing with fear, appears limited to restricting vague imaginations, but fails to control the experience of death. Epito-

38 Dryden, Tyrannick Love (Fn. 37), IV.i, l. 521.
39 Ibid., IV.i, ll. 537–539.
40 See Daniel Weidner, Gespielte Zeugen. Der Schauspieler-Märtyrer auf dem Barocktheater, in: Silvia Horsch / Martin Treml (Ed.), Grenzgänger der Religionskulturen: kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zu Gegenwart und Geschichte der Märtyrer, München 2011, pp. 259–279. My concept of transfiguration is based on Ulf Otto, Internetauftritte. Eine Theatergeschichte der Neuen Medien, Bielefeld 2013, pp. 36–42.
41 Dryden, Tyrannick Love (Fn. 37), IV.i, ll. 472–475.

mising a lack of (heroic) resolution, the imagery employed in Berenice's speech is strikingly similar to the passage from the *Conquest of Granada* discussed above:

> As some faint pilgrim, standing on the shore,
> First views the torrent he would venture o'er;
> And then his inn upon the farther ground,
> Loth to wade through, and lother to go round;
> Then dipping in his staff, does trial make
> How deep it is, and, sighing, pulls it back;
> Sometimes resolved to fetch his leap, and then
> Runs to the bank, but there stops short again;
> So I at once
> Both heavenly faith and human fear obey;
> And feel before me in an unknown way.[42]

Berenice's "human fear", expressed as an irresolvable oscillation between anticipation and hesitation, eludes rational access much in the way Almanzor describes his own courageous heroic feat. Her fears are, however, not analysed as a property of femininity, but as a more general human attitude towards death. While she begs Catherine to save their lives, Catherine re-frames Berenice's plight as yet another extension of heaven's trial, referring her life to heavenly agency rather than her own, and rejecting the more human emotion of pity as inferior to piety.[43] In exposing Catherine's disregard for both Berenice's and her own mother's fears, the play does not only highlight the martyr's radical departure from (gendered) structures of human relatedness, but also points to the structural dynamics of pity and the complex cultural grammar of suffering and response, operating – as Katherine Ibbett shows in detail – on a spectrum of inclusion and exclusion, shared experience and consolidations of distance.[44] In an aesthetic perspective, the rejection of pity moreover links to a Corneillean rejection of tragedy in favour of an admirative model: Corneille, in the preface to *Nicomède*, highlights that his protagonist "ne cherche point à faire pitié" (does not ask for pity), thus requiring to discard the poetics of tragedy in favour of a hero "qui n'excite que de l'admiration dans l'âme du spectateur" (who excites nothing but admiration in the spectator's soul).[45] At the same time, the play's negotiations of pity and piety respectively echo key concerns of the English Renaissance epic and its characteristic depreciation of pity, in particular targeted at Elizabeth I as a female monarch. Most explicitly, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* addresses the intrusion of power into relations of pity, and its conflation with erotic attraction:

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42 Ibid., IV.i, ll. 478–488.

43 Catherine claims to be caught "betwixt my pity and my piety" (Dryden, Tyrannick Love [Fn. 37], IV.i., l. 110). The concept of piety is also highlighted in Dryden's preface to the play.

44 Katherine Ibbett, Compassion's Edge: Fellow-Feeling and Its Limits in Early Modern France, Philadelphia, PA 2017.

45 Corneille, Nicomède (Fn. 19), p. 641.

As "pity contaminates love with political servility", it "forms a particularly dangerous part of the conceptual apparatus of absolute rule".[46]

Revealingly, Berenice eventually accepts her fate, but – unlike Catherine – is saved: her suffering is not physically realised, but her suffering is her fear, serving as a trial of her virtue. At the end of the play, when Porphyrius takes the Roman crown from a dead tyrant, and Berenice agrees to become his wife, she explicitly steps back from any involvement in politics, carefully avoiding a conflation of heroic female exceptionality in the sacred sphere with concepts of political heroics. This humility, typical of female protagonists in Heroic Drama, breaks down Saint Catherine's exemplary, yet radically distanced theatrical constancy to a more relatable example of feminine virtue.

Tragedy and Cowardice in Venice Preserv'd

The political fragility of the Restoration settlement was allied with a rapid erosion of the aesthetics of Heroic Drama. Under a growing disillusionment with the restored court, and not least in reaction to dwindling theatre attendance and the resulting competitive pressure, re-arrangements of the later Stuart stage include parodies of the heroic mode, the spectacular 'horror plays', and – maybe most importantly – a 'pathetic turn' of serious drama. This transition from overt heroic ventures to depictions of human suffering corresponds with a preference for female protagonists, often orphans, widows or mothers. Around the turn of the century, these plays came to be labelled 'she-tragedies' (implying, one will note, that 'regular' tragedy is something masculine).[47] Fear, expectably, is regularly experienced by the female protagonists of these plays, such as Thomas Otway's *The Orphan* (1680), Thomas Southerne's *Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage* (1694), Nicholas Rowe's *Fair Penitent* (1703) or William Taverner's *Faithful Bride of Granada* (1704). Notably, the protagonist in John Banks' *Vertue Betray'd, or, Anna Bullen* (1682) incessantly speaks not only of her fears, but of her need to hide these in concession to her political position: While the play strongly alludes to martyrdom, the conquest of fear is shown not to depend on courage or constancy, but on theatrical dissimulation.

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46 This is analysed in detail by Colin Burrow, Epic Romance: Homer to Milton, Oxford 1993, quote p. 125. See Cynthia Nazarian, Sympathy Wounds, Rivers of Blood: The Politics of Fellow Feeling in Spenser's *Fairie Queene* and *A View of the State of Ireland*, in: Modern Philology 113, Issue 3, 2016, pp. 331–352.

47 The term 'she-tragedy', coined by Nicholas Rowe, is notoriously underdefined, even more so as it is often seen as a transitional genre, including "anything mediating between Restoration heroic tragedy and eighteenth-century burgeois drama" (thus Paula de Pando, 'Look to Thy Self, and Guard Thy Character'. She-Tragedy and the Conflicts of Female Visibility, in: Pilar Cuder Domínguez [Ed.], Genre in English Literature, Amherst, NY 2014, pp. 149–180, quote pp. 155–156).

While the female characters of 'she-tragedy' have been a favourite of Restoration studies, it has yet to be clarified what the generic shift accomplishes within cultural negotiations of the heroic. As Luis-Martínez has pointed out, 'pathetic' is to be understood not primarily in terms of increasingly domestic and private settings, but as an aesthetic paradigm, and thus as a critical re-assessment of the dramatic languages developed in the 1660s and 1670s.[48] Again, it shall be argued that examining representations of fear, and its intersections with gender in particular, can contribute to an understanding of how exactly these changes were set – focusing on Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd or The Plot Discover'd* (1682), a play standing out not only for its success, which extends well beyond the Restoration, but also for its meta-poetic complexity.

As hardly any study of the play has failed to notice, *Venice Preserv'd* is set against the background of the 'Popish Plot', an alleged Catholic conspiracy to assassinate the king, and the Exclusion Crisis, with an emerging Whig party trying to exclude the Duke of York – the later King James II – from the succession to the throne. Otway's prologue presents the play very explicitly to "distracted times", "When we have fear'd three years we know not what / Till Witnesses begin to die o'th'rot."[49] With marked irony, the author refutes the allegation of exploiting the political situation in order to sell yet another conspiracy to the London stage. He links fear and distraction not only to the immediate contexts, but also to the more general limitations of human knowledge and to the languages of jurisdiction – aspects which, as will be argued, the play circles around obsessively.[50] Set in republican Venice, it stages a failing plot against the senate. Jaffeir, the male protagonist, is torn between loyalty to his wife, Belvidera, the daughter of a Venetian senator, and his friend Pierre, who convinces him to join the plot. Desperate Jaffeir, bound by incompatible loyalties and shaken by fears, betrays his friends, murders Pierre to save him from a public execution and kills himself on the spot. Belvidera dies in madness.

Otway's dramatic interest in fear is clearly prefigured in his principal source, César Vichard de Saint-Réal's treatise *A Conspiracy of the Spaniards Against the State of Venice*, which was translated into English as early as 1675.[51] Although the

48 Zenón Luis-Martínez, 'Seated in the Heart': *Venice Preserv'd* between Pathos and Politics, in: Restoration and Eighteenth Century Theatre Research 23, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 23–42, here pp. 25–27.

49 Thomas Otway, Venice Preserved, ed. by Malcolm M. Kelsall, London 1969, Prol. 1, pp. 3–4.

50 Jessica Munns has traced the appeal of conspiracy narratives to their "combination of the probable – testimonies, evidences, eyewitness accounts – and the wildly improbable" (Restoration Politics and Drama: the Plays of Thomas Otway, 1675–1683, Newark, DE [et al.], 1995, p. 171). On the political background, see Peter Hinds, 'The Horrid Popish Plot': Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London, Oxford 2010. Owen's seminal "Restoration Theatre and Crisis" (Fn. 16) examines the impact of the Exclusion Crisis for the dramatic production of the later Stuart Stage.

51 César Vichard Abbé de Saint-Réal, A Conspiracy of the Spaniards against the State of Venice, out of French, London: Printed by J. D. for Richard Chiswel 1675.

author's interest is not explicitly fear – or the heroic – the text brings into focus models of human exceptionality, as well as the mechanisms of fearful imagination in this context. At the very beginning, Saint-Réal outlines how the exceptionality of ambitions to overthrow a government – for which there is "no comparison, either for the danger, or the difficulty"[52] – requires exceptionality in all men involved: "Amongst all Humane Enterprizes, Conspiracies are certainly of greatest consequence; for Courage, Prudence and Fidelity, being equally requisite to every Member, are Qualities rare in themselves, therefore much more rarely found to concur in single persons".[53] More specifically, he points out that a conspiracy has to rely on passionate commitment rather than rational considerations alone: Should the conspirator be a man of judgement and prudence, he is "apter to fall into the contemplations of the great hazard to which he is exposed":[54] A leader thus need not only consider practical matters, but "ought to have as serious and equal regard even to the Panick Fears, and the most airy Imaginations that may occur".[55] Jaffeir, who is to become Otway's central character, is characterised as a man of exceptional bravery, who nevertheless cannot rise up to the imaginative anticipations of extreme violence he comes to associate both with the success of the plot and its discovery, leaving him in a state of desperate irresolution.[56]

Incorporating Saint-Réal's material into the gendered structures of fear in drama, and the equally gendered patterns of heroic agency and victimisation, *Venice Preserv'd* can be read as a play both on feminised fears and failing courage, commenting on the fearless virtue of Dryden's heroes as well as the poetic and aesthetic paradigms they stand for. In the opening acts, Jaffeir's resolution to join the conspiracy is rendered as distinctly masculine: Jaffeir asserts that he will be a 'man' as opposed to a coward or traitor,[57] insisting that fearful imagination is a female deficiency.[58] In addition, the conspirators rely heavily on the background of a corrupt and degenerate, 'effeminate' Venetian government, against which they cast themselves as men of "high calling",[59] "separated by the Choice of

52 Ibid., p. 4.
53 Ibid., p. 3.
54 Ibid., p. 4.
55 Ibid., p. 5. Imagination is, however, not only perceived as destructive, but also as a means of (re-)gaining resolution: "The firmest Resolution Man's Nature is capable of, springs for the most part from the strongest Imagination of the Danger he is to Incur, by Vertue of which Imagination, The Soul in the end becomes familiar with the Circumstances of that Danger, how frightful soever it might seem at first sight, after Duty considered" (ibid., p. 93).
56 Ibid., pp. 90–91.
57 Otway, Venice Preserved (Fn. 49), II., ll. 188–191.
58 He thus asserts that "Women have fantastick Constitutions" (ibid., III.ii, l. 281), while Pierre derides the "feminine Tale" that seems to have frightened Jaffeir (ibid., III.ii, l. 223). Later, however, Jaffeir acknowledges "Prophetick truth" in Belvidera's imaginations (ibid., IV.i, l. 69).
59 Ibid., II., l. 223.

Providence, From the gross heap of Mankind".[60] However, it becomes obvious that such appropriations of a heroic habitus are tinged with fears, most especially as Jaffeir, the outsider, is introduced at the last minute: While the conspirators find him to show signs of distraction, interpreted as fear, and thus suggest to dispose of him, Pierre – in a textbook example of dramatic irony – defends him ardently, arguing in particular that suspicion itself reveals cowardice.

Structurally, the conspirators' fears seem to reflect the fear of the ruthless tyrant as associated with more or less undefined premonitions of conscience. However, while the fearful tyrant leaves little doubt about his non-heroic and fundamentally un-tragic status and is strongly gendered as effeminate, Otway's play significantly lacks such unfailing signals to the audience: It becomes largely impossible to decide whether someone is a hero, a villain, an anti-hero, a failing hero or none of the above. Instead, 'hero' as a lexical item is transferred to the subplot, organised around the ludicrous Venetian senator Antonio and his preferred prostitute, which rather obviously subverts any notion of heroic masculinity. As the play comes to dismantle established concepts of the heroic, it focuses, instead, on the question of who is honest, who is a friend and who is a coward, and, more importantly, on the question of how notions of honesty, loyalty or cowardice can be translated into reliable evidence. This is reflected in the speech acts used by the protagonists throughout the play – including confessions, promises, oaths and passionate professions of friendship and love – which are easily discerned as feeble means to control fearful imagination. This struggle for reliability is also indicated by the characters' increasing preoccupation with labels and categories (like honesty, honour, nobility, cowardice or villainy) – in line with Canfield's diagnosis of a "total breakdown of language".[61] Finally Jaffeir, desperate about having been called a coward, asks Belvidera to judge whether he is one or not.[62] As one can hardly conceive of a

60 Ibid., II., ll. 224–225.

61 Thus Canfield, Heroes and States (Fn. 16), p. 101.

62 Otway, Venice Preserved (Fn. 49), IV, ll. 446–449. It might be argued that concepts of fear and reliability even pervade the image of the dog, which Derek Hughes (Human Sacrifice on the Restoration Stage: The Case of 'Venice Preserv'd', in: Philological Quarterly 88, Issue 4, 2009, pp. 365–384) has interpreted as a joint symbol of submission and aggression: Thomas Willis' *Two discourses concerning the soul of brutes* uses the dog as an example of instinctive, slavish fearfulness (Two discourses concerning the soul of brutes which is that of the vital and sensitive of man. The first is physiological, shewing the nature, parts, powers, and affections of the same. The other is pathological, which unfolds the diseases which affect it and its primary seat; to wit, the brain and nervous stock, and treats of their cures: with copper cuts. By Thomas Willis doctor in physick, professor of natural philosophy in Oxford, and also one of the Royal Society, and of the renowned college of physicians in London. Englished by S. Pordage, student in physick. London 1683, here p. 37; original Latin publication 1672), but also points out how a dog "knows a Man at a great distance; if he be a Friend, he runs to him and fawns on him; If an Enemy and fearful, he barks at him or flies at him, but if armed or threatning him, he flyes away from him" (ibid., p. 39) – a conception which seems to be echoed in Otway's characters' hopeless attempts to pinpoint 'true' nature and loyalties.

hero like Dryden's Almanzor to be in need of such external affirmation, Otway's play is venturing rather far from the notion that "the minds of heroes their own measures are". Instead, the very act of 'measuring' seems to converge with a transforming culture's increasing reliance on calculable patterns and codifications as well as a growing mercantile ethos as invoked in the play, ultimately pointing to a more general cultural divestment in the heroic.[63] The preoccupation with reliability and contingency is, moreover, reflected in various allusions to juridical languages, ranging from concepts of evidence and witnessing to oaths and acts of confession, which lead into the court scene of the fourth act, the employment of torture to extract confessions and the public execution as an act of institutionalised justice.[64] In Otway's play, this is, however, juxtaposed with the imaginative dimension of fear as the Venetian court tries to extort a confession for a crime which never comes to materialise: As Venice is "preserv'd", the play's action is virtually reduced to intentions and contentions, with the notable exception of murder and suicide at the very end.

As the enthusiastic heroic venture of infinite courage and agency is substituted by paralysing delusions of possible realities, Otway's figuration zooms in on exactly what Dryden's hero leaves blank. In particular, maintaining courage as a masculine heroic virtue becomes impossible as the prototypical projection of fear onto the feminine is shown to fail. This is not only exemplified by the male characters experiencing panic fears and the metaphorical tortures of imagination, but can also be traced by looking, once more, at the female protagonist – Belvidera – and her attempts to share in male heroism. Trying to convince Jaffeir to let her in on his secrets, she asks him to disregard her female identity:

> Look not upon me as I am, a Woman,
> But as a Bone, thy Wife, thy Friend who long
> Has had admission to thy heart, and there
> Study'd the Virtues of thy gallant Nature;
> Thy Constancy, thy Courage and thy Truth,
> Have been my daily lesson: I have learnt them,
> Am bold as thou, can suffer or despise
> The worst of Fates for thee, and with thee share them.[65]

63 See Derek Hughes, Human Sacrifice and Seventeenth-Century Economics: Otway's 'Venice Preserv'd', in: SEDERI: Journal of the Spanish Society for English Renaissance Studies 12, 2001, pp. 269–279, here pp. 274–278; and id., Human Sacrifice (Fn. 62).

64 As Staves has shown, oaths and vows emerged as a central topic in the late seventeenth century, resonating in public and parliamentary debate and criminal law as well as literature (Players' Scepters (Fn. 12), pp. 191–251). In addition, various studies have highlighted the importance of proof and evidence in the contemporary juridical and political discourses, especially associated with institutional violence; see Lisa Silverman, Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France, Chicago [et al.] 2001, pp. 43–45; and Bähr, Furcht und Furchtlosigkeit (Fn. 1), pp. 213–340.

65 Otway, Venice Preserved (Fn. 49), III, ll. 119–126.

In the course of the play, Belvidera comes to discard these ideas of sharing masculine courage, perceiving herself once more as a helpless victim to her fate and the tragic pretension of her 'masculine' aspirations. More importantly, the play reveals this confession to masculine courage as fatally ironic, because Jaffeir – the traitor – does not exactly prove an example of "Constancy", "Courage", and "Truth", and the nature of his heart is opaque even to himself. Belvidera's attempt at courageous heroism does not fail because she is a woman, but because she is striving to imitate a concept of heroic masculinity which does not exist.

Ultimately, what the characters are left with is not admirable agency, but pity – a concept which in itself is markedly re-gendered in Otway's play. Reflecting a Hobbesian reading of pity as 'fear for the self', it is first brought in line with fear as something despicably effeminate.[66] Finally, however, pity comes to converge even with a residual notion of nobility: When Pierre is about to be executed on the wheel, he appeals to his friend's compassion, asking to save him from suffering a criminal's death and do him "some way Justice" by killing him – supposedly, the ultimate proof of what he hints at as "Something that's Noble".[67] Strikingly, this does not only re-frame Pierre's death in competing systems of justice and honour, but Jaffeir's interference moreover disrupts the passive spectator position pity appears to imply, and that he had adopted for the largest part of the play.

Thus integrating fear and pity, Otway re-asserts tragedy from a perspective of gender.[68] In particular, the imaginative dimension of fear is related to a meta-tragic

66 Jaffeir, for example, visualizes himself as being shamefully remembered as a man who "In fond compassion to a Womans tears / Forgot his Manhood, Vertue, truth and Honour" (ibid., IV, ll. 16–17.). See Roland Weidle, Unmanning the Self: The Troublesome Effects of Sympathy in Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*. A Response to Elizabeth Gruber, in: Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate 17, Issue 2–3, 2007, pp. 200–209, here p. 203. Weidle draws connections to an emerging discourse on sympathy and sensibility. See also Candy B.K. Schille, Reappraising 'Pathetic' Tragedies: *Venice Preserved* and *The Massacre of Paris*, in: Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660–1700 12, Issue 1, 1988, pp. 33–45.

67 Otway, Venice Preserved (Fn. 49), V., l. 453; l. 450. Although Pierre relates that his friends had already honourably "dy'd like men" (ibid., V., l. 422), he begins to cry when imagining his own death on the wheel. Otway's dramaturgy seems to resonate Katherine Ibbett's argument that seventeenth-century dramatic theory increasingly distinguished self-interested instances of pity from compassion as an emotion 'plus généreux' (Pity, Compassion, Commiseration: Theories of Theatrical Relatedness, in: Seventeenth-Century French Studies 30, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 196–208; see also id., Compassion's Edge [Fn. 44], on renegotiations of pity and compassion in the seventeenth century).

68 Otway's play thus bypasses the slightly earlier, more conventionally gendered definition of tragedy in Dryden's *Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy*, which was prefixed to the 1679 edition of *Troilus and Cressida*: While defining tragedy on Aristotelian terms as a play "which by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our minds" (John Dryden, Troilus and Cressida, in: The Works of John Dryden, Vol. 13. Plays: All for Love, Oedipus, Troilus and Cressida, ed. by Maximilian E. Novak, Berkeley 1984. pp. 217-355, here p. 229), Dryden applies gender when comparing major Elizabethan playwrights, claiming the difference to be "that *Shakespear* [sic.] generally moves more terror, and *Fletcher* more compassion: For the first had a more Masculine, a bolder and more fiery Genius; the Second a more soft and Womanish" (ibid., p. 233).

focus on human knowledge and agency. While tragic anagnorisis prototypically manifests itself by transforming fearful imagination into definite knowledge (or 'proof' in the sense of conviction), *Venice Preserv'd* structurally multiplies the moment of anagnorisis, thus reducing it to a shifting set of contingent attributions. Inversely, Belvidera's madness puts on stage a complete lack of knowledge and a reduction to a surface of radical imagination, which displays a gendered transition into categorical otherness: While Pierre is denied a death which would symbolically relate him to the martyr paradigm, Belvidera's end seems to invert the structure of the prototypical martyr play, in which the fears vanquished by the glorious protagonist are transposed onto the effeminate tyrant figure.

Conclusion

Using gender as a tracer in different generic environments of the Restoration stage, it can be shown that both generic distinctions and distinctions of gender become crucial resources for negotiations of human exceptionality. Gender and genre are interrelated in order to dis-articulate increasingly problematic heroic concepts from concepts of fear, and to refocus fear and fearlessness as a conceptual lynchpin of heroic figurations. Thus, gendered structures of fear were used to scrutinise the relational and projective mechanisms that heroic figurations seem to imply, but also to think through structures of political contract and obligation, and, not least, aesthetic emotion and theatrical relatedness.

Dryden's Almanzor, as the prototypical and prototypically masculine epic hero, seems to represent a total absence of fearful anticipation, which is related to a state of uncivilised liberty. The transgressive dimension of such exceptional courage could be shown to translate onto a much more general concern with heroic fearlessness within the framework of political authority and obligation. Staging, by contrast, an exemplary case of female martyrdom gives Dryden the opportunity to explore the impact of fear as disentangled from the unquestioned masculine courage of the epic paradigm. Obviously, many of the differences between the two plays derive directly from the opposition of the martial romance hero to the potential heroics of suffering and martyrdom, and are not immediately and exclusively a function of gender. However, the representation of a female martyr and saint, not least against the backdrop of a fearful and effeminate male tyrant, positions fear – and the conquest of fear – as a missing link between active warrior heroism and heroic martyrdom. Exploring representations of fear and heroism from the perspective of gender, *Tyrannick Love* thus points to the immense significance of martyrdom for cultural negotiations of the heroic in the later seventeenth century.

By contrast, Otway's *Venice Preserv'd,* in the aesthetic context of early 'she-tragedy', could be shown to inflect the established modes of admirative and transfigurative distance that earlier Restoration drama relied on. It does not only ex-

change admirable heroic fearlessness for human suffering, but appears to stage the very mode of exchanging, having the audience witness how aspirations to heroic courage lose ground while agency is shown to dissolve into an unsettling multitude of possibilities. Structurally implemented in the tragic peripeteia of the play as well as in its multiple anagnorises, the play revolves around the reproach of 'unmanly' cowardice and pity, pointing not only to shifting attributions of 'heroic' virtue, but also to more general aesthetic and generic considerations of theatrical effect and audience response. These, ultimately, seem to imply a more general departure from structures of legitimation based on heroic constructions. The tragic poetics of pity and fear, which early Restoration drama tried to transcend, are thus reclaimed in a pronounced disenchantment of the Heroic Play.

From Viragos to Valkyries

Transformations of the Heroic Warrior Woman in German Literature from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century

Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly

This article focuses on the variety of guises in which the heroic woman is imagined in German literature from the Early Modern period on, in order to attempt an answer to the question: can women ever be heroes?

The Virago, the Monstrous Queen and the Martyr

Three protagonists of literary works dating to the middle of the seventeenth century convey such contrasting visions of the heroic warrior woman that they make an excellent starting point for our discussion. The virago is Bucholtz's Valiska, the monstrous queen is Lohenstein's Sophonisbe and the heroic martyr is Lohenstein's Epicaris.

In 1656–60, the Lutheran clergyman Andreas Heinrich Bucholtz published a novel of some 2,000 pages entitled *Des Christlichen Teutschen Groß-Fürsten Herkules und der Böhmischen Königlichen Fräulein Valiska Wunder-Geschichte* (1659–60).[1] The novel relates the coming of Christianity in the latter days of the Roman Empire and describes the union of Germany and Bohemia, symbolised by the marriage of the eponymous hero and heroine. Bucholtz explains in his introduction that he is writing out of "Liebe zu meinem Vaterlande" (love for my fatherland) and that "unser Teutschland" (our Germany),[2] which for him includes the Bohemians, Goths, Swedes, Danes and other northern peoples, has brought forth just as many heroes as the Greeks and Romans. Bucholtz wrote *Herkules und Valiska* in the 1630s,[3] so the context for his patriotism is the Thirty Years' War and both the main characters can be imagined as the heroes that are needed in a time of national struggle.

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1 Andreas Heinrich Buchholtz, Des Christlichen Teutschen Groß-Fürsten Herkules und der Böhmischen Königlichen Fräulein Valiska Wunder-Geschichte. In acht Bücher und zween Teile abgefasset und allen Gott- und Tugendliebenden Seelen zur Christ- und ehrlichen Ergezligkeit ans Licht gestellet, Brunswick 1659/60. See Martin Disselkamp, Barockheroismus: Konzeptionen 'politischer' Größe in Literatur und Traktatistik des 17. Jahrhunderts (Frühe Neuzeit; 65), Tübingen 2002, pp. 83–157.

2 Buchholtz, Herkules und Valiska (Fn. 1), p. 3.

3 See Ingeborg Springer-Strand, Barockroman und Erbauungsliteratur. Studien zum Herkulesroman von Andreas Heinrich Bucholtz, Bern 1975, p. 1.

Bucholtz's heroine is the "unvergleichliche tapffere und gottfürchtige Valiska" (the peerless, brave, and god-fearing Valiska).[4] She is not a realistically delineated human but an ideal figure, a superhuman being not only possessed of all the most desirable female qualities, but of many male ones too. She is stunningly beautiful, strong, graceful, musical, and dances well. She is learned in Latin and Greek, German, and Czech. She deliberately rejects female activities, a limited education, and a restrictive way of life. She despises sewing, knitting, and lace-making, saying that these are activities for servants who have to earn their living by them, choosing to learn ancient languages instead. She considers that women should spend several hours a day at weapons' practice "so that they would not hide in the cellar in times of need but would come to the aid of their country and not leave their husbands in the lurch."[5]

Valiska loves arms and armour and can fight on horseback. Far from being presented as a transgressive character, she is depicted as wholly admirable. Her mother asks her frequently, however:

> Do you delude yourself, dear child, that you can become a man by means of these exercises? But she always replied: she would like to wish that such a thing were possible or that it was at least the custom for the female sex to cultivate knightly exercises.[6]

She enjoys the skilful use of arms for its own sake and takes part in tournaments on several occasions, where her skill is so extraordinary that she vanquishes all challengers, the one exception being Herkules. She organises a tournament at the emperor's court in Book VI, in which she herself competes, disguised as an Amazon. In this tournament, Valiska shows herself not only to be valiant and strong, but perfectly ready to inflict pain and injury on her opponents, smashing out the front teeth of a boastful fencer in single combat, for instance. She does not relinquish her warrior persona and her martial skill either on marriage or even on becoming a mother. Valiska, therefore, is a perfect example of a virago, an exceptional woman who has risen above the limitations of her sex.

A sign of her exceptional status is her cross-dressing, which she indulges in at numerous points of the novel. There is plenty of sexual ambivalence in this. When she is wearing trousers, women are attracted to her as well as men. Valiska closely resembles Herkules and in his preface to the novel Bucholtz hints to the reader that she should see Valiska and Herkules as one being. This idea is further confirmed by their names. When dressed as a man, Valiska calls herself Her-

4 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. Bucholtz, Herkules und Valiska (Fn. 1), p. 2.

5 "daß in zeit der Noht sie sich nicht in Kellern verstecketen / sondern dem Vaterlande zu hülffe kämen / und ihre Ehemänner nicht im stiche liessen", ibid., p. 187.

6 "bildestu dir ein / liebes Kind / durch diese Ubungen vielleicht ein Mannesbilde zu werden? Sie aber allemahl zur Antwort gab: sie möchte wünschen / daß solches möglich währe/ oder doch zum wenigsten der Brauch seyn möchte, daß das Weibliche Geschlecht den Ritterlichen Ubungen nachzöge", ibid., p. 189.

kuliskus, a combination of her name and that of Herkules. When he is travelling incognito in search of her, he uses the name Valikules. The eponymous hero and heroine, who differ from all the other characters in terms of their virtue and heroic qualities are, therefore, two aspects of the same person and together they make up one perfect human being. So if Herkules and Valiska are actually one person, this explains why Valiska's behaviour is not transgressive. She can do all that a man can do as Herkules's other half. She is a cross-dresser who is not punished, a warrior who continues to fight after losing her virginity, a wife whom marriage has not diminished or subordinated, a heroic woman who is allowed to live. Valiska, however, is more than a virago, she is, at least partially, a man.

Sophonisbe and Epicharis

Now let us look at two of the six tragedies by the dramatist and novelist Daniel Casper von Lohenstein.[7] *Sophonisbe* (1666) tells the story of a Carthaginian queen (d. 203 BC) who lived during the Second Punic War.[8] Sophonisbe is married to the Numidian prince Syphax who has revolted against Rome and has been taken prisoner by the Romans. In his absence, Sophonisbe takes command of the army but is captured by Masinissa, a Carthaginian ally of Rome's. Masinissa is strongly attracted to Sophonisbe and she uses this to turn him against Rome. When Scipio, the Roman general, demands that Masinissa hand her over as a rebel, Masinissa sends her a cup of poison to save her from the humiliation of surrendering to Rome. She drinks the poison and dies a heroic death.

In the first act of the play, when Sophonisbe learns that her husband has been taken prisoner by the Romans, her first reaction is to hand herself over to them as a substitute, but then she decides to take up arms in her husband's place. Lohenstein puts into her mouth a stirring speech in which she declares her intention, not just of arming herself for battle, but of unwomaning herself by cutting off all her hair in order to go to war like a man to defend her country. She compares herself to Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetes, who conquered King Cyrus and fulfilled her promise to make him drink blood by plunging his head, cut from his corpse, into a skin full of human blood. She also invokes the Amazons. However, Sophonisbe's undoubted courage and decisiveness are shown to be perverse. Having donned male clothing, it is only a short step before she decides to sacrifice her own children on the altar, like a second Medea, and to feed her people with her

7 See Cornelia Plume, Heroinen in der Geschlechterordnung. Weiblichkeitsprojektionen bei Daniel Casper von Lohenstein und die Querelle des Femmes, Stuttgart/Weimar 1996, p. 286–308; Renate Kroll, Die Amazone zwischen Wunsch- und Schreckbild, in: Klaus Garber [et al.] (Ed.), Erfahrung und Deutung von Krieg und Frieden. Religion – Geschlechter – Natur und Kultur, Munich 2001, p. 521–537.

8 Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, Sophonisbe, ed. by Rolf Tarot, Stuttgart 1970.

children's blood, in a terrible perversion of the mother's role.[9] Then we learn that, since she is now putting on men's clothes, her stepson Vermina has to dress as a woman. The 'heroic' woman who goes to war emasculates and symbolically castrates the men around her. Lohenstein goes on to portray Sophonisbe as a kind of sorceress who bewitches men and leads them to their doom, like Medea. Masinissa, who is unable to resist her charms, calls her a lethal spider, a snake, a leech, a dragon, an adder, and a witch. The danger this woman represents is only removed at the end of the play when, urged on by his Roman mentor Scipio, Masinissa sends her a cup of poison which she drinks. By accepting this, she rises above her femininity and her sexuality and is allowed to become heroic in death.

If Sophonisbe is the sexually voracious warrior woman, Epicharis is the other side of the coin: the chaste virginal heroic woman.[10] By using reason to discipline desire, she rises above physical passion and so comes closer to the male ideal. The historical Epicharis was a freedwoman who took part in the unsuccessful Pisonian Conspiracy against the tyrannical emperor Nero and who died in 65 AD. Volusius Proculus, the commander of the fleet, betrayed the plot and Epicharis was arrested. She refused to betray the other members of the group, even under torture. When she was being brought back to be tortured a second time, her limbs were so badly broken that she had to be carried bound to a chair. Refusing to surrender or give Nero the satisfaction of killing her, she strangled herself with her own bonds – thereby dying a martyr's death.

Questions of gender, as well as of heroism, are at the heart of the play. Epicharis is portrayed as being more a man than the men. She loves to wear trousers and often disguises herself as a soldier. She espouses the manly virtues of "Recht" (law) and "Vernunft" (reason) and is given speeches of clipped soldierly brevity by Lohenstein, while the future traitor among the conspirators, Proculus, tries to seduce her in speeches full of flowery Baroque rhetoric. One of the other conspirators says of Proculus that he is "von der Zung ein Mann / ein Weib [...] in der That" (A man in his speech but a woman in his deeds).[11] In modern parlance: he talks the talk but does not walk the walk! Epicharis refuses Proculus's advances, for her chastity is an essential precondition for her heroism, and out of wounded vanity Proculus betrays the conspiracy.

But then, all the male conspirators surrender in the course of the play, betraying their comrades. Epicharis is the only one who resists to the last, managing to cheat Nero of his victory over her with her last breath, exhibiting the extraordinary steadfastness and courage of the martyr.[12] She is a 'femme forte', a woman

9 Plume, Heroinen in der Geschlechterordnung (Fn. 7), p. 228, sees this as wholly positive.

10 Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, Epicharis, in: Sämtliche Werke, Vols. II.2.1 and II.2.2, ed. by Lothar Mundt [et al.], Berlin/New York 2005.

11 Ibid., II.2.1, p. 294.

12 See Pierre Béhar, Silesia Tragica: Epanouissement et fin de l'école dramatique silésienne dans l'oeuvre tragique de Daniel Casper von Lohenstein (1635–1683) (Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung; 18), 2 Vols., Wiesbaden 1988, Vol. 1, p. 118.

who possesses the virtues of a man. But she only does what she does because the men, whose proper business it is, do not take on the task of trying to topple Nero. She thereby comes closer again actually to being a man.

Can a Murderer be a Hero?

The biblical Judith is the embodiment of the heroic woman who, to save her people, uses her beauty to get close to a tyrant before murdering him in cold blood in his sleep. In the bible, Judith does not die after her deed but lives the life of a chaste widow. Nineteenth century writers, notably Friedrich Hebbel, imagine Judith as the woman who kills Holofernes because he raped her and because she desired him. In Hebbel's version, she will probably die, since she is most likely pregnant with Holofernes's child.

The historical figure of Charlotte Corday was sometimes compared to the biblical figure of Judith.[13] Corday, whose full name was Marie Anne Charlotte Corday d'Armont, had revolutionary sympathies but was disgusted by the September Massacres in 1792 in which thousands of so-called Counter-Revolutionaries were brutally lynched and murdered by the mob. Jean-Paul Marat was principally responsible for urging them on, so Corday took an independent decision to go to Paris alone and kill Marat in order, as she hoped, to end this bloodbath. In July 1793 she gained access to him on a pretext and stabbed him to death with a kitchen knife that she had bought the day before. Marat, who suffered from a painful skin condition, was sitting in his bath, so that he was not only defenceless but naked when she killed him. At her trial Corday stated very clearly that she had taken a rational decision to liberate France from Marat. She went calmly to her death at the guillotine.

To her admirers, the parallels with Judith were clear: a beautiful young woman, acting alone, using a knife, kills a defenceless man, who is in an intimate setting and therefore off his guard. The man is a villain, so the woman considers it necessary to kill him to save her people. However, there are three important differences between Corday and Judith that make it easier to turn Corday into a saint and a martyr. First, there is no hint in Corday's encounter with Marat of an erotic relationship between killer and victim, as there was with Judith even in the Early Modern period, for she did not use her beauty to seduce him and only

13 See Inge Stephan, Gewalt, Eros und Tod. Metamorphosen der Charlotte Corday-Figur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart, in: id. / Sigrid Weigel (Ed.), Die Marseillaise der Weiber. Frauen, die Französische Revolution und ihre Rezeption, Hamburg 1989, pp. 128–153; Inge Stephan, " Die erhabne Männin Corday". Christine Westphalens Drama " Charlotte Corday" (1804) und der Corday-Kult am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, in: id., Inszenierte Weiblichkeit. Codierung der Geschlechter in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2004, pp. 135–162; Helga Abret, Tyrannenmord. Politische Attentate in der Literatur und Erik Mitterers Drama "Charlotte Corday", in: Der literarische Zaunkönig 3, 2008, pp. 7–19.

spent long enough in his presence to plunge in the knife. Second, she was a virgin, as attested by the doctors who examined her corpse. Third, she paid for her deed with her death, a public death nobly borne.

Contemporary German sympathizers with the revolution were very interested in the case of Corday. The historian Johann Wilhelm Archenholz translated Corday's letters and the trial transcript into German a month after her execution, and published them in his journal *Minerva.* Christoph Martin Wieland composed a dialogue between Corday and Brutus also in 1793, in which Brutus (the killer of Julius Caesar) debates the ethics of political assassination with Corday, and in the same year Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock was already calling Corday "die erhabne Männin Corday" (the noble virago Corday). Among the early German commentators on Corday it was Wieland who made the connection not only between Corday and Judith but between Corday and Jael, the other heroic female biblical killer.[14]

Heinrich Zschokke and Renatus Christian Karl von Senckenberg published plays about Charlotte Corday in 1794 and 1797 respectively but it is in Jean Paul's *Halbgespräch* (1801) that we see the heights to which Corday veneration could ascend.[15] The *Halbgespräch* depicts a meeting between the author, a nobleman called Graf von –ß, and a presiding judge. It takes place on 17 July, the anniversary of Corday's execution, and debates the rights and wrongs of Corday's deed. Can it be right, asks the judge, for an individual to be judge and jury and simply decide to execute someone, as she did? She was not acting as an individual, objects the author, but as a warrior defending her people from a public enemy:

> Corday did not, as a citizen, fight and stab another citizen of the state but as a warrior in a civil war against the enemy of the state, therefore not as one individual stabbing another but as a healthy member of the party a treacherous cancerous limb.[16]

The nobleman has erected a shrine to Corday in his park. The three men go to this shrine at sunset, and when he gazes at the picture, the author calls Corday a second Jeanne d'Arc. The author reads out an account of Corday's life, deed, and last days, in which her decision to renounce marriage and love is an important factor in her heroic death. As the nobleman says: "Only the virgin dies for the

14 Christoph Martin Wieland, Ein paar Anmerkungen des Herausgebers über Scharlotte Korday, in: Neuer Teutscher Merkur 9, 1793, pp. 79–98. See Stephan, Gewalt, Eros und Tod (Fn. 13), p. 132.

15 Jean Paul, Über Charlotte Corday. Ein Halbgespräch am 17. Juli. Zuerst gedruckt im Taschenbuch für 1801. Herausgegeben von Fr. Gentz, J. P. und Joh. Heinr. Voß, in: id., Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 6, ed. by Norbert Miller, Munich 1963, pp. 332–358.

16 "Corday bekämpfte und durchbohrte nicht als Bürgerin einen Staatsbürger, sondern als Kriegerin in einem Bürgerkriege einen Staatsfeind, folglich nicht als Einzelne einen Einzelnen, sondern als gesundes Partei-Mitglied ein abtrünniges krebshaftes Glied." Ibid., p. 337.

world and the fatherland; the mother only for children and husband."[17] Thus, her chastity enables Corday to become Marat's Nemesis, as Jean Paul calls it.

The piece was published in the same year as Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, which presents another heroine and liberator of her people.[18] In the first three acts of the play, Schiller gives us a goddess of war. She is a virgin who has strength and courage beyond that of most men. In her soliloquy in the last scene of the prologue before her departure for the French court, she tells us that God's instructions to her are to unwoman herself and, by encasing herself in bronze and steel, to transform herself into a warrior. Once she embarks on her mission to free France and have the Dauphin crowned in Rheims, she is presented as not only resolute and fearless but as terrifying. In Act II, scene 5, Talbot calls Johanna "die Schreckensgöttin" (the goddess of terror) and Schiller invents the character of Montgomery, solely so that Johanna can kill him in cold blood on the battlefield. Act II, scene 6 is one of the most chilling in the play. Montgomery sees Johanna coming towards him across the battlefield with the world in flames behind her and says: "Dort erscheint die Schreckliche!" (There the terrible one appears)[19] Speaking of herself in the third person, Johanna tells him that he has fallen into the hands of a death-dealing virgin who is less merciful than the crocodile, the tiger or the lioness defending her cubs. She says that her binding contract with the spirit world obliges her to put to the sword all living things whom the god of battles sends her. When Montgomery tries to appeal to her womanly nature, she replies: "Nicht mein Geschlecht beschwöre! Nenne mich nicht Weib" (Do not appeal to my sex. Do not call me woman),[20] before slaying him without remorse or feeling.

Schiller emphasizes Johanna's lack of womanly feeling by juxtaposing her with Agnes Sorel, the Dauphin's mistress, who is all feeling. But by this point Johanna has encountered the Englishman Lionel on the field of battle, has disarmed him, and is about to drive her sword into his body as she did with Montgomery, when she looks into his eyes. Suddenly, she is lost. The goddess turns in an instant into a mortal woman who has only to see this man to love him. She cannot kill him, begs him to kill her and then realizes she has broken her vow of chastity. Lionel takes her sword and escapes, thus 'unmanning' Johanna, the unwoman. The fourth act shows us a Johanna racked with remorse, lamenting the mission that was imposed on her, and longing for Lionel. Having turned from warrior goddess to witch, she now turns from witch to saint. Not for this Joan of Arc death on a pyre but a heroic death on the battlefield, standing up with her banner in her hand before a sky lit with a rosy glow. In her last speech she has a vi-

17 "Nur die Jungfrau […] stirbt für Welt und Vaterland; die Mutter bloß für Kinder und Mann", ibid., p. 337.

18 Friedrich Schiller, Die Jungfrau von Orleans, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 1, Munich 1958.

19 "Dort erscheint die Schreckliche!", ibid., p. 53.

20 Ibid., p. 55.

sion of her own apotheosis, her heavy armour turning into wings, as she soars up to heaven and the choirs of angels. The king, who has just called Johanna an angel, gestures to the bystanders to cover her corpse with their lowered banners, after she has sunk to the earth in a death honourably caused by her wounds. She is therefore not the victim of a malevolent church or of her country's enemies like the historical Joan: this Joan has died for king and country – like a man. The pagan goddess has become a saint, but she can only do so by displaying the emotions of a mortal woman, which of course entails love for a man, and then renouncing them. As Inge Stephan points out, the death of Schiller's Joan has nothing to do with history. She dies because of her own contradictory nature.[21] By renouncing her womanly nature, but in a different way to her initial unwomaning, Schiller can allow Johanna to die a *man's* death on the battlefield and so become a hero. Schiller goes further than anyone else dares to either in his day or in the nineteenth century in making a woman a real warrior and a hero by conferring the approbation of her society on her in the play. He thereby raises the question he confronts us with in other plays such as *Wilhelm Tell*: what is heroism?

At the same time as Schiller's *Jungfrau* began its successful career on the German stage with performances in Leipzig, Berlin, Stralsund, Hamburg, Schwerin, Dresden, Breslau, Kassel, Güstrow, and Stuttgart within the first nine months after publication, real women were joining up to fight for their country in the Napoleonic wars. We have records of twenty-three such women, who put on uniform and fought alongside the men in regular campaigns, often masquerading as men.[22] Of them, by far the most famous is Eleonore Prochaska (or Prohaska). She came from Potsdam, was the motherless daughter of an invalid soldier, and joined the Lützow Volunteers in April 1813 at the age of twenty-eight, taking the name of August Renz. Her military career only lasted six months because she was wounded in September of the same year and died on 5 October. She had snatched up the drum that a wounded enemy drummer had let fall and was drumming to rally her own side and give the signal to attack when she was fatally shot. At this moment, she is said to have uttered the words: "Herr Leutnant, ich bin ein Mädchen" (Lieutenant, I am a girl).

Because Schiller's Johanna was fresh in the mind of the German public, the real historical Eleonore Prochaska became subsumed into the myth, raised onto

21 See Inge Stephan, Hexe oder Heilige? Zur Geschichte der Jeanne d'Arc und ihrer literarischen Verarbeitung, in: id. / Sigrid Weigel (Ed.), Die verborgene Frau. Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft, Berlin 1983, pp. 35–66; " Da werden Weiber zu Hyanen...". Amazonen und Amazonenmythen bei Schiller und Kleist, in: Inge Stephan / Sigrid Weigel (Ed.), Feministische Literaturwissenschaft. Dokumentation der Tagung in Hamburg vom Mai 1983, Berlin 1984, pp. 23–42.

22 See Karen Hagemann, "Männlicher Muth und Teutsche Ehre". Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preußens, Paderborn [et al.] 2002, pp. 383–393.

a higher plane, and thereby made safe. Prochaska is in many ways the antithesis of Johanna: she actually masquerades as a man, she learns to shoot, she acts of her own volition rather than at God's command. But what is stressed in accounts of her life is her motherlessness, her independence from her father, her male attire, her rallying of the troops, and her death caused by wounds sustained on the battlefield. By emphasising these aspects, Prochaska could be compared to Schiller's Johanna very soon after her death and, like Johanna, could be dehumanised by being turned into a literary figure.

The first work about her appears to be Friedrich Duncker's play of 1815, *Leonore Prohaska*, only known today because Ludwig van Beethoven wrote incidental music for it. The work that kept Prochaska before the public consciousness was Friedrich Rückert's six-stanza poem entitled *Auf das Mädchen aus Potsdam, Prochaska*, published in 1816 in his *Kriegerische Spott- und Ehrenlieder*.[23]

In the same work Rückert celebrates another so-called 'Heldenmädchen' who fought in the Wars of Liberation, Friederike Krüger.[24] As a nineteen-year-old she also joined Lützow's troop in April 1813 and took the name of August Lübeck. Her sex was quickly discovered, but she was allowed to stay with the soldiers, rose to be a non-commissioned officer, was decorated with the Iron Cross and the Russian Order of St George, and was only discharged from the army in 1815 after the second campaign. Rückert calls his poem *Der Unteroffizier August Friederike Krüger*. Both poems treat these women ironically.

But there was another young woman whose contribution to the war effort in subsequent decades was to receive nearly as much literary attention as that of Eleonore Prochaska, and her deed stays well within the boundaries of womanly conduct: Johanna Stegen. When the Napoleonic troops clashed with the First Pomeranian Regiment near Lüneburg, their munitions threatened to run out. Johanna Stegen saw that the French had abandoned a cart full of munitions. She filled her apron with them and ran to the German front line to supply the fusiliers. She ran back and did the same again, often holding a corner of the apron in her teeth so as to leave her hands free. In this way, she kept the German troops constantly supplied and they won the battle. She fearlessly ignored the hail of bullets through which she had to pass again and again, even when they cut through her clothes. Just as Eleonore Prochaska became known as the Heroic Maiden of Potsdam, Johanna Stegen was called the Heroic Maiden of Lüneburg. Rückert devotes a poem to her too in which he is far less ironic about her deeds than he was about those of Prochaska and Krüger. "Aber seht, es ist ein Engel / Unterwegs mit schnellem Fuß" (But see, there comes an angel fleet of foot), he writes about Stegen.[25]

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23 Friedrich Rückert, Kriegerische Spott- und Ehrenlieder (1816), in: Friedrich Rückert, Poetische Werke in zwölf Bänden, ed. by Heinrich Rückert, Frankfurt am Main 1882, Vol.1, p. 210.

24 Friedrich Rückert, Zeitgedichte (1814/15), in: Poetische Werke, Vol. 1, pp. 61–62.

25 Ibid., pp. 59–61, here p. 60.

Where Friederike Krüger's salient piece of clothing was her Iron Cross, an object which causes great unease to the men around her in Rückert's poem, Stegen's is that most female of garments, an apron, emblematic of womanly service.

Prochaska and Stegen were portrayed in literature again and again over the next century. Rückert's poems alone would have served to keep them before the reading public, as collected editions of his works were published in 1834, 1836, 1843, 1846, 1868/9, and 1882, but works about them continued to be written throughout the nineteenth century and they appeared in cheap popular prints right up to and beyond World War I. As the century progressed, it seemed as if every region wanted its own 'Heldenmädchen': Friedland, Lemberg and Bremen are examples, while the Austrians, for instance, had Katharina Lanz, the "Heroic Maiden of Spinges", a figure revered to this day in the Tirol, for instance, in tourist literature for St. Vigil in Enneberg, where her statue stands in the market place.

While these women were being mythologised, the German stage was being dominated by a very different mythical figure.

Brünhild, the Germanic Warrior Maiden

The first entrance of the Valkyries into the consciousness of German intellectuals was Johann Gottfried Herder's translation of a poem from Thomas Berthelin's *Antiquitatem Danicarum et de causis contemptae a Danis ad huc gentilibus mortis libri tres* (Copenhagen, 1689). This poem, entitled *Die Todesgöttinnen*, had as a subtitle: "Das Gesicht eines Wandrers in einer einsamen Grabhöle, da er die Valkyriur also weben sah" (The vision of a wanderer when he saw the Valkyrie weaving in a lonely cavernous grave) and Herder incorporated it into the collection of folksongs that he had been putting together since the 1760s.[26] What these wild and sanguinary women are weaving are human entrails from which they are hanging human heads. Herder's Valkyries, therefore, are angels of death, personifications of war, 'femmes fatales', and the Sister Fates rolled into one. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's friend Friedrich Heinrich Karl, Baron de la Motte Fouqué, is the first writer to present the Nibelungen saga in dramatic form in his trilogy, *Der Held des Nordens* (1808–1810). The next literary treatment is Ernst Raupach's play *Der Nibelungen-Hort*, first performed in 1828 and printed in 1833.

In the 1850s, three men, close contemporaries, were working simultaneously on dramas based on the Nibelung material – Emanuel Geibel, Friedrich Hebbel, and Richard Wagner.[27] Geibel called his blank verse tragedy simply *Brunhild*. It first appeared in 1857, going into a second edition already in 1861.[28] It is a com-

[26] Johann Gottfried Herder, Die Todesgöttinnen, in: id., Stimmen der Völker in Liedern. Zwei Teile 1778/79, ed. by Heinz Rölleke, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 313–315.

[27] Another nineteenth-century work based on the Nibelung material is Heinrich Dorn's opera *Die Nibelungen* (1855).

[28] Emanuel Geibel, Brunhild. Eine Tragödie aus der Nibelungensage, Stuttgart/Augsburg 1857.

pelling psychological drama that focuses on a small number of well-drawn characters. There are two heroic figures, Siegfried and Brunhild. Siegfried is heroic because of his magnificent physique and joy in his own physicality, while Brunhild is heroic because of the depth of her feeling and because of her capacity for suffering. Friedrich Hebbel called his trilogy *Die Nibelungen* and he is not particularly interested in Brunhild at all.

It is Wagner who gives Brünnhilde – this is his spelling – a truly tragic dimension and makes her a central figure in his four-part operatic cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung), for which he composed both the libretto and the music. It had a long gestation period, beginning in 1848. He began work with a prose sketch of *Siegfrieds Tod* (Siegfried's Death), concluding in 1874 with Act III of *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods).[29] The first of the four parts to be completed was *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie) in 1856 and the entire *Ring* was first performed in August 1876 in Bayreuth. Wagner's Brünnhilde is the daughter of Wotan by Erda. She is a "Walküre" or Valkyrie, that is, one of a group of warrior maidens who roam the battlefields and take dead heroes up to Valhalla, the place of the fallen heroes. If we look objectively at Brünnhilde, we see that, though she is a heroic warrior maiden and appears wearing armour, her outstanding quality is the expression of those emotions that are connoted female. She feels compassion for Sieglinde, love for Siegfried, hurt and betrayal for herself, and finally overwhelming grief at Siegfried's death. She leaps into the flames and joins Siegfried in a love death. Rather than being the warrior queen who strives to the last to keep her pride, her honour, and her sense of self intact and who is prepared to destroy the hero Siegfried to do so, she is depicted as remaining faithful to her love for Siegfried and dying in order to join him beyond the grave. Her last words are: "Siegfried! Siegfried! Sieh! / Selig grüsst dich dein Weib!" (Siegfried, Siegfried, look – blissfully thy wife greets thee), before she leaps into the flames.[30] Wagner's Brünnhilde, like Werner's Wanda, sacrifices herself for the man she loves and, even though he wronged her, she removes the curse of the ring through her faithfulness.

Women Writers and the Heroic Woman

Women writers, entering the public sphere through the back door, had the handicap of writing within a cultural system and using rhetorical tools that they themselves did not create. In the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, they left well alone the tropes about mythical and biblical warrior women that began to

[29] See Peter Wapnewski, Weißt du wie das wird...? Richard Wagner Der Ring des Nibelungen. Erzählt, erläutert und kommentiert, Munich/Zurich 1995. Norbert Müller compares Hebbel's and Wagner's versions of the Nibelung material in his Die Nibelungendichter Hebbel und Wagner, Essen 1991.

[30] Richard Wagner, Die Musikdramen, Hamburg 1971, p. 814.

dominate the stage and invented their own fictional warrior women instead. They imagined women putting on trousers and taking part in war and revolution in the real world, acting in a way that society would never allow a virtuous woman to act in real life. Fiction, therefore, allowed women to think the unthinkable and they sometimes created the most surprising works. Maria Antonia, Electoral Princess of Saxony, composed an opera about enlightened Amazons in the 1760s, Christine Westphalen wrote a play glorifying Charlotte Corday in 1804, Karoline von Woltmann retold the story of the Bohemian Amazons in 1815, and Elisabeth Grube depicted Eleonore Prochaska in 1864 in her play about the Lützow Volunteers. But these works are exceptions. What women writers do most often is to invent completely fictitious women warriors, dress them in trousers, and place them in a war zone in a realistic setting, whether contemporary or historical. This enables them to meditate on woman's role in a time of national upheaval, to consider woman's capacity not just for agency, but for leadership and even for violence, to depict woman's survival in a disordered world, and to think about how a woman reconciles her destiny as wife, mother, daughter, sister within the exceptional situation that is war and to examine the question of heroism.

Virtually all the works in which women imagine a woman going to war are prose fiction, works to be enjoyed in an intimate setting or consumed in private by a solitary reader, who we may imagine was very often another woman.[31] Writers and readers can enjoy the transgressive behaviour of the heroine, who has a freedom of movement and an autonomy that they themselves, in most cases, did not have.[32] Benedikte Naubert's *Geschichte der Gräfin Thekla von Thurn oder Scenen aus dem dreyssigjährigen Kriege* (1788) places her heroine into the midst of the Thirty Years' War, while Friederike Lohmann's *Die Talmühle* (before 1811) is set during the Schmalkaldic War of 1546–47. Two other authors depict the counter-revolutionary uprising in the Vendée in 1793–96 from two different political standpoints: Therese Huber's *Die Familie Seldorf* (1795/6) is written shortly afterward the struggle and takes a pro-revolutionary stance, while Caroline de la Motte Fouqué's *Das Heldenmädchen aus der Vendée* (The Heroic Maiden from the Vendée, 1816) is written twenty years later from a royalist perspective. Huber questions a whole series of accepted truths, among them the dictum that a heroic woman's destiny is either marriage or death. Fouqué shows her heroine expiring heroically at the end of the novel but only after she has had a career remarkable for its resolution and daring.

Louise Aston's *Revolution und Contrerevolution* (Revolution and Counter-Revolution, 1849) has a wonderful, wholly implausible heroine called Baroness

31 See Ulrike Prokop, Die Einsamkeit der Imagination. Geschlechterkonflikt und literarische Produktion um 1770, in: Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Ed.), Deutsche Literatur von Frauen, 2 Vols., Munich 1988, Vol. 1, pp. 325–365; Barbara Becker-Cantarino, Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik. Epoche, Werke, Wirkung, Munich 2000; Helen Fronius, Women and Literature in the Goethe Era 1770–1820: Determined Dilettantes, Oxford 2007.

32 See Mechtilde Vahsen, Die Politisierung des weiblichen Subjekts. Deutsche Romanautorinnen und die Französische Revolution (1790–1820), Berlin 2000, pp. 40–44.

Alice. She is the president of a revolutionary club, she takes part in the 1848 revolution in Berlin, striding over the barricades through a hail of bullets, and then she plays a part in the revolution in Schleswig-Holstein. Alice also practises what today might be called 'free love', manipulates men to her political ends, bears arms, and wears trousers. Mathilde Franziska Anneke's account of another episode during the same revolution, *Memoiren einer Frau aus dem badisch-pfälzischen Feldzuge 1848/49* (1853), is a non-fiction account of her own real participation in war.

Of course, some women writers had internalized patriarchal ideas about women as passive, helpless, emotional, and irrational victims, and even when they invent heroic women, they make them conform to these norms,[33] thus policing the boundaries of woman's sphere even more thoroughly than male writers did. The turning point comes at the end of the nineteenth century when women writers and thinkers finally begin to take issue with such male tropes as the eroticized depiction of Judith as 'femme fatale' and to use the figure to debate very different questions. In her novella *Königin Judith* (Queen Judith, 1895), for instance, Maria Janitschek claims an agency for her heroine that comes from Judith's own sense of self, which gives her an ascendancy over the Holofernes figure that has nothing to do with seductiveness and everything to do with sheer force of personality.[34] Other women writers use the figure of Judith to debate the morality of killing a defenceless and sleeping man or the problem of guilt. But most hearteningly, women begin to rethink the figure of the Amazon, to imagine for themselves what an Amazon state could conceivably be like and to ask whether such a state might have utopian and emancipatory potential for their own lives. Ilse Langner's play *Amazonen* (1933) is the most positive and affirmative example of this, showing in the epilogue how modern technology can compensate for women's physical weakness and how, in a new age, men and women can be comrades in some great endeavour, instead of encountering each other only either in an adversarial or in an erotic relationship.[35] Women, in other words, begin finally to write back.

So can women be heroes? If one criterion for heroism is to die a noble death, as is the case from at least the mid-eighteenth century on, then there should be no problem. Lohenstein's Epicharis, Schiller's Johanna, Zacharias Werner's Wanda, Grillparzer's Libussa, Wagner's Brünnhilde, Eleonore Prochaska all suffer bravely and die such a death for a good cause. So surely they are to be seen as heroes? They have an unsurmountable problem, however: they are women. They have to rise above their own sexuality and renounce motherhood, even though their destiny, their 'Bestimmung', is to be mothers. Male authors reinforce this

33 Sigrid Weigel, Die geopferte Heldin und das Opfer als Heldin. Zum Entwurf weiblicher Helden in der Literatur von Männern und Frauen, in: Die verborgene Frau (Fn. 21), pp. 138–152.

34 Maria Janitschek, Königin Judith, in: Lilienzauber. Novellen (1895). Deutsche Literatur von Frauen (Digitale Bibliothek; 45), Berlin 2001, pp. 35561–35581.

35 Ilse Langner, Amazonen. Komödie, in: id., Dramen, ed. by Eberhard Günter Schulz, Vol. 2, Würzburg 1991.

notion again and again. Then, having renounced these central aspects of their being, there is nothing left for them but to die.

Gustav Roethe, professor of German studies at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin, expresses the impossibility of a woman being a hero with exemplary clarity in a speech entitled *Deutsches Heldentum*. He gave this speech in 1906 on the occasion of the birthday of Emperor Wilhelm II. – Kaisers Geburtstag. This is how he begins:

> The German lands are strewn today with a plenitude of powerful women in marble and bronze wearing armour who as 'Germania' are supposed to represent the symbol of our national unity. I would not rejoice at this un-German form of artistic expression even if it were of higher aesthetic value. It does not touch our hearts. The chilly female personification has never acquired blood and life for us. The German has always clothed his ideal, the quintessence of his desires, in the form of a *hero*. The hero, however, is a man.[36]

Women cannot be heroes? Why not? Because they are women.[37]

[36] "Das deutsche Land ist heute übersät mit einer Fülle gepanzerter Machtweiber in Marmor und Bronze, die als 'Germania' das Symbol unserer nationalen Einheit darstellen sollen. Ich würde mich dieser undeutschen künstlerischen Ausdrucksform nicht freuen, selbst wenn sie ästhetisch wertvoller geraten wäre. Sie berührt uns nicht das Herz. Die frostige weibliche Personifikation hat für uns nie Blut und Leben gewonnen. Der Deutsche hat von jeher sein Ideal, den Inbegriff seiner Wünsche, in die Gestalt des *Helden* gekleidet. Der Held aber ist ein Mann." Gustav Roethe, Deutsches Heldentum, in: id., Deutsche Reden, Leipzig 1927, pp. 1–18, here p. 1.

[37] The ideas in this article are developed at much greater length and with many more examples in Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, Beauty or Beast? The Woman Warrior in the German Imagination from the Renaissance to the Present, Oxford 2010.

Creating and Subverting German Models of *Galanterie*?

Heroes and Heroines in Texts by Christian Friedrich Hunold and Maria Aurora von Königsmarck[1]

Madeleine Brook

In his article on constructions of the heroic throughout history[2], Ronald Asch lists as some of the defining characteristics of the hero their superhuman nature, possibly with a link to God or the gods, capable of superhuman deeds and possibly even suffering the torments of passions (however these are conceived), and set apart from the rest of society, which looks on in wonder at the figure they cut. If one subscribes to this definition, the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century monarch certainly did his best to create a heroic image for himself. With all the symbolism clinging to his chosen emblem,[3] the ritual surrounding his person which he established at court, and the style of rhetoric and behaviour known as *galanterie*, the Apollonian Sun King of France, Louis XIV, came to be an ideal model for European monarchs of the period by which to express the nature of their rule, power, and relationships, both within and beyond the geographical borders of their territories.[4] At the turn of the seventeenth century, it was Friedrich August I, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland – known as August the Strong – who

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1 This article is extensively based on parts of the chapter "August the Strong, the Eighteenth-Century Gallant Archetype", in: Madeleine Brook, Popular History and Fiction: The Myth of August the Strong in German Literature, Art and Media (Cultural Identity Studies; 28), Oxford 2013, pp. 61–104.

2 Ronald G. Asch, The Hero in the Early Modern Period and Beyond: An Elusive Cultural Construct and an Indispensable Focus of Social Identity?, in: helden. heroes. héros. Special Issue 1, 2014: Languages and Functions of the Heroic, pp. 5–14. DOI 10.6094/helden.heroes.heros./2014/QM/02.

3 On the construction of Louis XIV's image through art, see, of course, Peter Burke, The Fabrication of Louis XIV, New Haven/London 1992; for Louis' employment of elemental symbolism in his fêtes, see Orest Ranum, Islands and the Self in a Ludovician Fête, in: David Lee Rubin (Ed.), Sun King: The Ascendancy of French Culture During the Reign of Louis XIV, Washington 1992, pp. 17–34, as well as other essays in that same volume.

4 See, again, Burke, The Fabrication of Louis XIV (Fn. 3), in particular Chapter 11: The Reception of Louis XIV, pp. 151–177; and John Adamson, The Making of the Ancien-Régime Court 1500–1700, in: John Adamson (Ed.), The Princely Courts of Europe 1500–1750, London 1999, pp. 7–41, here pp. 40–41. More recently and on the tension in the projected public image of Louis XIV and that of Louis as a private man, see in particular the essays in Mathieu da Vinha [et al.] (Ed.), Louis XIV: l'image et le mythe, Rennes/Versailles 2014; in the same volume, on the role of foreign diplomats at court in providing a reaction to the royal image, see Sven Externbrink, Le roi et le diplomate: l'image de Louis XIV à travers les dépêches et la *Relation de la cour de France* d'Ézéchiel Spanheim (1680–89 et 1698–1701), pp. 201–214.

seemed to aim at portraying himself as the ideal gallant ruler among the German princes. This self-constructed image was projected through all conceivable avenues of princely representation available to the artistic minds and technologies of the time,[5] and it was also taken up in the literature of the day: first in the *roman à clef* entitled *Der Europäischen Höfe Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte* (The Amorous and Heroic History of the European Courts; 1705) by Christian Friedrich Hunold (who also wrote under the pseudonym 'Menantes'). Principally a novel of entertainment in which the princely hero, Gustavus, is held up as an example for the book's bourgeois audience to follow, the book also gathers a large number of stories concerning the nobility of contemporary Europe. Secondly, August appears as the principal male actor in two short stories now firmly attributed to Maria Aurora von Königsmarck, who had been one of August's mistresses early in his reign of Saxony. These two stories, "Die Geschichte der Solane" (The Story of Solane) and "Die Geschichte der Givritta" (The Story of Givritta), are contained in the voluminous courtly novel commonly known as *Römische Octavia* (Roman Octavia; 1713/1762), one of the two great literary achievements of Duke Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel.[6] They narrate the actions of the respective eponymous heroines in relation to the prince and his image.

These texts are partly of interest because, while gallant literature often presented fictionalized, disguised, and encoded events and figures of contemporary bourgeois life, it was fairly unusual for a noble ruler of the same period to be fictionalized during his own lifetime.[7] They are also important texts in the history of the

5 On August the Strong's artistic interests in relation to the construction of his image, see, for example, Claudia Schnitzer / Petra Hölscher (Ed.), Eine gute Figur machen: Kostüm und Fest am Dresdner Hof, Dresden 2000; Claudia Schnitzer (Ed.), Constellatio Felix: Die Planetenfeste Augusts des Starken anlässlich der Vermählung seines Sohnes Friedrich August mit der Kaisertochter Maria Josepha 1719 in Dresden, Dresden 2014; Dirk Syndram / Jutta Kappel / Ulrike Weinhold (Ed.), Das Historische Grüne Gewölbe zu Dresden: Die barocke Schatzkammer, Munich/Berlin 2007; Kurt Milde (Ed.), Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann (1662–1736) und die Architektur der Zeit August des Starken (Fundus-Bücher; 125), Dresden 1991; Kerstin Heldt, Der vollkommene Regent: Studien zur panegyrischen Casuallyrik am Beispiel des Dresdner Hofes Augusts des Starken (Frühe Neuzeit; 34), Tübingen 1997.

6 On the attribution of the stories to Königsmarck, see Stephan Kraft, Galante Passagen im höfischen Barockroman: Aurora von Königsmarck als Beiträgerin zur *Römischen Octavia* Herzog Anton Ulrichs, in: Daphnis 28, Issue 2, 1999, pp. 323–345. On Duke Anton Ulrich as an author, see, for example, Julie Meyer / Maria Munding, Anton Ulrich als Dichter, in: Rüdiger Klessmann (Ed.), Herzog Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig: Leben und Regieren mit der Kunst, Braunschweig 1983, pp. 201–212; Étienne Mazingue, Réflexions sur la creation romanesque chez Anton Ulrich, in: Jean-Marie Valentin (Ed.), Monarchus Poeta: Studien zum Leben und Werk Anton Ulrichs von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (Chloe; 4), Amsterdam 1985, pp. 47–53.

7 Several examples of seventeenth and early eighteenth-century novels and in particular *romans à clef* may be referenced here in which real life bourgeois and aristocratic figures provided the events on which the plots were based: Hunold's scandal-inducing *Satyrischer Roman* (1706), Philipp von Zesen's autobiographical *Die Adriatische Rosemund* (1645), Johann Thomasius's *Damon und Lisille* (1663/65), Martin Opitz's *Hercinie* (1630), and others. Real contemporary noble figures are rather thinner on the ground: encoded anecdotes from the

reception and production of August the Strong's image as a ruler and gallant ideal, although admittedly, partly as a result of their encrypted nature, their long-term significance in this regard was superseded by other texts.[8] However, closer inspection of these two sets of texts reveals not only two different views of the male-gendered gallant ideal but also, in at least one instance, a tantalizing glimpse of what might be considered a gallant heroine, a *dame galante*. This article analyses the gaps between the gallant ideal of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and the interests of Königsmarck and Hunold in creating their texts, and thus examines how the concept of the hero is subtly, though perhaps unintentionally, undermined. In doing so, Königsmarck's text comes to suggest a veritable unmasking of the masculine gallant ideal as anything but heroic while – rather surprisingly – still upholding aspects of its notions of masculinity. Arguably, at the same time, she presents heroic possibilities for her female characters by playing gendered norms off against each other and demonstrating the necessity of the female element for maintaining an image of heroism in the *homme galante*. Finally, this article posits that even the tensions inherent in Hunold's presentation of Friedrich August as a gallant ideal have the effect of placing a question mark over the nature of the concept of the hero.

Friedrich August I., Elector of Saxony, who became August II., King of Poland, in 1697, was born in 1670, the second son of Johann Georg III., Elector of Saxony, and Anna Sophie, Princess of Denmark and Norway. The young electoral prince became well known for his feats of apparently immense physical strength which later earned him the soubriquet 'the Strong'.[9] Like many young princes of the period, shortly after his seventeenth birthday, August embarked on a two-year cavalier tour of the courts of Europe, which naturally included the court of Louis XIV of France.[10] In the years following his tour, August established a successful military reputation in imperial campaigns against France and the Turks, although this reputation would later be sullied by the events of the Northern Wars in the first decade of the eighteenth century.[11] In 1691, August married Christiane Eberhardine von

royal courts of Europe, past and contemporary, litter Duke Anton Ulrich's *Römische Octavia* and – as already mentioned in this article – Hunold makes August of Saxony and Poland the thinly veiled protagonist of his novel *Der Europäischen Höfe Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte*; otherwise such direct incorporation of real noble figures in fiction is rare.

8 The other text in particular being Karl Ludwig von Pöllnitz's notoriously salacious work *La Saxe galante* (1734), published – significantly – shortly after August's death. See Brook, Popular History and Fiction (Fn. 1), esp. p. 90 and pp. 95–103.

9 For the stories of August's manipulation of metal objects (among other things), see Georg Piltz, August der Starke: Träume und Taten eines deutschen Fürsten, Berlin 1986, pp. 17–19; Karl Czok, August der Starke und Kursachsen, Leipzig 1987, p. 11.

10 See, for example, Mathis Leibetseder, Die Kavalierstour: Adlige Erziehungsreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert (Archiv für Kulturgeschichte / Beihefte; 56), Cologne [et al.] 2004; Alain Viala, La France galante, Paris 2008.

11 See, for example, Robert Frost, The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721, Harlow 2000, p. 230, pp. 243–244 and pp. 263–264; David Kirby,

Bayreuth-Brandenburg. The match was not a particularly happy one: five years after their marriage, Christiane Eberhardine produced a son, their only child, but the clash of personalities between husband and wife meant they spent very little time together. August also acknowledged a number of illegitimate children by various mistresses, including a son by Maria Aurora von Königsmarck and three children by Countess Anna Constantia von Cosel, his longest-serving mistress. The unexpected death of his elder brother in 1692 brought August the Saxon electoral title.[12] He also began working on his political ambitions beyond Saxony by standing as a candidate for the Polish throne, which he won in 1697, thereby becoming the first German king – albeit not within his own hereditary territories – and by marrying his son, Friedrich August II. to the Habsburg Archduchess Maria Josepha of Austria. August died in Warsaw on 1 February 1733 and was buried in the royal crypt in Krakow.

In the decades marking the turn of the seventeenth century, approximately 1680–1730 – dates that almost perfectly encompass the duration of August's reign – the German middle and upper classes came into contact with and adopted a new style of social interaction and expression that had originated at the French court of Louis XIV. The French were universally held up as the masters of gallant behaviour, for example by the controversial juridical scholar Christian Thomasius in his 1689 lecture *Discours Welcher Gestalt man denen Frantzosen in gemeinem Leben und Wandel nachahmen solle?* (Considerations on the manner in which the French should be imitated in everyday life and manners). *Galanterie* was also a rhetorical system that could be applied to all conceivable aspects of life, but broadly covered conduct towards others, the expression of learning and knowledge; in short, communication of all kinds, written and spoken.[13] Its key principle lay in self-promotion; that is, promoting one's own interests by fostering a positive perception of oneself and one's position in the eyes of others. The means by which to achieve this required an ability to adapt and maintain personal ease in all social situations. Unsurprisingly, as a result, *galanterie* received praise and criticism alike from German contemporaries. There were voices who pointed to its civilising power, such as Johann Christian Barth, who explicitly linked it to virtuous and socially skilled behaviour:

> Civility is a virtuous and gallant way to adapt oneself, in deeds as in words, according to the time and place, to the type of people with which one associates, so that one can recommend oneself and so help to improve one's fortunes.[14]

Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period: The Baltic World, 1492–1772, London 1990, p. 307.

12 Piltz, August der Starke (Fn. 9), pp. 27–33.

13 Peter Hess, Galante Rhetorik, in: Gert Ueding (Ed.), Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik, Vol. 3, Tübingen 1996, pp. 508–509.

14 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "Die Höfflichkeit ist eine Tugendhaffte und galante Conduite, sich, so wohl in Wercken, als Worten bey Erwegung der Zeit und des Orts, nach dem Genie der Leute, mit welchen man umgehet, zu richten:

But naturally there were also those who pointed in the opposite direction, at the potential *galanterie* held for encouraging immoral behaviour and false character. Some went so far as to link the potential encouragement of immoral behaviour with the growing (but still very much nascent) market in novels:

> For there would be enough other forms of godlessness in such books, which tell of nothing but hatred, murder, dissimulation, disavowal, lies, deception, […] and lecherous whickering and so forth, and what is more they praise all this as wit, propriety, and virtue in their heroes! Such things may well serve those people to whom whoring is a deed of *galanterie* and an *histoire galant* is a happy tale of nothing but adulterous affairs.[15]

This criticism from Gotthard Heidegger, a Swiss pastor and theologian, which focuses on reading fiction, and specifically gallant literature, as the expression of *galanterie*'s disreputableness, gives the view that the *homme galant*, the gallant hero, is absolutely the wrong sort of hero, the thoroughly bad example and representative of a topsy-turvy world in which vice is portrayed as virtue.

As Disselkamp has shown, the concept of 'heroic virtue' or *virtus heroica* in the Aristotelean tradition became ever more problematic during the later seventeenth century: definitions were largely contained within the theoretical field of ethical discourse such that a credible application within political theory and practical application within the developing political models of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries became increasingly difficult, until the concept was rejected as no longer congruent with bourgeois existence during the Enlightenment.[16] The emphasis on the definitions by ethical philosophers of the visibility of heroic virtue through the performance of deeds meant that heroism as a concept was heavily engaged with the notion of performance and the necessity of achieving a heroic image. This also opened it up to criticism as an art of dissembling not easily compatible with Christian ideas of virtuous conduct in the individual (and especially the prince when it was applied to the political

Damit man sich recommandire, und also sein Glück befördern helffe." Johann Christian Barth, Galante Ethica, In welcher gezeiget wird, Wie sich Ein junger Mensch bey der Galanten Welt, Sowohl Durch manierliche Wercke, als complaisante Worte recommandiren soll, Dresden/Leipzig 1728, 3rd ed., in: Conrad Wiedemann (Ed.), Der galante Stil 1680–1730 (Deutsche Texte; 11), Tübingen 1969, p. 11.

15 "Es were ja sonst anderwerts Gottlosigkeit genug in solchen Bücheren, die von nichts anders, als von hassen, mörden, simulieren, läugnen, lugen-dichten, hinders Liecht führen, [...] und geilem wiheln &c. handeln, und dises alles, an ihrem Heros als Witz, Wolständigkeit, und Tugend noch dazu loben! [...] solche Sachen dienen wol under diejenige Leuth, bey denen huren [...] eine *Galanterie* begehen, ist, und *Histoire Galante* ein Lust-Geschicht von lauter Ehbrüchen bedeutet [...]." Gotthard Heidegger, Mythoscopia Romantica: oder Discours von den so benanten Romans, Das ist Erdichteten Liebes- Helde[n]- und Hirten-Geschichten: Von dero Uhrsprung, Einrisse, Verschidenheit, Nütz- oder Schädlichkeit: Samt Beantwortung aller Einwürffen, und vilen besondern Historischen, und anderen anmühtigen Remarques, Zurich 1698 (facsimile edn., Walter Ernst Schäfer [Ed.], Berlin/Zurich 1969), Vorbericht, n.p. Emphasis in the original.

16 Martin Disselkamp, Barockheroismus: Konzeptionen 'politischer' Größe in Literatur und Traktatistik des 17. Jahrhunderts (Frühe Neuzeit; 65), Tübingen 2002, p. 5 and pp. 26–39.

sphere of discourse).[17] Moreover, as Disselkamp explains, definitions that linked heroic virtue with divine inspiration, and thus the achievement of 'superhuman' virtue, proved equally unstable: the hero could only *appear* to overcome his human form due to his mastery of emotion, of himself – to achieve truly divine standards of conduct could not be acceptable within the established relationship between humankind and God – and the hero's overreliance on his own power and success could lead to his downfall and succumbing to vice.[18]

These problems hover in the background of Heidegger's criticism. Implicit in Heidegger's words is, on the one hand, an acceptance of the hero as a person who is recognizable by deeds, but on the other hand, they ought in particular to be deeds that are not self-serving. This is indicated most strongly by Heidegger's emphasis on the illicit and sexual nature of the acts he lists. It is clear, too, that Heidegger considers the literary hero to be a figure whose conduct will be internalized and emulated by the reader, and that readers will receive the novel as a guide for their own conduct. He works *ex negativo* in reference to the figure of the hero as he ought to be. The disdain Heidegger bears for the novels' heroes is palpable in his sarcastic tone and the focus of the list of 'heroic' deeds, which describes almost all in terms of deception and subterfuge, blurring the distinction between truth and appearance, or *Sein* and *Schein*, highlighting this in particular as a path away from godliness.

Nevertheless, adaptability and flexibility were key to the successful execution of gallant style and gallant behaviour. Intrinsic to its success was the art of the compliment, tailored to its audience and artfully composed for 'natural' expression and wit. 'How to' guides were common; the most prominent writers of these were Talander, Menantes, Amaranthes – the pseudonyms for the writers August Bohse, Christian Friedrich Hunold, and Gottlieb Siegmund Corvinus – but there were others. They advised their readers on the composition of 'gallant' letters and poetry of all kinds, and on conversation.[19] One of the overriding concerns – perhaps unsurprisingly – was the expression of love. Generally, behavioural instruction in these books aimed exclusively at men. Only one of Hunold's guides, published in 1710, *Die Manier höflich und wohl zu Reden und zu Leben* (The Way to Speak and Live Politely and Well), addresses the manners of women, but relegates this comparatively short section to the back of the book. The direction of *galanterie* in favour of the man and the extremely slight role given to women as 'dames galantes' hardly seems clearer here. The separation suggests that women were not envisaged as ac-

17 Ibid., pp. 40–42.
18 Ibid., pp. 44–47.
19 An indication of the extent of the popularity of such works is given in the list of (selected) titles of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century etiquette books, their authors, and the number of editions provided in Manfred Beetz, Frühmoderne Höflichkeit: Komplimentierkunst und Gesellschaftsrituale im altdeutschen Sprachraum (Germanistische Abhandlungen; 67), Stuttgart 1990, pp. 106–107.

tive practitioners of the mode in the way, or to the extent, that was encouraged and prescribed for men. *Galanterie* as envisaged in German thought was a 'male domain'.[20]

The root of 'good' *galanterie* lay in France and, importantly, in the behaviour of the princely court, although it was taken up and developed within French salon culture, notably by Madeleine de Scudéry. Hunold's novels *Die liebenswürdige Adalie* (Sweet Adalia; 1702) and *Der Europäischen Höfe Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte* (1705) indicate that he saw the basis for gallant behaviour in a courtly – and therefore political – environment. Even so, this did not mean that the *homme galant* existed only in a courtly environment or that the model was one necessarily intended for a princely or noble audience. Theoretically, universal politeness was to sustain society throughout and between the different social classes.[21] However, several of the theoreticians of *galanterie* were also novelists, and many German novels of the period written in the gallant style have links to instructional literature clearly aimed at the middle classes. Indeed, the middle classes were generally the producers and recipients of gallant literature of all kinds and the names of the nobility are conspicuously absent from the roll call of gallant authors.[22] Nevertheless, the middle classes and gallant authors were present at court at various times in their lives – as courtiers, tutors, clerks, secretaries and so on – for example Benjamin Neukirch in Berlin, August Bohse in Weißenfels, and Christian Weise in Halle. Thus, it seems likely that gallant instructional books and guidance literature were aimed not simply at courtly men in general, but at the middle class men active or potentially active in and around noble courts, so that they might move more comfortably in these circles and establish careers.[23] It is

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20 Isabelle Stauffer, Die Scudéry-Rezeption im Pegnesischen Blumenorden: Galanterietransfer aus genderkritischer Perspektive, in: Ruth Florack / Rüdiger Singer (Ed.), Die Kunst der Galanterie: Facetten eines Verhaltensmodells in der Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit (Frühe Neuzeit; 171), Berlin 2012, pp. 251–274, here p. 251. Other works, such as books on manners, were aimed specifically at girls and young women, such as *Des Galanten Frauenzimmers kluge Hofmeisterin* (The Clever Lady Governess of the Gallant Woman; transl. from the French and published in Leipzig in 1696) or August Bohse's *Des Galanten Frauenzimmers Secretariat-Kunst oder Liebes- und Freundschafts-Briefe* (The Secretarial Arts of the Gallant Woman or Letters of Love and Friendship; Leipzig 1698). See Cornelia Niekus Moore, The Maiden's Mirror: Reading Material for German Girls in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Wiesbaden 1987, pp. 117–120. On books of manners and conduct for women in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, see also Sabine Koloch, Kommunikation, Macht, Bildung: Frauen im Kulturprozess der Frühen Neuzeit, Berlin 2011, and on the complexities of the practice of the compliment for women, see esp. pp. 304–341.

21 Pamela Currie, Literature as Social Action: Modernist and Traditionalist Narratives in Germany in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Columbia, SC 1995, p. 102.

22 Johannes Süßmann, Wurde der deutsche Adel galant? Vorüberlegungen zu den unerforschten Wegen des Galanterietransfers in der Adelserziehung des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts, in: Ruth Florack / Rüdiger Singer (Ed.), Die Kunst der Galanterie: Facetten eines Verhaltensmodells in der Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit (Frühe Neuzeit; 171), Berlin 2012, pp. 317–337, here pp. 317–318.

23 Ibid., p. 334.

worth noting in this regard that the kinds of interaction enumerated in Hunold's *Die Manier höflich und wohl zu Reden und zu Leben* are predominantly focused on the addressing of various court officials, while only a relative few explain how to approach an exchange with a prince or regent, meaning that the focus lies on those figures with whom aspiring court officials were most likely to interact.

It is worth pausing briefly here to remark once more on the apparent exclusion of women in this context, because at first glance, this can seem rather puzzling. If the courtly environment is inherently political, surely the sphere of the courtly woman is therefore also political. After all, women did indeed take on what would be considered political roles at court – as regents and guardians for male heirs still considered minors; as patrons of art, music, and literature; as active contributors to, as well as participants in, the courtly festival culture that presented the claim to power of the prince and his dynasty, thereby also shaping their own self-image and laying claim to particular roles of power themselves.[24] Yet the roles women occupied and the paths they navigated were nevertheless embedded in a social system that was by default patriarchal; the positions of power held by women were constantly being contested and were frequently deemed only temporary solutions until a suitable male came of age or status to take up the reins. This is particularly evident in the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire. The abbesses of Herford Abbey and Quedlinburg Abbey in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while officially *reichsfrei* (directly subject to the Holy Roman Emperor), found themselves regularly having to resist pressure to cede their territories and privileges to nearby civic authorities or even their protectors in Saxony and Prussia.[25] Another example is the conflict that surrounded the accession of Em-

[24] See, for example, Heide Wunder, Herrschaft und öffentliches Handeln von Frauen in der Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit, in: Ute Gerhard (Ed.), Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts: Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart, Munich 1997, pp. 27–54, esp. 45–50. There has been much recent scholarship on the political roles and opportunities of women at royal and noble courts in the early modern period: see, for example, Jessica Munns / Penny Richards (Ed.), Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe, Harlow [et al.] 2003; Clarissa Campbell Orr (Ed.), Queenship in Europe 1660–1815: The Role of the Consort, Cambridge 2004; Nadine Akkerman / Birgit Houben (Ed.), The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting Across Early Modern Europe, Leiden [et al.] 2014; James Daybell / Svante Norrhem (Ed.), Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1800, London 2017.

[25] On the general situation of the 'Fürstäbtissin' or princess-abbess in this period, see Teresa Schröder-Stapper, Fürstäbtissinnen: frühneuzeitliche Stiftsherrschaften zwischen Verwandtschaft, Lokalgewalten und Reichsverband, Cologne [et al.] 2015, but esp. pp. 379–386 and pp. 499–503. On Herford in particular, see also Michael von Fürstenberg, "Ordinaria loci" oder "Monstrum Westphaliae"? Zur kirchlichen Rechtsstellung der Äbtissin von Herford im europäischen Vergleich, Paderborn 1995, esp. pp. 356–372. On Quedlinburg in particular, see also Jochen Vötsch, Die Äbtissin von Quedlinburg als Reichs- und Kreisstand, in: Clemens Bley (Ed.), Kayserlich – frey – weltlich: Das Reichstift Quedlinburg im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit, Halle 2009, pp. 120–129, and Frank Göse, Beschränkte Souveranität: Das Verhältnis zwischen Stift und Schutzherrschaft im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, in: Bley, Kayserlich – frey – weltlich, pp. 130–150.

press Maria Theresia, the only woman of the period in the German lands to occupy such a politically significant position, from the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 to the subsequent wars of succession.[26] However, a significant aspect of the works penned by the likes of Hunold, Weise, and Neukirch on the mode of *galanterie* is that they were not aimed at the members of the noble rank, who were more likely to have a presence at court and to have been educated in its communication forms, but at a middle class whose male representatives had not had that same exposure to courtly life and who aspired to a career at court. The very notion that women of a social class which did not in and of itself have a calling to rule (for example, through dynastic claim to power) might aspire to public office was actively discouraged and even learned women themselves could declare their disapproval of any such ambition on the part of members of their sex.[27] Isabelle Stauffer has demonstrated that the developmental change from the French notion of *galanterie* as a female dominated mode – thanks to its cultivation in seventeenth-century French salon culture – towards an almost exclusively male domain in German thought can be traced in the reception and expression of key ideas in the German-language literature of the late seventeenth century, even in that produced by women.[28] The apparent exclusion of women as addressees in these texts that functioned to a certain extent as guides to navigating the courtly environment through the gallant rhetorical mode is therefore rooted in the social developments of the period and in the socially defined roles prescribed not simply for men on the one hand and women on the other, but for men and women distinguished by social status and class.

Gallant behaviour was thus presented for a political environment and aimed at increasing the (middle class male) individual's chances of success in public life. Therefore gallant behaviour was also by default mainly the preserve of men, as is made clear in the contemporary guides to gallant manners. However, *galanterie*'s connection with the theme of love and the device of the compliment also creates a tension between the political public and the private spheres. Arguably, in

26 Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Maria Theresia: Die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit. Eine Biographie, Munich 2017, esp. pp. 67–80 and pp. 86–109.

27 Anna Maria van Schurmann was among those women who professed their agreement, as she wrote in a letter to her mentor, André Rivet on 1 March 1632, in which she expanded her argument that women could and should engage in higher study: "[...] I remember reading somewhere that Ulpian women were barred from all civil or public office. By what justice this was decreed I will not now laboriously inquire, save that I think it is clearly proven from this that the leisure in which we pass time was praised and legitimate." Anna Maria van Schurmann, Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated and Other Writings From Her Intellectual Circle, ed. and transl. by Joyce L. Irwin, Chicago 1998, p. 43. Cf. Anne R. Larsen, Anna Maria van Schurmann, 'The Star of Utrecht': The Educational Vision and Reception of a Savante, Abingdon 2016, p. 115.

28 See Stauffer, Die Scudéry-Rezeption im Pegnesischen Blumenorden (Fn. 20).

both areas, it was a means to a self-interested end of successfully achieving personal objectives.[29]

It is in part against this background that the court of August the Strong came to be seen as the epitome of courtly ceremonial, represented by a particular kind of rhetoric displaying the universal abilities and interests of the ideal ruler, promoting his (self-)interests, which also involved formal display of some of his connections with women who were not his wife. So, by association, it also became the epitome of *galanterie* in German-speaking territories.[30] This is reflected in the contemporary literature that took August as a key character and conveyed him beyond the boundaries of his court circle in Dresden and Warsaw; a selection of these texts are examined here and present August the Strong as an *homme galant*.

Christian Friedrich Hunold had been a law student, but by 1700 his impecunious ways had forced him to move from Jena to Hamburg and to earn his way by writing occasional poetry and gallant novels under his pseudonym, 'Menantes'. His most notorious publication, *Satyrischer Roman, In Unterschiedlichen / lustigen / lächerlichen und galanten Liebes-Begebenheiten* (Satirical Novel in Various Entertaining, Humorous, and Gallant Love Affairs), in 1706 detailed the scandals of Hamburg society and resulted in his departure from the city. Yet another of his popular novels, though with less extreme consequences, was *Der Europäischen Höfe Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte*. In the first half of the eighteenth century, this novel was reprinted eight times, while Johann Georg Hamann produced two sequels published in 1728 and in 1740 (posthumously), the first reprinted three times and the second once.

Der Europäischen Höfe Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte, der Galanten Welt zur vergnügten Curiosité ans Licht gestellet (The Amorous and Heroic History of the European Courts Revealed to the Gallant World to Satisfy its Curiosity), to give its full title, presents the fictionalized and encrypted stories of the love lives of European royalty from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and stories of the battles they fought in the conflicts of the same period. Most characters and locations are provided with pseudonyms, many of which are simple enough to work out, but evidently not all the anagrams were entirely transparent, even to a fairly contemporaneous audience: a key was published in Cologne in 1731 under the title *Geheime Nachrichten und Briefe von Herrn Menantes Leben und Schriften* (Secret Mes-

29 Peter Hess, Poetry in Germany, 1450–1700, in: Max Reinhart (Ed.), Early Modern German Literature 1350–1700 (The Camden House History of German Literature; 4) Rochester, NY 2007, pp. 395–467, here p. 433.

30 Süßmann suggests that this may also be a linked side effect of the political background of the Saxon court as a newly royal court at the time, which, as a consequence of its foreign interests, had a high number of foreign courtiers present, while the less wealthy native nobility was less engaged at court, maybe paving the way for a greater non-noble presence within the administration of the court. Thus, there was a greater interest in the uses of gallant conduct at a court where representation was of singularly critical importance. See Süßmann, Wurde der deutsche Adel galant? (Fn. 22), p. 333.

sages and Letters from the Life and Writings of Herr Menantes). Episodes of 'true' tales presenting stories of the likes of Philipp Christoph von Königsmarck (=Silibert von Cremarsig), Johann Georg IV., Elector of Saxony (=Albion), Afonso VI of Portugal (=Alfonso, King of Torgapulia), William IV of Orange (=Prince Iranio of Aurasia), Louis XIV of France (=King Silvio of Gallia), and Georg Ludwig of Hanover (=Prince Viciludo of Leburgino) form the majority of the novel's content. Delivered in the form of narratives told by the book's characters, they are backgrounded by the overarching story of the main character, Gustavus (=August the Strong/Friedrich August). Frequently, the narrators are members of Gustavus's entourage and he is therefore often among the respective narrator's audience. Gustavus's own story – of his travels round the various courts of Europe in a bid to rescue his true love, Princess Arione von Thurabe (=Christiane Eberhardine von Brandenburg-Bayreuth), from her supposed kidnappers – thus stands out by not being narrated in this pattern, as it forms the active frame for the other more or less passively received tales.

The tales told in *Europäische Höfe*, Hunold claims in the book's introduction, are not simply a kind of secret history, "for the performances of the heroes are already written down in many choice books, so you will learn nothing new here; and to touch on their secret love affairs is as dangerous as it is curious".[31] Hunold ostensibly seeks to distance himself and his work from the implication of scandal – even if the historical events were indeed scandalous – by explaining that such stories not only run the risk of offending the high society individuals they depict, they also present a risk to their audience. For those who behold the stories of these events could, in some way, be socially damaged through the destruction of their sense of *Ehrfurcht* (reverence) in the presence of such luminaries. Familiarity is to be avoided: these are individuals who are to be kept at arm's length and it is proper that this should be the case. Much rather, Hunold says, he writes to inspire respect for the heroes of these stories. Entertainment and the lessons of virtue sit side by side and give Hunold the excuse to depict the less salubrious exploits of his characters. In this case – apparently – the pleasure experienced in the act of reading these tales can pose no real risk to their moral fibre. Indeed, displaying the negative side of passion is necessary or else there could be "an vollkommener Tugend kein so grosses *Delectament*, wo man an vollkommenen Lastern nicht Abscheu tragen müsse" (no such great pleasure in perfect virtue where one would not also have to experience abhorrence at perfect vices).[32]

Although the novel's title merely promises entertainment, there is thus a claim to a level of instruction within the book. Moreover, it is presented in such

31 "[d]enn die Verrichtungen der Helden sind schon in vielen kostbaren Büchern entworffen, daß man hierinnen nichts neues zu wissen krieget; und derselben geheime Liebes-Angelegenheiten zu berühren, ist so gefährlich als *curieus*." Menantes [Christian Friedrich Hunold], Vorrede, in: Der Europæischen Höfe Liebes- und Helden-Geschichte, Der Galanten Welt zur vergnügten Curiosité ans Licht gestellt, Hamburg 1705, no pag.

32 Ibid., no pag.

a way that the reader may treat it as another 'how to' book. Ideal gallant behaviour in the characters is frequently accompanied by a snippet of wisdom on the best way to comport oneself, or a verdict on a difficult situation is passed with universal application by the narrator. Prince Iranio (=William of Orange) does not seek to impress Princess Amariane (=Princess Mary Henrietta of England) through bombast but treats her as he would all other women of his acquaintance. He thus draws a comment from the narrator of the first part of *Liebes- Und Helden-Geschichte Des Durchlauchtigen Printzen von Aurasien, Und der Printzeßin Amarianen* (Amorous and Heroic History of the Serene Prince of Aurasia and Princess Amariana), that the gallant knows when to apply his *galanterie* to achieve greatest advantage and, importantly, does not view love as a feeling to be gratified immediately or to be forced into existence in the object of one's desire.

Comportment stands alongside the etiquette of letters. Several characters compose and send poems and a great deal of plot explanation occurs through the medium of letters between lovers or friends. To highlight the good composition and style of these letters and poems, Hunold has Silibert von Cremarsig read out to Gustavus and his other rescuers a love letter he wrote to his captor Adina while under the influence of a magic potion. The gales of laughter with which his listeners greet his overly dramatic declarations of love are a conclusive verdict on its gallant quality. The particular mode of expression exemplified in Silibert's letter is viewed by the men as a very un-German, i.e. morally dubious, practice and as 'bad' *galanterie*.[33] Here, 'bad' *galanterie* and its poor or misguided expression have resulted from 'unnatural' passion (made obvious through the use of a potion) rather than reasoned love. This is contrasted in the novel with the thoughtful and slow development of Gustavus' love of Arione.

Gustavus is thus held up throughout the novel as the ideal *galant* and the heroic *galant* that the other men around him often fail to fully embody. Gustavus has a fiery spirit, is incredibly strong, keen to be a good ruler when he inherits his father's throne, and is an accomplished performer of all princely activities and sports. Although (female) temptations are put in his way to make him stray from his fidelity to Arione, he remains steadfast. Even the ladies at Silvio's court cannot induce him to have an extra-marital affair, although they have more success with his friend Heroald. Gustavus does indulge in a flirtatious friendship with Thersarie (=Marie Thérèse de Bourbon, Princess de Conti), but he is careful not to overstep propriety. Yet the narrator states that "Gustavuß erwiese aber hierdurch, daß die Treue am aller-edelsten, wenn man schöne Gelegenheit hat, untreu zu warden" (through this Gustavus showed that faithfulness is the most noble when you have a wonderful opportunity to be unfaithful).[34] Here, it is the game of testing the boundaries of socially acceptable flirtation that is important in the appreciation of virtue and the control of passions it represents, or it is the possibility of false pas-

[33] Ibid., pp. 866–867.
[34] Ibid., p. 578.

sion and the resistance of temptation that makes Gustavus heroic, in contrast to Silibert or Heroald, who fail to exhibit self-control. Moreover, Gustavus's action represents a moralizing rejection of the apparent roots of *galanterie* at the court of Louis XIV. The repeated contrast between the site of ideal *galanterie* and that of undesirable *galanterie* is striking: France, and the French court in particular, is not only presented as less accomplished in the art of *galanterie*, but also as in a position to learn from the superior skill of its (morally superior) Germanic neighbours. With this, Hunold further distinguishes 'good' from 'bad' to meet the objections of *galanterie*'s detractors.

Hunold's Gustavus is thus very much a 'hero' in the sense that he displays many of the supposed features of a hero. Moreover, he is a gallant hero in that he is the one man of his entourage who, as they travel, does not succumb to the temptation to behave in a non-*galante* manner that would compromise the true direction of his sight: his love, Arione. Yet, time and again, the reader is shown that – with the exception of magic – the missteps of Gustavus' companions and friends are avoidable. Gustavus' heroism, whatever the truth might be concerning August's legendary super-strength, is therefore implicitly achievable. Those characters who fall short – and those characters are often noble or of the same princely status as Gustavus – not only give the reader concrete examples of incorrect or poorly conceived gallant conduct, the narrator interrupts with pithy advice. Readers are thus given every opportunity to learn how they may more closely emulate the hero, even while their social distance from him is protested by the author (Hunold's assurance of upholding the correct amount of *Ehrfurcht*), or even despite this.

Hunold's works analysed here – works of fiction and works of reference – clearly present *galanterie* as a masculine rhetorical mode on the one hand and the gallant hero as the ideal male embodiment of that mode on the other. Indeed, there is little, if any, room for an active feminine expression of that mode or an acceptable female embodiment. Nevertheless, the gallant hero model is given a rather different gloss in the texts by Maria Aurora von Königsmarck, which have female protagonists. These are contained in Duke Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel's extensive novel *Octavia: Römische Geschichte* (Octavia: Roman History), also known as *Römische Octavia* (Roman Octavia) (1677–1714),[35] whose overarching framework narrative is the fictionalized plight of the historical Octavia, early Christian empress of Rome and Nero's first wife. Hiding with other Christians from Roman persecution in the catacombs beneath the city, news of the outside world and other courts reaches her via a series of episodic narratives told by guests at her court, among which are the stories of Solane and Givritta. Both stories demonstrate the extreme reliance of the model of the gallant hero on the co-

[35] Kraft, Galante Passagen im höfischen Barockroman (Fn. 6), p. 323–324; Werner Schröder, Kritisches zur Edition der *Römischen Octavia* des Herzogs Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig, in: Euphorion 89, 1995, pp. 335–348.

operation of the female object of *galanterie* and show that without that cooperation, the position of the gallant hero, perhaps even of *galanterie* as a mode, is highly precarious.

Maria Aurora von Königsmarck was one of August the Strong's earliest and most famous mistresses. In addition to being known for her relationship to August and as the sister of the unfortunate Philipp Christoph von Königsmarck, she was well known as an accomplished poet, librettist, and musician.[36] From 1698 she embarked on a religious life at the prestigious Protestant convent in Quedlinburg, where for a time she also acted as coadjutrix. Although Königsmarck's affair with August (during which she bore him a son) was brief, she was a highly visible element of August's projection of himself and took part in the Procession of the Gods in Dresden on 7 February 1695.[37] The practice of maintaining an official mistress in addition to a legitimate wife was quite common at the European courts in this period, and it was consequently an important position. These women provided important points of influence for particular causes and interests, becoming gatekeepers to the royal chamber and the royal ear. The role of the mistress and the high profile of women at August's Saxon court is the focus of Königsmarck's two stories: *Die Geschichte der Solane* (The Story of Solane) in the fourth volume of the second edition published in 1712, and *Geschichte der Givritta* (Story of Givritta) in the seventh volume of the second edition published in 1762.[38] Comparing the two female protagonists reveals some of the tensions within courtly *galanterie* concerning the public and private aspects of the *galante*.

The Story of Solane tells a version of Aurora's (who takes the character Solane) own affair with August, who is here called Orondates.[39] Young Solane comes to

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[36] Philipp Christoph von Königsmarck is thought to have been murdered in mysterious circumstances for his supposed affair with Sophie Dorothea von Celle, Duchess von Braunschweig-Lüneburg, the estranged wife of Georg Ludwig, Elector of Hanover and later King George I of England.

[37] The visual record of this is the festival work by Martin Klötzel, Der von dem Chur-Fürsten zu Sachsen Hertzog Friderico Augusto, In Dero Residence Dreßden/Donnerstags den 7. Febr. 1695 Aus dem Chur-Fürstl. Reit-Hause, durch das Müntz Thor, bey dem Stall etc, wiedrumb in obenbemeldtes Reit-Hauss, angestellte und gehaltene Götter-Auffzug, Dresden 1697. Details of Königsmarck's life can be found in Sylvia Krauss-Meyl, "Die berühmteste Frau zweier Jahrhunderte": Maria Aurora von Königsmarck, Regensburg ^{2}2006.

[38] The story of *Solane* is currently available online as a pdf document edited by Stephan Kraft, Geschichte der Solane, in: Zeitenblicke 1.2, 2002: www.zeitenblicke.de, 30 October 2015. The story is included in the fourth volume of the second edition of *Römische Octavia* printed in Braunschweig in 1713. See Anton Ulrich Herzog zu Braunschweig und Lüneberg, Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, VI, 2 (=Römische Octavia IV, 2), Stuttgart 2010.

[39] This is the second episode in *Römische Octavia* to feature a heroine named Solane. The first – in the sixth volume of edition A, *Zugabe zum Beschluß der römischen Octavia* (Addition to the Final Part of the Roman Octavia), published in Nuremberg in 1707 – portrays the story of Sophie Dorothea von Celle, Duchess von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (also known as the Princess of Ahlden), who was imprisoned by her husband Georg Ludwig, Elector of Hanover and King George I of England (1660–1727), after her affair with Philipp Christoph von Königsmarck (1662–1694), brother of Maria Aurora von Königsmarck. See Stephan

the court of Orondates in the hope of securing his help for her family. All the women at court like and respect her, including all those closest to the prince: his mother, his wife, and his brother's widow. She soon attracts the amorous attentions of the prince, first through her singing and then through an accidental fall, in which she lands in a position of obeisance at his feet. She works hard over a period of time to withstand his attentions, attempting to preserve her honour on the one hand and the 'purity' of their relationship on the other. Orondates makes her efforts difficult, though: he tricks her into dressing up in a white outfit that matches his, breaks into her room at night, and displays extreme jealousy of her male friends or any that she might make. The story also touches on Orondates' political activities, including war against the Thracians to improve his standing in Rome and his accession to a new throne after being elected king of Alanen. At this point, Solane finds herself betrayed by Orondates, whom she had considered her soulmate: he chooses a new woman to be at his side. However, Solane accepts this turn of fate and retreats into a religious life at the convent of Diana at Nujodunum. With this final information, the narrative abruptly ends and the story's fictional audience comment on the merits of Solane's conduct, in particular on her willingness to support the public image of the monarch.

The Story of Givritta, written some time in 1713, paints an unflattering portrait of one of Aurora's successors in August's affections, Anna Constantia von Cosel. Givritta (Anna Constantia), having fallen into disgrace at another princely court through pregnancy, has been returned to her father's estate, which she seeks to escape through marriage to Fredeboldus, a minister to the king of Daturia and Centaurien, Wilkinus (this is the fictional pseudonym for August). When they arrive at court, Givritta sets out to gain herself a reputation for virtue and patience, and for being the long-suffering but good-hearted wife of a man who does not seem to love her. The favour she gains at court is withdrawn – especially by the women – when she breaks court protocol by addressing Wilkinus without introduction and then following him around. Wilkinus reluctantly agrees to a divorce between Givritta and her husband, which prompts Givritta to begin pursuing her ambition of becoming Wilkinus's wife. Her numerous pregnancies reveal the nature of their relationship and her power at court and over the king grows. Wilkinus grows tired of her, yet her threats to kill herself and him if he does not remain faithful to her alarm him, and he allows her to have political knowledge and influence. A plot hatches to remove Givritta from Wilkinus' favour and when she travels to join Wilkinus, she finds he has a new mistress.

The two protagonists are thus evidently polar opposites: the motivations for their arrival at court and their conduct when there, the degree of acceptance (es-

Kraft, Geschlossenheit und Offenheit der 'Römischen Octavia' von Herzog August Ulrich: 'der roman macht ahn die ewigkeit gedencken, den er nimbt kein endt' (Epistemate / Reihe Literaturwissenschaft; 483), Würzburg 2004, pp. 96–99. I use *Solane* or *Die Geschichte der Solane* to refer exclusively to the story attributed to Königsmarck's authorship.

pecially by the courtly women) that they experience as a result, their respective reactions to the reversal of their fortunes – in comparison, these two women are as night and day. Yet the two principal male characters are remarkably similar. Although there is no condemnation of their conduct, it is evident that both Orondates and Wilkinus lack the ability to control themselves or maintain their control over their own actions and agency when they come into contact with these two women. Ordinarily, it might be possible to lay the blame for this conduct at the door of the women as daughters of Eve and, consequently, inherent temptresses. Yet, at least in the case of Orondates, the men already have a dangerous reputation for consorting with women. Although this weakness may be exploited – as Givritta is portrayed doing – neither Solane nor Givritta are introducing new mores into the court in this respect.

Further, both these stories are declared within *Roman Octavia* to come from an external source, and this influences the reader's assessment to an important degree: *The Story of Solane* is read aloud by the physician of the character Antiochus Epiphanes in the presence of his friends, in order to pass the time and serve the patient as 'a pleasant medicine'. It is both entertaining and therapeutic. *The Story of Givritta* is read out ostensibly because Octavia appears unhappy, "so [die Geschichte] ihr vielleicht auch noch einige Aufmunterung würde geben können" (because the story might cheer her a little).[40] The reactions to the two stories are also different: when the reading of *Solane* is complete, the liveliness of the discussion is evidence that the men have been drawn into the story and have been thoroughly entertained, while Callinicus's pithy statement that "[e]inem Freunde zu gefallen [...] sein Glück zu verschertzen/ ist mehr als großmüthig zu nennen" (to throw away one's happiness for the benefit of a friend should be deemed more than magnanimous)[41] provides a kind of general moral for the reader. At this point it is, however, *general*. This behaviour would be considered extraordinary of any person. All further debate is halted, though, by Epiphanes' reminder that the story has a basis in fact, and precisely because he is aware that the behaviour described here could be 'misunderstood' as sexual, he urges them to take a positive view of a virtuous woman sacrificing herself on the altar of friendship and loyalty to her lord.

In contrast to the eagerness shown by Epiphanes' friends to hear his tale, Octavia is not very interested in hearing the story of Givritta and it is virtually forced upon her. She relents only because she does not like "auf einige Weise sich jemanden mißfällig zu erzeigen […], wie ungelegen es ihr auch kame, ihnen nicht abzuschlagen" (to be disobliging to someone in some way, and, however

40 [Königsmarck], Die Geschichte der Solane (Fn. 38), p. 602; [Königsmarck], Die Geschichte der Givritta, in: Römische Octavia VII, 1, pp. 359–360 (=Werke IX, 1, pp. 357–358).

41 [Königsmarck], Die Geschichte der Solane, p. 658.

unwelcome it was to her, did not wish to refuse them).[42] Nor is the reaction to *Givritta* as unequivocally positive as that to *Solane* – Octavia is visibly displeased by the story.

Givritta portrays characters who see marriage as a way to escape their parents, as a way to escape boredom, or as a way to secure power. There is no true love and no *constantia*, and the characters have psychological depth.[43] Wilkinus is actually described in terms that make his *inconstancy* necessary. In fact, he is frequently described as suffering "unter dem Joch der Beständigkeit" (under the yoke of constancy) and his continued faithfulness to Givritta causes alarm among his courtiers, as a result of which "man alle Hofnung muste schwinden lassen, ihn jemahls mehr unbeständig zu sehen" (all hope of ever seeing him inconstant ever again faded).[44] The suspicion of sarcastic intent here should be countered with *Solane*, where the male protagonist is just as lacking in *constantia* as in *Givritta*, yet this is not commented on negatively by the story's (admittedly male) audience. It is thus worth comparing the conduct of the two heroines, Givritta and Solane. In contrast to Givritta, Solane does not actively seek the king's attention nor to amass power herself. Instead, she is raised up by the power of the king only, never actively takes control.[45] Nevertheless, both women are seen as a threat to the masculine political order in some way and the court deems it necessary to remove them – notably despite the prince's prior sexual reputation. The decisive difference between the two women manifests in how they deal with their rejection as mistresses. Solane withdraws quietly from the world by going into a convent/temple – and this is decreed admirable self-sacrifice on behalf of a friend (Orondates) by those who hear her story.[46] Givritta, however, desperately tries to prevent her fall and refuses to withdraw gracefully, further threatening to destabilize an already precarious model of masculine image and gallant heroism.

Arguably, Hunold seeks to bring the notion of gallant heroism down to the level of more ordinary mortals for all his protestation of preserving and inspiring reverence. His success may be mixed: his work is steeped not in the didactic as such, but the instructional; it is a guide full of (anti-)examples of the *homme galant* with a single example of a true *homme galant*. Hunold's work in providing guides for *galanterie* suggests that he ought to be concerned to provide an achievable model for his readers, yet Gustavus is perfect and none of his companions achieve his level of perfection. This is part of his heroic stature. Nevertheless, by showing how the other male characters go wrong in their *galanterie* and pointing out how

42 Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Römische Octavia VII, 1, p. 360 (= Werke IX, 1, p. 358).
43 Kraft, Galante Passagen im höfischen Barockroman (Fn. 6), p. 338.
44 [Königsmarck], Die Geschichte der Givritta (Fn. 40), pp. 394 and 390.
45 [Königsmarck], Die Geschichte der Solane (Fn. 38), p. 639.
46 Ibid., p. 658.

it ought to be, Hunold seems to suggest that such stature is possible for others of lesser social status, as long as those errors are avoided. Yet this, surely, is at least partially contrary to what a hero is supposedly meant to be: a social status apart, recognisable by great deeds and self-mastery that hint at superhuman levels of Aristotelian virtue and resistance to vice, consequently admired by others who cannot transcend their human existence. While Hunold emphasizes that he aims to preserve that admiring *Ehrfurcht* and sense of distance in his work of gallant tales, the didactic elements bring a tension into his portrayal of the gallant hero that redirect attention to those in the audience who are not (yet) 'heroic'.

On the other hand, Königsmarck evidently does not subvert any notion of feminine heroism that may exist – her 'heroine' sacrifices herself for the perceived good of the hero. Her thoroughly dislikeable anti-heroine fails because she *will not* sacrifice herself. Yet at the same time, Königsmarck pits gendered norms of femininity and masculinity against each other with the result that she lifts the lid on the masculine 'heroism' of the *homme galant* as ultimately a façade which crumbles where the woman in the equation will not cooperate. Orondates actively makes life unpleasant, even frightening, for Solane because he is the king and he can; Wilkinus does not have the nerve to call Givritta's bluff when she threatens to kill them both or the strength of character to put her off at all, and others have to step in to dispose of his problem. Here is *galanterie* seen from the back side: its private aspect, which underpins its public aspect, is revealed to be rather less glossy than its image would lead the world to believe. Whether that is what she intended or not, it does become apparent through her two texts that the positive image of August the Strong – an image he had himself forged, an image as the epitome of the gallant prince, of the heroic gallant prince, even – was not as robust as that image suggested. As Jean M. Woods observed in 1988, there has not been a great deal of work on the active role of women in the phenomenon of *galanterie*.[47] Yet these two texts by Königsmarck present an opportunity to glimpse what active participation of women in that mode might entail for the dynamics of gender roles at court, in particular the role of the mistress in relation to other women at court, but more broadly for courtly behaviours and rules of conduct in general. Furthermore, in their fictional accounts of contemporary figures and events, both Hunold and Königsmarck reveal, first, an awareness of the slippage in the heroic model of the Early Modern period also evident in the theoretical tracts of the time (as shown, for example, by Disselkamp). They reveal, secondly, perspectives on that slippage rooted in the different social backgrounds and expectations of the bourgeois upper middle classes on the one hand and the lower nobility on the other.

47 Jean M. Woods, Aurora von Königsmarck: Epitome of a "Galante Poetin", in: Erika Alma Metzger / Richard E. Schade (Ed.), Sprachgesellschaften – Galante Poetinnen (Literary Societies / Literary Women), Daphnis 17, Issue 3 (1988), pp. 457–465, here p. 460.

Victorian Male Heroes and Romance in Elizabeth Bowen's Short Fiction[1]

Laura Mª Lojo-Rodríguez

This article discusses the conjunction between the concepts of heroism and gender in late nineteenth-century adventure novels – what Elaine Showalter has termed "male romance"[2] – and twentieth-century short fiction by women writers. More specifically, the essay will focus on the aesthetic and ideological strategies that the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen deployed to reassess Henry Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure* (1887) in the short story entitled *Mysterious Kôr*, published in the collection *The Demon Lover and Other Short Stories* (1945).

Elizabeth Bowen (1899–1973) first read Henry Rider Haggard's *She* at the age of twelve, being at the height of her "first winter of discontent" with "the sheer uniformity of the human lot".[3] At that time, Bowen had already lost "the myths of childhood", and the "thunder clouds" that mounted on the horizon which "were to burst in 1914" conveyed a feeling of bitter disenchantment.[4] Although Haggard's novel was to remain one of Bowen's favourite books, her own appreciation of it appeared inextricably related to a profound sense of disenchantment which the imminent advent of the Great War conveyed. I will argue how, despite obvious differences between Haggard and Bowen's work, both narratives entail a disillusioned perspective pertaining to a world at the verge of disintegration and collapse which, in these writers' view, affected the individual, politics, literature and society at large. In fact, Second World War London shared a number of social and historical features with *fin-de-siècle* London,[5] both giving rise to narratives that entailed a sense of the individual's struggle with dark and primitive forces, which the constructions of the heroic in Haggard and Bowen's narratives seek to counteract. Both Haggard and Bowen articulate their respective narratives as a literary response to personal and social disenchantment. In order to do so, Haggard's heroes and Bowen's heroine undergo a quest-myth, whose point of departure is a

1 This article benefits from the collaboration of the research projects 'Women's Tales': The Short Fiction of Contemporary British Writers, 1974–2013 (FEM2013-41977-P) and "Intersections: Gender and Identity in the Short Fiction of Contemporary British Women Writers (FEM2017-83084-P, AEI, FEDER), the Research Network *Rede de investigación en Lingua e Literatura Inglesa II* (R2014/043) and the research group Discourse and Identity (GRC2015/002; GI-1924).

2 Elaine Showalter, Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle, Harmondsworth 1990, p. 79.

3 Elizabeth Bowen, The Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen, ed. by Hermione Lee, London 1986, p. 247.

4 Ibid., p. 246.

5 Sara Wasson, Urban Gothic of the Second World War: Dark London, London 2010, p. 5.

civilization on the verge of destruction and which is in itself, as Ronald Asch argues, "a half-ironic re-enchantment of a world disenchanted by science and rational thought".[6]

As a consequence, both Haggard and Bowen deploy the "heroic" as a strategy of re-enchanment, drawing on the myth of King Arthur as a heroic model which would hypothetically imply bringing ancient and honourable standards to life in the modern world. Although in substantially different ways, Haggard and Bowen invoke the heroic potential of King Arthur as the embodiment of Englishness and national identity in times of crisis. However, whereas hero worship became a potent force in Victorian ideation and, more specifically, in privileging a particular construction of masculinity, Bowen critically departs from such premises by undermining Arthur's liberating potential and displacing it to the narrative's female character. Bowen is careful in articulating difference from Haggard's narrative and draws from many of his literary motifs to produce not only a female version of an imaginative escape – which she defines as "the saving hallucination"[7] – but also to privilege the heroic experience of a woman in times of war and the hardships of the civilian, which history has traditionally superseded to favour male accounts of the battlefront.

Thus, in *Mysterious Kôr* (1945) Bowen both draws and departs from Haggard's prototypical male romance *She* by simultaneously incorporating his literary landscape into her story, yet also by questioning some Victorian ideological assumptions inherent to Haggard's novel. In addition, Bowen opens an intertextual dialogue not only with Haggard's text, but also with the work of those Victorians that had informed his novel, most notably with Andrew Lang's sonnet *She* – compiled in the collection *Grass of Parnassus* (1888) – and with Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900).

As will be discussed, Bowen's allusions to Haggard's novel in the short story are not directly retrieved from his narrative but from Andrew Lang's eponymous sonnet *She*. Lang had been personally involved in the composition of the novel, assessing and correcting Haggard's manuscript at different stages of its composition. Significantly, Bowen's allusion to Lang reveals a web of Victorian connections among literary and anthropological works, all of them seminal to the construction of a particular conception of maleness and heroism which late nineteenth-century romances reflect, and which Bowen seeks to question.

Lang was a prominent anthropologist and literary critic, who functioned as a "circulator of ideas" of the works of other Victorian anthropologists and writers,

6 Ronald G. Asch, The Hero in Early Modern Period and Beyond: An Elusive Cultural Construct and an Indispensable Focus of Social Identity?, in: helden. heroes. héros. Special Issue 1, 2014: Languages and Functions of the Heroic, pp. 5–14, here p. 10. DOI: 10.6094/helden.heroes.heros./2014/QM.

7 Bowen, Mulberry Tree (Fn. 3), p. 97.

such as Edward Tylor, Henry Rider Haggard and Sigmund Freud.[8] Despite the disparate nature of these authors' work, all of them seemed to share a common attempt found in late imperial culture to define civilised European masculinity in a world overtly dominated by what they saw as "feminine" concerns, such as the "corrupting knowledge of telegraphs, steam, daily newspapers and universal suffrage".[9] These writers sought to counterbalance the values of a technologized world, of capitalist mass-production and bourgeois over-refinement by advocating a return to mythical and more authentic roots in the form of heroic quests and adventures, most often and paradoxically taking place in the confines of the civilised world.[10]

In 1885, Lang met Haggard and they became close friends: Haggard dedicated *She* to Lang. In turn, Lang's article *Realism and Romance* (1887) championed the work of Robert Louis Stevenson and Haggard over the realist domestic novel; in this article, Lang explicitly used Tylor's ideas to connect Haggard and Stevenson's romances to a primitive, myth-making stage of human culture, which is core to Haggard's *She*. In fact, Lang's influential *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887) was published nearly simultaneously with *She*, a novel which draws on some of Lang's assumptions on anthropological theory. Significantly, Lang's *Social Origins* (1903) and *The Secret of the Totem* (1905) are both cited by Freud in *Totem und Tabu* (Totem and Taboo, 1913), a book which takes up the theme of primal anxiety according to Psomiades,[11] a theme which amounts to a late-Victorian anxiety in the same general area of Haggard's *She*. In turn, Haggard's novel was one of Freud's favourite books, cited in *Die Traumdeutung* (The Interpretation of Dreams, 1900). Significantly, Freud discusses Haggard's novel *apropos* of a dream of his own regarding an encounter with Louise N. and describes the novel as an example of "the eternal feminine, the immortality of our emotions",[12] which Psomiades reads as an attempt to define "civilized, European masculinity against its others – femininity, the 'primitive,' the 'savage' – by praising a genre, Romance, which could restore 'savage masculinity'".[13]

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8 Kathy Alexis Psomiades, Hidden Meaning: Andrew Lang, H. Rider Haggard, Sigmund Freud, and Interpretation, in: Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net 64, 2013, pp. 1–36, here p. 1: https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ravon/2013-n64-ravon01452/1025669ar/, 6 February 2018.

9 Julia Reid, "Gladstone Bags, Shooting Boots, and Bryant & May's Matches": Empire, Commerce, and the Imperial Romance in the *Graphic*'s Serialization of H. Rider Haggard's *She*, in: Studies in the Novel 43, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 152–178, here p. 153.

10 Lang read Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) while at Oxford, supported his anthropological theory of myth against the philological theories of Max Müller, and collected these views in *Custom and Myth* (1884), which he dedicated to Tylor. As Robert Segal explains in *Hero Myths* (London 2000, p. 12), the study of hero myths goes back at least to 1871, when Edward Tylor argued that many of them followed a uniform plot: the hero is exposed at birth, is saved by other humans or animals and grows up to become a national hero.

11 Psomiades, Hidden Meaning (Fn. 8), p. 22.

12 The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, ed. and transl. by A. A. Drill, London 1995, p. 397.

13 Psomiades, Hidden Meaning (Fn. 8), p. 22.

Late-Victorian romance was attractive to its many readers for, among other things, its "interest in maleness".[14] Elaine Showalter relates the revival of romance in the 1880s with the literary expression of male anxiety to replace "the heterosexual romance of courtship, manners, and marriage that had been the specialty of women writers" with "the masculine and homosocial 'romance' of adventure and quest, descended from Arthurian epic".[15]

In his critical work, Lang produced a passionate defence of the Romance Revival: in the poem *The Restoration of Romance* (1887) – dedicated to Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle and Haggard himself – Lang explicitly established a connection between the genre's virility and Victorian ideation concerning myth and heroism:

> King Romance was wounded deep,
> All his knights were dead and gone,
> All his court was fallen on sleep,
> In a vale of Avalon!
> Nay, men said, he will not come,
> Any night or any morn.
> Nay, his puissant voice is dumb,
> Silent his enchanted horn! […]
> Then you came from South and North,
> From Tugela, from the Tweed,
> Blazoned his achievements forth,
> King Romance is come indeed!
> All his foes are overthrown,
> All their wares cast out in scorn,
> King Romance hath won his own,
> And the lands where he was born![16]

In the poem, Lang refers to "King Romance" as heir to Arthur and Arthurian epic, to his mythical kingdom – now dormant and forgotten, awaiting to be resurrected – and to the vale of Avalon, Arthur's final destination after death, from where he shall return whenever England is in danger of foreign invasion and domestic disintegration. By doing so, Lang invokes the spirit of King Arthur, conjuring up the virtues which the hero and his knights represent: national unity against the threat of barbarians, honesty and virility, and, ultimately, English national identity. As Kennedy suggests,[17] the publications of nineteenth-century editions of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485) occurred when many in England believed that Medieval chivalry could be a guide for the conduct of a

14 Stephen Arata, Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle: Identity and Empire, Cambridge 1996, p. 89.

15 Showalter, Sexual Anarchy (Fn. 2), p. 79.

16 Andrew Lang, The Complete Poems of Andrew Lang, Vol. 2, ed. by Peter-Eric Philipp, New York 2000.

17 Edward Donald Kennedy (Ed.), King Arthur: A Casebook (Arthurian Characters and Themes; 1), London 2002, p. xxxiii.

gentleman and when many looked at the Middle Ages as a time of harmony and order, a particular construction which a large number of Victorian intellectuals and artists celebrated in their work, such as the innumerable Pre-Raphaelite pictorial recreations of the Arthurian legend, Edward Bulner Lytton's *King Arthur* (1849), William Morris's *The Defence of Guinevere and Other Poems* (1858), W. J. Linton's *The Old Legend of King Arthur* (1865), A. C. Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882) and *The Tale of Balen* (1896) or, most notably, Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1885).

Thus, the nineteenth century witnessed an interest in the Middle Ages since for many this era provided the roots of many of the characteristics seen as essential features of national identity, including the origins of their political system, the foundations of their economic and social order, and the beginnings of their territorial empire.[18] Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) must be understood in tune with this and represented the landmark of Victorian ideation of heroes and the heroic. For Carlyle, heroes had the potential to resolve the problems of democratic and industrial modernity which, in his view, resulted in the individual's exploitation and eventual alienation as a result of a shift from royal authority to a laissez-faire economy, which isolates people from a sense of community and society. As Chris R. Vanden Bossche explains,

> Carlyle's works represent and attempt to resolve dilemmas raised by what he and his contemporaries perceived as a revolutionary shift of authority in virtually all realms of discourse and institutions of power in Western Europe. From his vantage point, it appeared not only that authority had shifted but the transcendental grounds for it had been undermined.[19]

In fact, Carlyle regarded democracy as a political expression of despair from not finding heroes to govern.[20] Significantly, Tennyson's influential *Idylls of the King* was prefaced by a dedication to the then-deceased Prince Albert, whom Tennyson regarded as his "ideal knight" in his possession of the traditional characteristics attributed to heroes:

> Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
> Laborious for her people and her poor –
> Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day –
> Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
> To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace –
> Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
> Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,

18 Stephanie L. Barczewski, Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood, Oxford 2000, p. 28.

19 Chris R. Vanden Bossche, Carlyle and the Search for Authority, Columbus, OH 1991, p. 1.

20 Daniela Garofalo, Communities in Mourning: Making Capital Out of Loss in Carlyle's *Past and Present* and *Heroes*, in: Texas Studies in Literature and Language 45, Issue 3, 2003, pp. 293–314, here p. 297.

> Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
> Beyond all titles, and a household name,
> Hereafter, through all times, Albert the Good.[21]

Paradoxically enough, the attributes of heroism seem to be absent in Victoria's nature despite her actually being the reigning monarch, and Tennyson only briefly refers to her at the dedication's closing as a prospective example of woman's inconstancy:

> Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
> Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
> Remembering all the beauty of that star
> Which shone so close beside Thee that ye made
> One light together, but has past and leaves
> The Crown a lonely splendour.[22]

As Elliot Gilbert notes,[23] Tennyson presents Albert as an active force of national life, whereas Queen Victoria appears in the dedication as the passive wife, all revealing of Tennyson's ideology pertaining to domesticity, gender and power.

As argued above, the nineteenth-century profusion of heroic reassessments is strongly connected with British nationalism in the nineteenth century and with a particular construction of maleness: those masculine heroes not only provided exemplars of British superiority, but also displayed the heroic efforts of the great individuals that the nation had produced.[24] Similarly, the construction of British manhood was a pervasive theme in Victorian culture, based on "the era's intersecting needs to recognize national character and revere national heroes, and the Arthurian legend was revived as part of this quest for the timeless model of manhood",[25] as Debra Mancoff pointed out. Arthur's legend also implied bringing ancient, honourable standards to life in the modern world, to the point that each phase of Arthur's life was offered to the Victorians as a lesson in manly action:

> The bold youth transformed to tempered manhood through the acquisition of Excalibur, the true lover faithful to his marriage vows; the public servant who placed duty over private gain and pleasure; and the fallen hero dying in fellowship and dignity, leaving his life example as legacy.[26]

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21 Lord Alfred Tennyson, Idylls of the King, London 1885 (Repr. New York 2012), p. 2.
22 Ibid.
23 Elliot Gilbert, The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse, in: Edward Donald Kennelly (Ed.), King Arthur: A Casebook, London 2002, pp. 229–255, here p. 233.
24 Barczewski, Myth and National Identity (Fn. 18), p. 12.
25 Debra Mancoff, To Take Excalibur: King Arthur and the Construction of Victorian Manhood, in: Edward Donald Kennedy (Ed.), King Arthur: A Casebook, London 2002, pp. 257–280, here p. 257.
26 Ibid., p. 258.

Such an act of cultural self-definition was of course fuelled by England's heroic deeds, exemplified by the country's position as a world leader in politics, industry and the rise of a vast colonial empire.

In general terms, the Arthurian legend remained the vehicle of those who used the Medieval past to support a conservative vision of the British nation.[27] As Tennyson had done before him, Lang invoked the ghost of Arthur to return in face of the threat from barbarians or, in modern terms, of what Stephen Arata has termed the fear of "reverse colonization",[28] the anxiety of Western countries to be overrun by primitive forces, where a fearful reversal of antagonistic positions occurs. In addition to this, 'domestic' issues also warranted Arthur's attention: the new capitalist, technologized and over-refined society of mass-production and urban environments threatened the existence of organic communities, characterised by more authentic human relationships and individual bonds.

However, as any literary text, Haggard's novel is riddled with contradictions: the ideal, organic community, which heroic Arthur represents, is at odds with the late-Victorian capitalist economy of mass culture and production. While Haggard and his circle criticised this economy, it simultaneously granted their work the circulation, popularity and critical recognition which they desired. Although Haggard felt the urge to endow his characters with the virtues and values that Arthur represented, the novel offers more sinister and disturbing undertones provided by its references to the cultural production of some of his contemporaries (more concretely, Lang and Freud). Exploring the origins of civilization by returning to a primitive stage in human development violently clashed with late Victorian's dreams of order and stability that the myth of Arthur represented. This is, in my view, strongly connected with Victorian anxieties concerning the end of England's world supremacy and the disintegration of the British Empire, whose first symptoms were already visible in late Victorian times.

Henry Rider Haggard's *She* epitomises most of the public ideals pertaining to gender, power and imperial ideology, encapsulated in a heroic quest-myth of male ambition and desire. The male protagonists of Haggard's novel, Horace Holly and Leo Vincey, leave Cambridge on a journey to the heart of Africa with the intention of avenging the death of Leo's ancestor, Kallikrates. As Holly and Vincey journey across a symbolic, primeval landscape, they withdraw from the historical sites of European civilization. Kôr, the characters' final destination – *axis mundi* – brings to mind a primordial journey to the origins of humanity, precisely the subject-matter of those anthropological works (Tylor's, Lang's and Freud's) that had inspired the novel. As Evlyn Hinz notes:

> One is able to appreciate the historical significance of these [the novel's] events. That an Egyptian goddess should have a priest indicates, in the first place, that both old orders have begun to decline; the marriage of the Egyptian Amenartas and the Greek

[27] Barczewski, Myth and National Identity (Fn. 18), p. 39.
[28] Arata, Fictions of Loss (Fn. 14), p. 108.

> Kallikrates, in turn, signals the birth of the new order, specifically, the beginning of the Western world; the flight-exodus motif, finally, suggests […] the Judaic cast of the resulting culture and the accompanying linear nature of its concept of time and history.[29]

Futhermore, Holly and Vincey 'penetrate' the centre – the core, Kôr – of an exotic civilization, significantly construed by the Western man as the 'primitive' where his wildest sexual fantasies can be realised as opposed to the strictures of Victorian sexual mores in a place "where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe".[30]

Significantly, Haggard's *She* represents a revealing move from what Sara Wasson has described as the nineteenth-century "gothitisation of city space as a result of industrialisation"[31] by exploring a return to more primitive societal communities. Bowen's Mysterious Kôr represents a move in the opposite direction: whereas Kôr remains the characters' mental landscape, the narrative focuses on the physical and psychological implications of the Blitz in war-stricken London, which is, like Kôr itself, rapidly disintegrating: "FULL moonlight drenched the city and searched it; there was not a niche left to stand in. London looked like the moon's capital – shallow, cratered, extinct."[32]

In the midst of the city's desolation, extinct after the "evacuation of the living",[33] "a girl and a soldier" wander through the streets, seeming "to have no destination but each other".[34] The soldier, significantly named Arthur, is on leave, and has come to London to see his girlfriend Pepita, but their hopes of sharing some moments of intimacy are shattered by the refusal of Pepita's roommate, Callie, to leave the flat which the two girls share. The characters' sexual frustration increases as the story progresses, alternately focusing on Arthur and Pepita's reflections as they are forced to sleep in their separate beds.

Significantly, Bowen's *Mysterious Kôr* also draws on the myth of King Arthur, which was at the time also part of the English heroic repository as Europe edged closer to war: King Arthur would be in the position of defending England against foreign invasion. As Anthony Burgess notes, a curious rumour circulated in England in 1940, stating that "Arthur had come again to drive out the expected invader", and "Arthur would never really die".[35] Significantly, the 1940s witnessed a large number of rewritings of the Arthurian myth: pacifist-inspired T. H. White's tetralogy *The Once and Future King* (1958) – whose first volumes were published during the course of World War II – was one of the most popular Arthurian reas-

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29 Evelyn Hinz, Rider Haggard's *She*: An Archetypal 'History of Adventure', in: Studies in the Novel 4, Issue 3, 1972, pp. 416–430, here p. 419.
30 Edward Said, Orientalism, New York 1979, p. 190.
31 Wasson, Urban Gothic (Fn. 5), p. 152.
32 The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen, Harmondsworth 1983, p. 728.
33 Leo Mellor, Reading the Ruins: Modernism, Bombsites and British Culture, Cambridge 2011, p. 9.
34 Bowen, Collected Stories (Fn. 32), p. 729.
35 Anthony Burgess, English Literature: A Survey for Students, London 1974, p. 25.

sessments. White specifically related Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* with his own pacifist concerns at the outbreak of World War II, discussing the therapeutic quality of Arthurian literature as "an antidote to war" in this gloomy panorama.[36] The fifth volume of White's heroic reassessment of King Arthur, which he was writing in 1940, was conceived of as a culmination of the previous one, where "the epic theme is War and how to stop it" and the heroic values that the Knights of the Round Table represent could be regarded as an "anti-Hitler measure".[37]

However, and unlike White, Bowen rewrites Arthur in an unheroic fashion in order to invest the female character in the narrative with traditionally male heroic virtues, such as courage, resolution, action and insight. As happens in the classical world of traditional heroes, war is the privileged stage for the hero's exploits: among other things, war implies a state of exception in which the normal *status quo* is temporarily suspended. Bowen presents in the story such a momentary suspension of warfare, when traditional heroes most often sought the company of women after the hardships of battle. In the many nineteenth-century permutations of the Arthurian legend, women were often related to Camelot's downfall by using their 'female' powers (beauty and sexual allure) to achieve destructive and malevolent ends. Significantly, Bowen reverses the pattern by presenting a feminised, paralysed Arthur and a powerful, active female character, Pepita, who takes the lead.

Bowen's particular reassessment of heroic Arthur testifies to her playful reversal of gender roles in the story: Arthur is led by Pepita through the streets of London to her place. On their way, Pepita quotes some lines from Andrew Lang's poem, which Arthur fails to identify: "'Mysterious Kôr.' What is?' he [Arthur] said, not quite collecting himself. 'This is – *"Mysterious Kôr thy walls forsaken stand,/Thy lonely towers beneath a lonely moon–"*/– this is Kôr.'"[38]

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36 Sylvia Townsend Warner, T. H. White: A Biography, London 1967, p. 178.

37 François Gallix, T. H. White and the Legend of King Arthur: From Animal Fantasy to Political Morality, in: Edward Donald Kennelly (Ed.), King Arthur: A Casebook, London 2002, pp. 281–297, here p. 283.

38 Bowen, Complete Stories (Fn. 32), p. 729. Despite the fact that Pepita accurately describes Haggard's imaginary landscape in the novel, she quotes Andrew Lang's sonnet *She*:

Not in the waste beyond the swamps and sand,
The fever-haunted forest and lagoon,
Mysterious Kôr [sic] thy walls forsaken stand,
Thy lonely towers beneath the lonely moon,
Not there doth Ayesha linger, rune by rune
Spelling strange scriptures of a people banned.
The world is disenchanted; over soon
Shall Europe send her spies through all the land?
Nay, not in Kôr, but in whatever spot,
In town or field, or by the insatiate sea,
Men brood on buried loves, and unforgot,
Or break themselves on some divine decree,
Or would o'erleap the limits of their lot,

For Pepita, Kôr's magnificent, intact monuments stand in opposition to London's ruined buildings, implying the possibility of regeneration which the power of the miraculous Grail would entail, and which would save her from the state of destruction and disenchantment of a modern waste land. However, Arthur remains in ignorance, failing to be enlightened by Pepita's imaginative vision, and this puts an end to the possibility of his renewal and redemption, as Pepita remarks: "This war shows we've by no means come to the end. If you can blow whole places out of existence, you can blow whole places into it […]. By the time we've come to the end, Kôr may be the one city left: the abiding city".[39]

While delaying the arrival at home where she and Arthur would have to sleep in separate beds,[40] Pepita thinks about Kôr as a means of relieving frustration at Arthur's suggestion to "populate Kôr"[41] and regards Kôr as a place of possibilities where she might eventually experience sexual desire in full, as she rather enigmatically says to Arthur: "To think about Kôr *is* to think about you and me […]. We'd be alone [there]".[42]

Pepita's passionate defence of Kôr as a place of possibilities, as the "abiding city", recalls Bowen's discussions on the therapeutic quality of literature in times of crisis, which in the postscript of the American edition of *The Demon Lover* (1945), she describes as "the saving hallucination" or, put differently, "the passionate attachment of men and women to every object or image or place or love or fragment of memory with which his or her destiny seemed to be identified, and by which the destiny seemed to be assured".[43] Pepita's attachment to Kôr as an alternative to chaos and destruction matches what Bowen defines as the "search for indestructible landmarks in a destructible world" which produces "small world-within-worlds of hallucination – in most cases, saving hallucination".[44]

If Haggard's novel brings to mind Victorian discussions on the relationship between the individual, the primeval and societal bonds as discussed by Lang and Freud, Bowen's concept of the 'saving hallucination' recalls Freud's ruminations on the impact of popular literature on the adult subject in *Der Dichter und das Phantasieren* (1908), translated into English as "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" or as "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming". In the child's most absorbing occupation, play, the things of his world are rearranged and ordered in a way which pleases the child. In so doing, Freud argues, the mechanics of the child's play resemble the work of the creative writer, who produces "a world of fantasy which he takes very seriously […] he invests it with a great deal of affect, while

There, in the tombs and deathless, dwelleth SHE!
(Andrew Lang, Grass of Parnassus, London 2007, p. 42).

39 Bowen, Complete Stories (Fn. 32), p. 730.
40 Maud Ellmann, Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow across the Page, Edinburgh 2003, p. 21.
41 Bowen, Collected Stories (Fn. 32), p. 731.
42 Ibid., p. 730.
43 Bowen, Mulberry Tree (Fn. 3), p. 87.
44 Ibid., p. 97.

separating it sharply from reality".[45] In fact, and as Freud explains, fantasy is the adult's exchange for childhood play, which he calls "day-dream".[46] Whereas in common daily activities adults are normally ashamed of confessing the nature of their fantasies, writers – especially "the less pretentious writers of romances, novels and stories", Freud argues – give way to their fantasies in their literary creations by means of the construction of a "hero who is the centre of interest, for whom the author tries to win our sympathy by every possible means, and whom he places under the protection of a special providence […] whose invulnerability very clearly betrays – His Majesty the Ego, the hero of all day-dreams and all novels".[47] Significantly, Freud even suggests the possibility of myths being "distorted vestiges of the wish-phantasies of whole nations" or "the age-long dreams of young humanity".[48] Readers experience great pleasure in approaching this particular type of popular fiction, which releases the tension of one's mind without reproach or shame.[49]

Pepita's experience as a reader of Haggard and Lang's texts overlaps with her own construction of it – which may well correspond to the character's first approach to these works in late childhood, thus mirroring Bowen's own experience and appreciation of Haggard's text. Unlike the other adult characters in the story – who fail to understand the significance of Pepita's particular construction of Kôr – Pepita is not ashamed of confessing the nature of her day-dreams, for they constitute a psychic strategy to counterbalance chaos and destruction, as Bowen herself explained in the aforementioned postscript to the collection of stories:

> Personal life here, too, put up its own resistance to the annihilation that was threatening it – war. Everyone here, as is known, read more: and what was sought in books – old books, new books – was the communicative touch of personal life. To survive, not only physically, but spiritually, was essential.[50]

Pepita's day-dream of Kôr springs from the therapeutic power of literature and its possibility of bringing about mental and spiritual relief.

Mysterious Kôr closes with Pepita's partial realization of her Freudian fantasy through a nocturnal dream – "fulfilment of desires in exactly the same way as day-dreams are",[51] Freud argues – which lays bare the nature of the character's desires:

> She still lay, as she had lain, in an avid dream, of which Arthur had been the source, of which Arthur was not the end. With him she looked this way, that way, down the wide, void, pure streets, between statues, pillars and shadows, through archways and colonnades. With him she went up the stairs down which nothing but moon came; with him trod the ermine dust of endless halls, stood on terraces, mounted the extreme tower,

45 Sigmund Freud, The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming, in: Philip Rieff (Ed.), Character and Culture, London 1963, pp. 34–43, here p. 35.
46 Ibid., p. 36.
47 Ibid., pp. 39–40.
48 Ibid., p. 42.
49 Ibid., p. 43.
50 Bowen, Mulberry Tree (Fn. 2), p. 97.
51 Freud, Poet to Day-Dreaming (Fn. 45), p. 39.

> looked down on the statued squares, the wide, void, pure streets. He was the password, but not the answer: it was to Kôr finality that she turned.[52]

Pepita's dream functions as an assertion of the character's independent sexuality, of which Arthur is "the password, but not the answer".

As a conclusion, Lang's poem resonates through Bowen's *Mysterious Kôr* as a literary response to the disenchantment of the world. In fact, Lang's plea for a return to epic and magical roots accounts for the 'mysterious' quality which Kôr still holds for disenchanted Pepita. For Pepita, the imaginary existence of Kôr offers the therapeutic value of compensating for the desiccation produced by war, re-enchanting the subject in the face of grounded fears of death and complete annihilation. Haggard and Lang also conceived of romances as a literary response to the sense of disenchantment with a progressively mechanized, scientific and reason-governed world, which could be however 're-enchanted' through the imaginative quests which these narratives entail: Kôr's autonomous mythic world would provide readers with the enchantment which the scientific discourse had superseded. The reassessment of the myth of King Arthur in both narratives becomes revealing of particular, and even divergent constructions of heroism and heroic qualities, which are in these texts revisited to fit in mutable concerns and constructions of what heroism and gender actually entail.

52 Bowen, Collected Stories (Fn. 32), p. 740.

A Melancholy Look from Fearless Eyes

Metamorphoses of a 'Dangerous' Heroine of the Romantic Period

Petra Pollákova

> I know those are the eyes of someone dead,
> Eyes that no loving hand has closed.[1]
>
> —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*

This study focuses on the visual and literary symbolism of the type of 'dangerous' heroine found in the first half of the nineteenth century. I understand 'dangerous' heroines to be such female heroes whose actions broke the period's gender stereotypes and challenged man's authority in society as a whole. I will argue that the real, active power of this type of heroine was weakened by styling her into the role of a physically passive and melancholy martyr, an icon of virtuous femininity in order to 'pacify' her, as it were. The heroine's diverse metamorphoses and stylisations do more than reveal the period's gender stereotypes; they are also a revealing probe into artistic endeavours to articulate a primeval essence of art, its influence on human fantasy and emotion, and the reciprocal relation between the spectator and the image.

As a central source, I chose ekphrastic (literary) descriptions of visual art, period literary records, and popular stories. Methodologically, the main point of departure is a type of ekphrasis which James Heffernan designates as "the Medusa model of ekphrasis".[2] According to Heffernan, this type of ekphrasis is one of several ways of expressing the antagonism of word and image. If the opposition between word and image becomes a conflict between narrative and stasis, and ekphrasis transforms a static image into a story, we can interpret the process from the gender perspective: a male authority functions as the mover, the creator of the story, and the female as image, "as fixed and fixating object of desire".[3]

The classical myth of Medusa represents one of the symbols of the archetypal fear of gazing at an image. The terrible Gorgon Medusa, able to turn onlookers to stone, was killed by the hero Perseus. Her head, severed from her body, was by this act transformed into an image. The power and terror of her look, persistent

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1 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, Part I, Vol. 2: Goethe's Collected Works. Trans. by Stuart Etkins, Princeton/Oxford 2014, p. 107. German original: "Fürwahr es sind die Augen eines Toten, / Die eine liebende Hand nicht schloß." (ll. 4195–4196).

2 James A. W. Heffernan, Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery, Chicago 2004, pp. 108–109.

3 Ibid., p. 109.

even after her death, is symbolically transferred to the ability of an image to attract and control onlookers' gazes and emotions.

The archetypal power of Medusa to petrify a (male) viewer thus makes ambivalent the image to which this type of ekphrasis relates. On the one hand, there is the beauty of a certain image able to draw to itself the gazer's sight; on the other hand, there is the horror of the image and its power to bind and take possession of the gazer's spirit.[4]

In modern theoretical studies examining the relation between visual art and the gazer, the gazer is largely viewed as a male spectator, whose power to control his gaze in relation to the observed image becomes equivocal and in many respects problematic.[5] In some cases, the gazer's sight is threatened by an image that dares to look back at the spectator.[6] If the image depicts a woman, fundamental gender issues and taboo themes may enter into the relationship between the male spectator and the gazing Medusa-like image.

Medusa's Power of Sight

When turning our attention to the iconic figure of Medusa and her image in romantic literature of the nineteenth century, we first have to go back to this motif in Goethe's *Faust*.[7] A quotation from Goethe's *Faust* introduces this article. It relates to the chapter "Walpurgis Night" in part one of *Faust*, in which Mephistopheles transports Faust to a high mountain peak where a witches' Sabbath is in progress. In the midst of the wild and chaotic witches' dance, Faust is suddenly bewitched by a slowly moving figure of a pale and lovely girl who reminded him strongly of his dead lover, Gretchen. However, Mephistopheles discourages Faust from looking at the girl, saying she is but a lifeless spectre with the lethal force of Medusa's gaze. Mephistopheles says:

> Leave that alone – it only can do harm!
> It is a magic image, a phantom without life.
> It's dangerous to meet up with;
> its stare congeals a person's blood

4 For the recent literature on the motif of Medusa gaze, see, for example, Sibylle Baumbach, Medusa's Gaze and the Aesthetics of Fascination, in: Anglia – Zeitschrift für englische Philologie 2, 2010, pp. 225–245.

5 The question of the relation between sight and power or powerlessness in visual art is explored in the influential study by John Berger, Ways of Seeing, London 1972, pp. 45–64. For an analysis of Medusa's gaze in relation to visual art or political power, see Horst Bredekamp, Theorie des Bildakts (Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen; 2007), Berlin 2010, pp. 233–243.

6 Heffernan, Museum of Words (Fn. 2), p. 121.

7 It should be noted that in the case of Goethe's *Faust*, the archetypal figure of Medusa has several different semantic strata. For more details, see the study by Ernst Osterkamp, Re-Defining Classicism: Antiquity in *Faust II* Under the Sign of the Medusa, in: Hans Schulte [et al.] (Ed.), Goethe's *Faust*: Theatre of Modernity, New York 2011, pp. 156–174.

and almost turns him into stone –
you've surely heard about Medusa![8]

Innocent Gretchen, seduced by Faust, is treated symbolically as a dangerous Medusean image, an undead apparition strongly attracting the male spectator and putting him in mortal danger. The contrast between narrative and stasis, between word and image, is heightened here by the immobility of Gretchen, who, amid dramatic scenes of a wild and chaotic dance, "is slowly moving away, dragging her feet as if they were in fetters".[9] This Gretchen, seen by Faust in the form of Medusa, can be understood as an augury of the approaching tragic end for Gretchen – her execution turning the living girl into an undead static image haunting Faust's imagination.

Another classical example of a magic Medusa image is Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous ekphrastic poem *On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery*, first published posthumously by his widow in 1824.[10] The poem was inspired by a painting that was erroneously regarded as one of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpieces in the nineteenth century.[11]

The scene depicts Medusa's severed head with an assemblage of slithering snake bodies in place of hair. The head with half-open eyes, gazing upwards, is lying abandoned in the midst of a rocky landscape vista by the mouth of a dark cave. Medusa is surrounded by various hideous creatures, such as toads, bats, lizards, and rats. Shelley sets this melancholy scene on a dark night, as he begins his poem with the verse: "It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky."[12] He concentrates on the ambiguous face of Medusa, in which opposite qualities – beauty and horror – are unified in perfect harmony. Feelings of fear, anxiety, suffering, and pain blend together here with unearthly beauty and constitute one whole in the spirit of the Romantic aesthetics.[13]

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8 Goethe, Faust, Part I (Fn. 1), p. 107. German original: "Laß das nur stehn! dabei wird's niemand wohl. / Es ist ein Zauberbild, ist leblos, ein Idol. / Ihm zu begegnen, ist nicht gut: / Vom starren Blick erstarrt des Menschen Blut, / Und er wird fast in Stein verkehrt; / Von der Meduse hast du ja gehört." (ll. 4190–4195).

9 Goethe, Faust, Part I (Fn. 1), p. 107. German original: "Sie schiebt sich langsam nur vom Ort, / Sie scheint mit geschloßnen Füßen zu gehen." (ll. 4185–4186).

10 For a detailed analysis of the iconography of Shelley's ekphrastic poem, see Jerome J. McGann, The Beauty of the Medusa: A Study in Romantic Literary Iconology, in: Studies in Romanticism 11, 1, 1972, pp. 3–25, or Carol Jacobs, On Looking at Shelley's Medusa, in: Yale French Studies 69, 1985, pp. 163–179.

11 The *Head of Medusa* painting from the collections of the Uffizi Gallery Museum in Florence is ascribed today to an anonymous Flemish artist, active ca. 1600, oil on wood, 49 × 74 cm, inventory number: P 1472.

12 Percey Bysshe Shelley, On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery, in: Marjorie Garber / Nancy J. Vickers (Ed.), The Medusa Reader, New York/London 2003, pp. 75–76.

13 In his classic iconographic study dedicated to European literature of the Romantic period, Mario Praz characterises the figure of Medusa as a manifesto of the conception of beauty in the Romantic period. For him, Medusa is a symbol of a dark and terrifying beauty,

Of great importance in this context is the connection of the contrasts between life and death. Medusa is a creature standing on the boundary line between life and death. She was killed, but her active power lives on in an iconic image. This close connection in Medusa's archetypal figure between the opposites of life and death in combination with simultaneous divine beauty and abject horror triggered a response from Shelley, as well as from many other authors of the period. As the English essayist and literary and art critic Walter Pater wrote about this work ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci,

> The subject has been treated in various ways; Leonardo alone cuts to its centre; he alone realises it as the head of a corpse, exercising its powers through all the circumstances of death. What may be called the fascination of corruption penetrates in every touch its exquisitely finished beauty. About the dainty lines of the cheek the bat flits unheeded. The delicate snakes seem literally strangling each other in terrified struggle to escape from Medusa's brain […]. [14]

The power of Medusa's gaze was associated with Leonardo da Vinci's most famous work, the *Mona Lisa*. 'La Gioconda', as the Mona Lisa is frequently called in Italy, began to compel the rapt attention of artists and men of letters in the 1840s.[15] Like Medusa, she was perceived as a fabulously ambivalent figure. On the one hand, she was worshipped almost as a Madonna, and, on the other, her beauty and mystery were highly provocative. The viewer felt enthralled and lost under the influence of her equivocal gaze, which became a symbol of the deep mystery of the remote origin of life and death.[16] For Walter Pater, 'La Gioconda' "is older than rocks among which she sits", and "like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave".[17]

It was Hans Belting who succinctly characterised the extraordinary effect of the *Mona Lisa* on the viewers of that period as follows: "The *femme fatale*, a creation of Romanticism, was all sensuality and feeling and thus posed a threat to the rationality of the male, tempting him with an allure that was further intensified by an apparent passiveness."[18]

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which considerably pares down the polysemous symbolism of this figure. Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, transl. by Angus Davidson, London 1933, pp. 26–27. Also of importance in this context is the original antique myth of Medusa, a beautiful young woman with golden hair turned into a monster by the jealous goddess Athena. For an analysis of the original antique mythology on Medusa, see, for example, David Leeming, Medusa: In the Mirror of Time, London 2013, pp. 9–19.

14 Walter Pater, The Renaissance. Studies in Art and Poetry, London 1973, p. 104.

15 Hans Belting, The Invisible Masterpiece. Transl. by Helen Atkins, Chicago/London 2001, pp. 137–138.

16 Mona Lisa fits the symbolic conception of famous women of the past representing, as Mario Praz writes, a great fascination for writers of the Romantic period. They were one of the types of femme fatale who was reborn in all ages and in different lands and became a symbol of all female vices and, at the same time, pleasure. Praz, The Romantic Agony (Fn. 13), p. 209.

17 Pater, The Renaissance (Fn. 14), p. 121.

18 Belting, The Invisible Masterpiece (Fn. 15), p. 138.

Death Becomes Her

If a beautiful woman is to change into an image, her physical existence (physical body) must first be destroyed following the example of the archetypal Medusa. In such a scenario, a male hero typically acts as an ambivalent symbolic figure – destroyer of the woman's physical body and creator and observer of her static magic image.

Let us recall the famous short story by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Oval Portrait*, first published in 1842, which in many respects symbolically perpetuates the Medusa myth.[19] The story begins with an injured traveller and his valet seeking refuge in a mysterious abandoned mansion. The traveller goes into a chamber with antique decorations and a great number of paintings. After a thorough examination of the room, the traveller discovers, in a half-hidden, candle-lit niche, an intriguing picture that had escaped his attention: a painting in an oval frame, perhaps an allusion to Athena's aegis bearing the head of Medusa, depicting the head and shoulders of a young girl with radiant hair melted imperceptibly into a vague yet deep shadow, which forms the background of the whole. The gaze of the woman's eyes is so strong that the traveller cannot bear it at first:

> I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception. But while my lids remained thus shut, I ran over in my mind my reason for so shutting them. It was an impulsive movement to gain time for thought – to make sure that my vision had not deceived me – to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. *In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting.*[20]

The traveller is fascinated by the painting, evoking the feeling that the girl is a living being rather than a painting. He finds a book in the chamber relating the history of the painting's creation. A tragic story revolves around the girl's portrait, the story of her fiancé, who was a painter. Enraptured by his art, the painter decides to do a portrait of his wife. Overindulging his artistry and the effort to portray, as truthfully as possible, the physical appearance of the young woman, he does not realise that her beauty and vital energy are gradually drained from her physical body. When the painting is finished, the painter cries in a loud voice, "This is indeed life itself!"[21] But as he looks at his wife, who had sat for him for long hours and weeks, he sees that she is dead.

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19 The symbolism of this short story is analysed in terms of gender and the dead woman's body by Elisabeth Bronfen, Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic, Manchester 1992, pp. 111–117. Bronfen bases her analysis on a study by Theodor Ziolkowski, Disenchanted Images. A Literary Iconology, Princeton, NJ 1977, pp. 78–147.

20 Edgar Allan Poe, Life in Death (The Oval Portrait), in: id., ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Tales and Sketches, Vol. 1: 1831–1842, Urbana, IL/Chicago 2000, pp. 659–666, here p. 663. My emphasis.

21 Ibid., p. 666.

The omnipotence of the beautiful woman's image and her strange vampire-like existence between life and death is vividly depicted in an Orientalist short story, *Bliss in a Garden of Apricots in Bloom* by the Czech neo-romantic writer Julius Zeyer.[22] Loosely inspired by Chinese literary tradition, the tale recounts the story of a father and a son dealing in art and antiques. The son falls in love with a lovely, mysterious woman who enchants him with nothing but her gaze: "She was gazing at me like the Evening Star, her gaze holding all that enthrals: grandeur, dreaminess, sadness, enthusiasm."[23] The young man meets the girl regularly in secret until he finds out that it was the soul of a long-deceased princess.

The protagonist's father was under a similar curse. As a young man, he fell in love with the countenance of a beautiful girl in an ancient painting he had found in an old, abandoned house. The picture depicted a garden with a lotus lake, and a golden palace in the background. Beneath a peony shrub sat a beautiful girl playing with a peacock. The man sat every evening in front of the painting, watching the girl and playing the lute for her. One day, the girl moved, spoke to the man, and pulled him into the picture. Together they lived in the landscape painting that seemed to be the very centre of the universe, from which the girl could watch the whole world and see the thoughts and deeds of all people. The only condition for staying in this landscape was to not interfere with real events and people's lives. The young man once violated this prohibition, losing his lover and being condemned to remain forever outside the image in the physical world, which represents a barrier to the fulfilment of personal feelings and ideals.[24]

Medusa-like images or portraits of women function here as icons of sorts, imbued with the physical and spiritual primeval essence of the depicted figure. The fact that these are images with magical power is intimated by various narrative situations which are regularly repeated with the theme of beautiful women's portraits coming to life. The formation of such works of art is either due to an artist of genius, such as Leonardo da Vinci, whose God-given talent succeeded in fathoming the most profound mysteries of life and art, or they are paintings of doubtful and baffling origin. In the story by Poe, the protagonist discovers a por-

[22] The story *Blaho v zahradě kvetoucích broskví* was first published in the Czech weekly literary magazine Lumír 10,11,12, 1982, pp. 146–149, 161–165, 177–182.

[23] All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "Hleděla na mne jako večernice, v pohledu tom bylo vše, co uchvacuje, majestát, snivost, smutek, nadšení." Julius Zeyer, Blaho v zahradě kvetoucích broskví (Bliss in a Garden of Apricots in Bloom), in: Ivan Slavík (Ed.), Tajemné příběhy v české krásné próze 19. století (Mystery Stories in Czech Literature of the 19th Century), Prague 1976, pp. 222–267, here p. 235.

[24] Julius Zeyer was known for his life-long fascination with non-European, and in particular, Asian (Oriental), art and literature. In this story and several others, he combined in a thought-provoking fashion the Western theme of pictures of beautiful women come to life with a very similar and extremely popular motif from Chinese literature. For more thematic details, see Wu Hung, The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting, Chicago 1996, p. 102 and pp. 121–125.

trait of a beautiful young woman in an abandoned haunted mansion, while in the Julius Zeyer story, a man acquires a painting with the figure of a fine-looking princess from an abandoned house previously owned by an old man.

It Is the Toilet of Death, but it Leads to Immortality

Another important motif for the creation of Medusa-like images of dangerous women is the process of creating pre-death portraits of famous historical (and sometimes pseudo-historical) heroines. In this situation, there usually appears the character of a renowned painter who is able to visually capture the heroine's mysterious inner power and emotions.

An example of this involves one of the greatest heroines in European history, Charlotte Corday. Corday, a Girondist, was executed in 1793 for the murder of one of the protagonists of the French Revolution, the Jacobin Jean-Paul Marat. As a result of her deed, Corday became one of the best known personages of her time. Her life, her personality, and the assassination – all of this was scrutinized by the general public. Paintings, drawings, and prints appeared depicting Corday murdering Marat or in prison awaiting execution.

In the European tradition, beautiful young women sentenced to death were a source of general fascination and sometimes even mass hysteria. Their physical beauty was often visible and this sexualisation of the female body was closely connected to general compassion and empathy.[25] An example of the sexualisation of Charlotte Corday's image is visible in a drawing by the artist Barry, depicting Charlotte Corday in a red prison chemise with partly exposed left breast.[26]

Corday's final days are related in the story of her portrait done in prison. When she was in prison, Corday sent a letter to the revolutionary tribunal with a request that her portrait should be painted before her execution. "I would like to leave this remembrance of me for my friends; while we cherish images of good citizens, curiosity sometimes leads us to seek images of great criminals, which serves to perpetuate the horror of their crimes."[27] The tribunal granted Corday's

[25] According to period accounts, young women could even arouse strong emotions in their fellow prisoners or executioners. Through this, they acquired a hallmark of exceptionality and superiority, which turned them into markedly idealised figures, sometimes comparable to angelic beings. Ursula Hilberath, Ce sexe est sûr de nous trouver sensible. Studien zu Weiblichkeitsentwürfen in der französischen Malerei der Aufklärungszeit (1733–1789), Alfter 1993, pp. 214–215.

[26] Barry, *Charlotte Corday revêtu de la chemise rouge* (Charlotte Corday Dressed in a Red Chemise), red chalk in black, white highlights on vellum paper, 1794, 26 × 20.5 cm, Musée Lambinet, Versailles, France, inventory number: 889.

[27] "Je voudrais laisser cette marque de mon souvenir à mes amis; d'ailleurs, comme on chérit l'image des bons Citoyens, la curiosité fait quelquefois rechercher ceux des grands criminels, ce qui sert à perpétuer l'horreur de leurs crimes." Nina Rattner Gelbart, The Blonding of

request, and the painter Jean-Jacques Hauer was assigned the task, as he had sketched Corday's face during the trial; he finished the portrait in her cell only a few hours before her execution. This portrait depicts Charlotte Corday's head and shoulders, with her face turned towards the viewer (Image 1).[28] She is wearing a plain light garment, her head covered with a high bonnet from which wisps of hair have come loose (Image 2).[29] When the jailer cut Corday's hair just before the execution, she gave, according to legend, one wisp to the painter as a reward for his work. According to Nina Rattner Gelbart, Charlotte Corday's hair took on a life of its own after her death and became one of the fundamental iconographic elements of her posthumous legend.[30]

The relation between the legend of Charlotte Corday and that of the archetypal Medusa began to evolve at the very moment of Corday's execution.[31] After her decapitation, the executioner's assistant allegedly lifted her head from the basket by the hair, showed it to the crowd with a gesture like a victorious Perseus, and slapped it on the face. According to eyewitnesses and period accounts, Charlotte Corday's head opened its eyes at that moment and flushed crimson.[32]

The question is, to what extent did the story of Charlotte Corday's last days inspire the literary destiny of another 'dangerous' heroine of European history, Italian noblewoman Beatrice Cenci? Beatrice went down in history for complicity in the assassination of her father, Francesco Cenci, for which she was beheaded in 1599 together with her stepmother and elder brother. The Cenci case was one of the momentous events of the late sixteenth century, and news of the trial spread throughout Italy due to the unsavoury reputation of the assassinated Francesco Cenci, who had been tried for a number of crimes and suspected of corruption at the Holy See. As it was widely believed that Pope Clement VIII had ordered the execution to seize the property of the Cenci family, on the day of the execution,

Charlotte Corday, in: Eighteenth-Century Studies 38, Issue 1, 2004, pp. 201–221, here pp. 218–219, endnote 13.

28 Hauer was probably the only artist to draw or paint Charlotte Corday while she was alive. Gelbart, The Blonding (Fn. 27), p. 210. Hauer's original portrait of Corday is today located in the Musée du Chateau de Versailles. Jean-Jacques Hauer, *Charlotte Corday*, oil on canvas, 1793–1794, 60.5 × 47 cm, Chateau de Versailles, Versailles, France, inventory number: MV 4615.

29 As an accompanying illustration documenting the renown of the portrait of Corday by Jean-Jacques Hauer, I chose a photo of the actress Clara Marion Jessie Rousby (née Dowse) from the 1870s stylised as a pre-death portrait of Charlotte Corday. Unknown photographer, *Clara Marion Jessie Rousby (née Dowse) as Charlotte Corday*, Woodburytype, 1870s, 90 mm × 55 mm, National Portrait Gallery, London, inventory number: NPG Ax 7606.

30 Gelbart, The Blonding (Fn. 27), p. 201.

31 On the symbolism of the head of Medusa as a figure representing the threat of revolt in the period of the French Revolution, see the essay by Neil Hertz, Medusa's Head, in: Marjorie Garber / Nancy J. Vickers (Ed.), The Medusa Reader, New York/London 2003, pp. 173–195.

32 Gelbart, The Blonding (Fn. 27), p. 206. This purportedly true event even made some contemporary scientists and physicians seriously consider whether victims of the guillotine may in fact retain consciousness for a short while.

Image 1: Jean Jacques Hauer, *Charlotte Corday*, oil on canvas, 1793–1794, 60 × 47cm, Versailles, Château de Versailles, inventory number: MV 4615.

Image 2: Unknown photographer, *Clara Marion Jessie Rousby (née Dowse) as Charlotte Corday*, woodburytype, 1870s, 90 × 55mm, London, National Portrait Gallery, inventory number: NPG Ax 7606.

the sympathy of all of Rome went out to Beatrice and her family. As in the case of Charlotte Corday, her imprisonment and execution gave rise to enduring legends celebrating her as a heroine or martyr rebelling against the patriarchal authority of her father or the Roman Pope.[33]

It is likely that Caravaggio was among the crowd of Romans watching the execution of the Cencis, and he later portrayed the emotions he felt about this event, as well as the expression on the face of a person being executed, in his painting *Judith Beheading Holofernes*.[34] Innovatively, he depicted Holofernes as being fully conscious and aware that it was the moment of his death.[35] Some scholars are of the opinion that this painting could be a veiled allusion to the patricide in the Cenci family, construing the figure of Caravaggio's Judith as a crypto-portrait of Beatrice Cenci.[36]

At any rate, Beatrice Cenci's countenance is historically associated with a totally different picture, which is currently identified as a portrait of an unknown young woman by an anonymous painter in the Galleria Nationale D'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini. This picture began to circulate in the late eighteenth century when the caption "Portrait, believed to be of Cenci girl, artist unknown" appeared next to it in the catalogue of paintings of the Roman Colonna family in 1783. From that time on, the picture began to be wrongly interpreted as a portrait of Beatrice Cenci.

The picture shows the head and shoulders of a young woman looking at the spectator over her shoulder (Image 3).[37] She is wearing a simple white dress and her hair is covered with a strip of white fabric wrapped around her head.[38] The background is an abstract dark surface. After 1794, one year after the execution of Charlotte Corday, this picture began to be associated with the name of the painter Guido Reni.[39] The connection between the legendary figure of Beatrice Cenci and

33 In the story of the Cenci case, it is important to mention the counsel for the defence, Prospero Farinacci, who tried to excuse Beatrice's complicity in the murder, arguing that she had been sexually abused by her father. Although this accusation was never proven, it became an important part of Beatrice's posthumous legend.

34 Caravaggio, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, oil on canvas, 1599, 145 × 195 cm, Galleria Nationale D'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome, inventory number: 2533.

35 Helen Langdon, Caravaggio, Prague 2002, p. 128. Caravaggio succeeded in capturing the boundary between life and death. Holofernes is almost dead, as shown by his eyes rolled backwards in his head, while his taut body convulses, struggling for the last seconds of life. As the scene is remarkably accurate, both anatomically and physiologically, it is believed that it was based on Caravaggio's actual observations of executions.

36 Charles Nicholl, Screaming in the Castle. The Case of Beatrice Cenci, in: London Review of Books 20, 13, 1998, pp. 23–27, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v20/n13/charles-nicholl/screaming-in-the-castle-the-case-of-beatrice-cenci, 10 November 2017.

37 Guido Reni attr., *Ritratto di Beatrice Cenci*, oil on canvas, 64.5 × 49 cm, Galleria Nationale D'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome, inventory number: 1944.

38 This plain, unembellished garment was believed to be the jail garb in which Beatrice went to her execution. Corrado Ricci, Beatrice Cenci, Milan 1923 (Repr. Milan 1941), p. 380.

39 Reni's association with this work eventually became so strong that the painting came to be regarded as one of Reni's masterpieces, despite lack of evidence warranting the association.

Image 3: Guido Reni attr., *Ritratto di Beatrice Cenci*, oil on canvas, 64.5 × 49cm, Rome, Galleria Nationale D'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, inventory number: 1944.

one of the greatest masters of Baroque Italian painting from the first half of the seventeenth century soon gave rise to new legends attempting to describe the circumstances under which the portrait was allegedly painted. The dramatic story surrounding the painting of the portrait of Beatrice Cenci is similar in many respects to that of Charlotte Corday's portrait. According to one version circulated widely in the nineteenth century, Guido painted Beatrice in her cell on the eve of her execution, at a moment when she was praying and begging for the forgiveness of her sins.[40] According to a more dramatic version recounted by Charles Dickens that again recalls the power of Medusa's gaze, Guido Reni stood among the crowd watching the execution. When the cart carrying Beatrice to the place of execution passed by him, she suddenly turned her face to him. Her look was so enthralling and haunting to the painter, that he later succeeded in painting it in his studio from memory.[41]

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the purported portrait of Beatrice Cenci, in conjunction with the dramatic story of its origin, became one of Rome's main tourist attractions and a source of inspiration for eminent writers such as Charles Dickens, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Stendhal, Alexandre Dumas, as well as the famous American novelists Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville.[42]

The Radiant Heroine

The story of Beatrice Cenci is analogous to that of Charlotte Corday, not only due to the assassination of men who, in the respective women's eyes, were tyrants, but also due to the women's youth, bravery, motives to murder, and, last but not least, their physical beauty (though in the case of Corday, this was disputed by her sympathisers and adversaries).

With their deeds, both heroines flagrantly violated the period's patriarchal rules, which rendered it impossible to view their actions and distinct personalities within the bounds of general gender stereotypes. Ambiguous approaches to the historic and later, legendary, lives of these heroines evince diverse metamorphoses, oscillating between the archetype of a dangerous femme fatale and that of a martyr or a saint.

The transformation of dynamic, socially and politically active female historical figures into Medusa-like static images was fundamental. In the case of Beatrice Cenci, the transformation into a static, passive image was crowned by her

40 For literature on the Reni myth, see, for example, Rossella Vodret, Un volto per un mito, il "ritratto di Beatrice" di Guido Reni, in: Mario Bevilacqua / Elisabetta Mori (Ed.), Beatrice Cenci, la storia il mito, catalogue, Rome 1999, pp. 131–138.

41 Charles Dickens, Pictures from Italy, London 1846, p. 212.

42 For a detailed analysis of visual and literary representations of Beatrice Cenci from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, see my study: Petra Polláková, The Case of Beatrice Cenci: From Guido Reni to David Lynch, in: Umění/Art 59, Issue 5, 2011, pp. 380–395, here pp. 386–391.

identification with the historic picture; in Charlotte Corday's case, the transformation was gradual. Whereas initial visual representations often depicted Corday at the moment of Marat's assassination, or later, as a woman of intellectual disposition, by the end of the eighteenth century, all action began to vanish from depictions of her and Charlotte Corday began to be portrayed largely as a passive figure. As in the case of Beatrice Cenci, writers[43] and artists of the nineteenth century emphasised her gentleness and self-sacrifice.[44]

The symbolic emphasis on the physical and intellectual passivity of the heroines was supported visually with various motifs. The heroine's static figure, torn away from the dynamic and the narrative nature of their own story, became a 'fixed and fixating object' exposed to the public view. Dozens of paintings or graphics made in the nineteenth century show Charlotte Corday in her jail cell, going to her execution, or watching her last portrait being painted.[45] The heroine's dominant static figure becomes the central point in this type of painting and represents absolute fascination with the walk-on actors surrounding her. However, the dangerous heroine is not only bound symbolically, but also physically. The most frequent motifs are not scenes in the prison cell, but pictures of Charlotte Corday with her hands tied. A very similar iconographic repertory is also associated with visual works of art of the nineteenth century depicting the last days of Beatrice Cenci.

An effort to suppress the original dynamic stories of the two heroines associated with aggression and murder, deeds that run contrary to ideas of natural feminine fragility and innocence, was manifested in physiognomy. Literary descriptions of Beatrice differed widely from the young girl's appearance in the purported portrait of Beatrice. Similar divergences appeared in physical descriptions of Charlotte Corday. The two heroines' eyes and hair underwent the most profound transformations, which we can consider a sort of symbolic reference to the most dangerous weapons of the mythological Medusa. Although the Rome portrait of Beatrice shows a young woman with dark eyes and brown hair, and Charlotte Corday was demonstrably a brunette, in the literary stories, their eyes are described as blue and their hair as light to golden. Blonde hair, as one of the

43 Charlotte Corday as a romantic literary character was created by the French writer and politician Alphonse de Lamartine, who dedicated to her fate and personality the 44th book of his collected works, *Histoire des Girondins*, dating from 1847. Lamartine admired Corday for her courage, resolve and personal charm. He described her as an angel commanded by God to dispense justice, as a Joan of Arc of freedom. But Corday was also an angel, with wings covered in Marat's black blood.

44 Elisabeth R. Kindleberger, Charlotte Corday in Text and Image: A Case Study in the French Revolution and Women's History, in: French Historical Studies 18, Issue 4, 1994, pp. 969–999, here pp. 990–992.

45 For an overview of the best known visual representations of Charlotte Corday from the end of the eighteenth to the first half of the twentieth century, capturing the changing iconography of this heroine, see Guillaume Mazeau, Corday contre Marat: Deux siècles d'images, Versailles 2009.

Image 4: Hihara You, *Joan of Arc Fireworks*, female hero in the Japanese video game *Otogi: Secret Spirit Agents*, illustration.

symbols of feminine charms and virtues,[46] is associated here with the iconography of an ambivalent woman, a heroine whose deeds ran contrary to the traditional gender conception of femininity. A similar metamorphosis was typical of other famous heroines of European history, for example, Joan of Arc, often portrayed in the nineteenth century with light or golden hair (Image 4).[47]

46 The symbolism of light woman's hair is an important theme running through all of the Western visual and literary iconography. It was of paramount importance in the nineteenth century when figures of women with blonde hair were often inspired by archetypal fairy tales of golden-haired princesses. Although blonde hair had a complex ambivalent iconography, it was one of the symbols of the woman as an innocent angelic being. For more details, see Elisabeth G. Gitter, The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination, in: PMLA 5, 1984, pp. 936–954, here pp. 943–948. On the symbolism of Medusa's golden hair in Victorian literature, see ibid., pp. 950–953.

47 Marina Warner, From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers, London 1994, pp. 368–369. The iconic appearance of a light-haired Joan of Arc also persists in the present-day popular culture. A case in point is a strikingly light-haired Joan of Arc in the

With regard to Charlotte Corday, period accounts circulated that she had reportedly had her hair lightened by a hairdresser just before Marat's assassination. As another reason for the later descriptions of Charlotte Corday as a blonde, it is said that she was wearing a powder wig at the time of Marat's assassination as a symbol of her support for the royalists.[48] However, it was only the posthumous legend of Charlotte Corday that proved the symbolic power of her light hair. As Gelbart convincingly shows, many subsequent commentators on the life and personality of Charlotte Corday described her hair as long, wavy, and distinctly light. Even the memorable wisp of hair that she gave to the painter Hauer was described by later eyewitnesses as light.[49] After all, Hauer's famous portrait of Charlotte Corday shows her as a blonde with bright blue eyes. The motif of Beatrice's light hair appears, for example, in descriptions of her purported jail portrait, or in literary descriptions of Beatrice in the works of the famous French novelists Stendhal and Alexandre Dumas, to whom Beatrice's light hair meant a matchless quality, reserved in the Italian tradition for paintings of Madonnas by Raphael.[50] Beatrice also has light hair in Charles Dickens' description of her 'portrait': "[…] the *light hair* falling down below the linen folds." [51] A typical example of her as a light-haired heroine with blue eyes is a description of this picture in the Cenci story from 1902 by the American writer Francis Marion Crawford, where the author, allegedly referring to the Rome painting, describes Beatrice as "[…] a lovely girl, *her hair gleaming in the sunshine like treads of dazzling gold*, her marvellous blue eyes turned up to heaven".[52]

In this context, the essential description of the 'portrait' of Beatrice Cenci is that by Percy Bysshe Shelley,[53] who introduced the motif of her golden hair in an interesting manner in his play about the Cenci case.[54] A detailed analysis of Shelley's play from the perspective of current gender issues was carried out by

film *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc* from 1999 featuring the American Milla Jovovich, or dozens of contemporary comic strips and video games presenting Joan of Arc as a series of sexually provocative, long-haired blondes.

48 Gelbart, The Blonding (Fn. 27), p. 204.

49 Ibid., p. 211.

50 See, for example, Belinda Jack, Beatrice's Spell. The Enduring Legend of Beatrice Cenci, London 2004, p. 151.

51 "The portrait of Beatrice di Cenci, in the Palazzo Berberini, is a picture almost impossible to be forgotten. Through the transcendent sweetness and beauty of the face, there is a something shining out, that haunts me. I see it now, as I see this paper, or my pen. The head is loosely draped in white; the light hair falling down below the linen folds." Dickens, Pictures from Italy (Fn. 41), p. 211. My emphasis.

52 James W. Mathews, The Enigma of Beatrice Cenci: Shelley and Melville, in: South Atlantic Review 49, Issue 2, 1984, pp. 31–41, here p. 34. My emphasis.

53 "Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck [...]." Young-Ok An, Beatrice's Gaze Revisited: Anatomizing "The Cenci", in: Criticism 38, 1, 1996, pp. 27–68, here p. 29.

54 Shelley's drama *The Cenci* is a verse drama in five acts, written in the summer of 1819 during Shelley's stay in Rome. As taboo themes of incest and patricide run through the play, it was staged in England for the first time only in 1922.

An Young-Ok, who pointed in a stimulating way to the association between Shelley's character of Beatrice and the archetypal Medusa.[55]

In Shelley's drama, the motif of Beatrice's rich, light hair is repeated, serving as a symbol of her momentary frame of mind. The motif of light hair had its literary justification in Shelley. It served as a means for highlighting and enhancing the pathos of Beatrice's suffering, and was equally an instrument of her revenge.[56] At moments when Beatrice must suffer her father's violent deeds or when she assassinates him in deadly anger, her hair is loose and chaotic, recalling the angrily writhing bodies of the snakes on Medusa's head.

A similar symbolism is that of the Medusa-like look of the golden-haired Beatrice, which gives to her tyrannical father and other male antagonists the impression that she controls an unmanageable and uncontrollable power.[57] A mysterious inner radiance, manifested in the form of the tragic heroine's light hair, becomes a symbolic demonstration of her suppressed and concealed power.

The inner glow of these heroines is often expressed visually through their attire. The image associated with Beatrice Cenci shows her in a white (purportedly prison) dress like the one in Hauer's portrait of Corday. Also, a full-length portrait of Corday painted by the French artist Tony Robert-Fleury in 1874 depicts her in a white dress contrasting with a darker surrounding landscape.[58] A similar tradition is kept alive around the figure of Joan of Arc, who is frequently shown in a golden or shining suit of armour.

Likewise, Shelley's head of Medusa, dropped somewhere in an abandoned nightscape, is characterised in several parts of the poem *On the Medusa* with the symbolism of light and radiance. Małgorzata Łuczyńska-Hołdys critically analyses the interconnection between light and shadow in this poem. Medusa's head is the only source of light in a dark nightscape originating from her pain and agony.[59] Medusa's 'glare of pain' may be perhaps understood in the sense of a transcendental radiance issued from pain and suffering, which takes her away from earthly life and makes her an archetypal icon of a romantic heroine.

This sublime quality of an internally radiant female icon seems to be a culmination of an extensive synthesis of heterogeneous parts making up the story and the character of the heroine. Her original, active social force, intellect, strong emotions, and the narrativeness of the dramatic story are frequently transformed into a static image. These disquieting female traits challenging gender stereotypes and endangering male social power thus come to the surface in the form of di-

55 It is significant that Shelley's play inspired by the famous Censi case and his ekphrastic poem *On the Medusa* were both written in 1819.

56 An, Beatrice's Gaze Revisited (Fn. 53), p. 49.

57 Ibid., pp. 51–54.

58 Tony Robert-Fleury, *Charlotte Corday at Caen in 1793*, oil on canvas, 1874, 210 × 125 cm, Musée Bonnat, Bayonne, France, inventory number: inv. CM 177.

59 Małgorzata Łuczyńska-Hołdys, Soft-Shed Kisses: Re-visioning the Femme Fatale in English Poetry of the 19th Century, Newcastle upon Tyne 2013, pp. 125–126.

verse primitive symbols. The woman's real power and social authority are turned symbolically into a magical, terrifying (Medusa-like) power hidden in the very 'physical' existence of the heroine's image.

Conclusion

> What ecstasy, and yet what pain!
> I cannot bear to let this vision go.[60]

In the preceding sections, I attempted to illustrate the depiction of a heroine in the period of Romanticism of the first half of the nineteenth century, with several examples drawn from literature, history, and visual art. I was particularly interested in the dangerous heroine whose story defies the period's gender stereotypes in many respects.

One of the fundamental contradictions my analysis highlighted is the stark contrast between the dynamism of a heroine's story and her period artistic depiction as a passive, timeless idol. The figure of a fictional or real-life heroine was torn from the real world and abstracted into the form of an immobile icon affecting the onlooker with the power of her Medusa-like gaze.

Mythological Medusa was beheaded by the hero Perseus, losing her physical body but retaining her primitive strength in her petrifying gaze. In the same way, the heroine's active 'body' is transformed into a transcendental idol, encompassing not only the latent danger of physical strength but also the threat posed by her gaze. This silent, wordless gaze of Medusa conceals, deep inside, diverse archetypal threats as well as desires springing from the depths of our social experience.

As Małgorzata Łuczyńska-Hołdys pointedly remarks, the only way to know the essence of Medusa is to expose oneself to her gaze.[61] Medusa's returned gaze, which was quintessentially a reflection of various traumas and social and gender taboos, was often hard to bear for the nineteenth-century onlooker or reader. This complex relationship between an active (male) onlooker and, in many respects, simultaneously, a creator of the iconic image of Medusa was frequently narrated in the literature and art of the nineteenth century through the story of a painter of genius able to artistically capture the magical, all-pervasive inner strength of this iconic heroine.

Literary works describing fictitious, miraculous icons of heroines often feature an element of mystery and the supernatural, where an ancient picture of unknown origin is discovered by a young man who is fatally attracted by the gaze of a woman in the picture. The reciprocal relationship between a male onlooker

60 Goethe, Faust, Part I (Fn. 1), p. 107. German original: "Welch eine Wonne! welch ein Leiden! / Ich kann von diesem Blick nicht scheiden." (ll. 4200–4201).

61 Łuczyńska-Hołdys, Soft-Shed Kisses (Fn. 59), p. 124.

and the "fixed and fixating" image of a woman is regularly described as being traumatic and unable to be fulfilled in real life.

Another way of transforming an active heroine into an immobile icon could have been mediated by posthumous legends of famous heroines of the past. In this study, I treated the iconography and the popular stories associated with Charlotte Corday and Beatrice Cenci in more detail. I was particularly interested in the elements common to the two legends. In the stories of these two heroines, a violent act occurs: the assassination of a male authority figure, be it a leading politician of the time or a tyrannical father. Both stories feature the figure of a talented painter who visits the heroine in prison and paints her pre-death portrait, capturing her almost supernatural inner strength in the form of Medusa's gaze. However, neither the portrait of Charlotte Corday nor the alleged Reni prison portrait of Beatrice embody any attributes referring to the dramatic deeds of these women, that transcended all limitations of the contemporary social rules. The figures are again taken out of the context of the original stories and transformed into iconic images of passive martyrs.

However, the period's visual and literary depictions of these heroines shift their deeds and subsequent suffering to a completely new level. The symbolic radiance that became physically imprinted in the physiognomy of these figures – in particular, in the symbols of golden hair and blue eyes – transformed the original threatening figure of Medusa into an almost Apollonian being. The returned gaze of this radiant Medusa symbolises a humanist hope for overcoming dark traumas in our cultural memory.[62]

Image credits

Image 1: © bpk | RMN - Grand Palais
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Image 3: © Gallerie Nazionali d'Arte Antica di Roma, Palazzo Barberini.
Image 4: © Hihara You, *Otogi: Secret Spirit Agents*, Japanese video game, URL: http://otogi.wikia.com/wiki/Category:Illustrators?file=Joan_of_Arc_Fireworks.png, 6 February 2018.

[62] The humanist denotation of the Medusa symbol, especially within the context of Shelley's poem and his translation of Goethe's *Faust*, is developed in studies by Dana Van Kooy, Shelley's Radical Stages: Performance and Cultural Memory in the Post-Napoleonic Era, London/New York 2016, p. 101 and Łuczyńska-Hołdys, Soft-Shed Kisses (Fn. 59), pp. 130–131.

When Heroes Sigh

Sentimental Heroism in Opera Culture Around 1800

Melanie Unseld

One of the main discourses of the European Enlightenment dealt with the nature of man: Nearly all Enlightenment thinkers and philosophers discussed the question of what man is like 'by nature'. This is because by turning to nature, they argued for a stable order grounded in and justified by science, a natural order that would also stabilise the social order. What had until then been legitimised only by Christian thinking now had to invoke a different basic order – and that is what nature (and the scientific confirmation) stood for. Especially considering this character of overthrow, it can be explained why the new order of the nature of man was so serious, so controversial and – in the end – so influential.

Philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and many others invoked nature in this sense in order to arrive at definitions of man. From the beginning, this definition was linked to the biological sex. Nature had provided, so the consensus, precisely two biological sexes. This meant that not only was the *one-sex model*, which had previously acquired some significance, off the table, but the *two-sex model* – as given by nature – was just as unavoidable as the unambiguous characterisation of these two sexes. The difference between the sexes was naturally conceived and focussed on their criteria of difference. To mention just a few examples already known and widely discussed:[1] "Woman has a superior feeling for the beautiful, so far as it pertains to herself; but for the noble, so far as it is encountered in the male sex",[2] as Immanuel Kant wrote in his aesthetics in 1764:

> Man on the other hand has a decided feeling for the noble, which belongs to his qualities, but for the beautiful, so far as it is to be found in woman. From this it must follow that the

1 See for example: Kordula Knaus, 'Mythos Weib'. Diskurse, Kontexte und narrative Funktionen in Richard Wagners Schriften, in: Christine Fornoff / Melanie Unseld (Ed.), Wagner – Gender – Mythen (Wagner in der Diskussion; 13), Würzburg 2015, pp. 41–56.

2 "Das Frauenzimmer hat ein vorzügliches Gefühl für das *Schöne*, sofern es *ihnen selbst* zukommt, aber für das *Edle*, insoweit es am *männlichen Geschlechte* angetroffen wird." Immanuel Kant, Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen (1764), 3rd section: Von dem Unterschiede des Erhabenen und Schönen in dem Verhältnisse der Geschlechter, in: Immanuel Kant. Akademieausgabe, Vol. 2, pp. 228–243, here p. 240, http://korpora.zim.uni-duisburg-essen.de/kant/aa02/228.html, 7 June 2018. Emphasis in the original. English translation: Immanuel Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, trans. John T. Goldthwait, Berkeley/Los Angeles 1965, p. 93.

> purposes of nature are directed still more to ennoble man, by the sexual inclination, and likewise, still more to beautify women.[3]

During the same time period, Jean-Jacques Rousseau distinguished the sexes in a similar way. And three decades later, in 1794, Wilhelm von Humboldt formulated a similar kind of anthropology of the two sexes:

> The entire disposition of the male gender is directed towards energy; this is what his force, his destructive violence, his striving for outward effect, his restlessness, are aimed at. In contrast to this, the temper of the female [gender] with its persistent strength, its inclination towards unification, its tendency to react when being acted upon and its gracious steadiness, [is directed] solely towards maintenance and thereness.[4]

It is not new in gender history or related disciplines to point out this difference between the sexes as being conceived as a natural order. Gender history has been occupied intensively with this for a number of years, with Karin Hausen's essay "Die Polarisierung der 'Geschlechtscharaktere'. Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben" from 1976 still being among the core texts in this debate.[5] Nor is it new to understand this difference between the sexes conceived as a natural order as a strong guideline for many discourses in the late eighteenth, and more intensively in the nineteenth century: mainly, all discourses of civil order – from aesthetics to the juridical discourse – can be seen as marked by it. For the field of men's studies, George Mosse underlined the heteronormative impact and its consequences for imagined masculinity. In 1996, he wrote in "The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity":

> The concept of modern masculinity stood for a definite view of human nature and human actions that could serve a variety of causes and that left hardly one modern ideology untouched. Nevertheless, as a theory of human nature, it was concrete and definite enough, constituting a coherent system that can easily be examined. This is the more so, as during its relatively short life – from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards – *the manly ideal changed very little*, projecting much the same so-called manly virtues, such as will power, honor, and courage.[6]

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3 "Der Mann dagegen hat ein entschiedenes Gefühl für das *Edle*, was zu *seinen* Eigenschaften gehört, für das *Schöne* aber, insofern es an dem *Frauenzimmer* anzutreffen ist. Daraus muß folgen, daß die Zwecke der Natur darauf gehen, den Mann durch die Geschlechterneigung noch mehr zu *veredlen* und das Frauenzimmer durch ebendieselbe noch mehr zu *verschönern*." Ibid.

4 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "Der ganze Charakter des männlichen Geschlechts ist auf Energie gerichtet; dahin zielt seine Kraft, seine zerstörerische Heftigkeit, sein Streben nach Außenwirkung, seine Rastlosigkeit. Dagegen die Stimmung des weiblichen, seine ausdauernde Stärke, seine Neigung zur Verbindung, sein Hang die Einwirkung zu erwidern und seine holde Stätigkeit allein auf Erhaltung und Daseyn." Wilhelm von Humboldt, Über den Geschlechtsunterschied und dessen Einfluß auf die organische Natur (1794), in: id., Werke, Vol. 1: Schriften zur Anthropologie und Geschichte, ed. by Andreas Flitner / Klaus Giel, Stuttgart 1960, pp. 227–228.

5 Karin Hausen, Die Polarisierung der "Geschlechtscharaktere": Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben, in: Werner Conze (Ed.), Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas: Neue Forschungen, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 363–393.

6 George Mosse, The Image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity, Oxford/New York 1996, pp. 3–4. My emphasis.

In the context of reflecting heroism, it is important to consider that academics such as Anne-Charlott Trepp,[7] Rebecca Habermas,[8] Martina Kessel,[9] Andreas Reckwitz and others have advocated in favour of a differentiation. That is because despite this very clear *essentialisation of the difference* between the sexes, it would be *wrong to assume that there was nothing but such a heteronormative discourse*. It would be likewise incorrect to assume that there was a stringent process from the Enlightenment until the modern era of the *grand récit* of heteronormativity and a dichotomy of difference between the sexes. In summary, Andreas Reckwitz clearly criticises the *grand récit* regarding the order of individuals ("Subjekt") within societies:

> There are indications of degendering tendencies in early bourgeois culture before 1800, and of emotionalisation, in this context, being directed at the ('das') subject within the framework of a specifically modern bourgeois strategy of universalisation, with men and women being equally addressed in a gender-neutral fashion.[10]

Specifically in the field of emotionality, possibilities of debating gender codes opened up: "By no means are men deprived of emotionalisation and psychologisation here; in fact, as 'men of feeling', they themselves provide one of the models for these processes."[11]

Particularly more recent masculinity research emphasises that even the hegemonic middle class of the nineteenth century did not deal with a monotonous, downright monochrome masculinity. Although indeed, following Max Weber and Norbert Elias, "Modernisation [was] described as a 'disenchantment of the world' or, respectively, as an increase in affective control, and predominantly, if implicitly, applied to masculine subjects as agents of 'occidental' modernity."[12] Martina Kessel, Manuel Borutta, Nina Verheyen and others rightly emphasise that the

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7 Anne-Charlott Trepp, Sanfte Männlichkeit und selbständige Weiblichkeit. Frauen und Männer im Hamburger Bürgertum zwischen 1770 und 1840, Göttingen 1996.

8 Rebekka Habermas, Frauen und Männer des Bürgertums. Eine Familiengeschichte (1750–1850), Göttingen 2000.

9 Martina Kessel, Heterogene Männlichkeit. Skizzen zur gegenwärtigen Geschlechterforschung, in: Friedrich Jäger [et al.] (Ed.), Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaften, Vol. 3: Themen und Tendenzen, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 372–384.

10 "[Es spricht] einiges dafür, dass die frühe Bürgerlichkeit vor 1800 zu einem *degendering* tendierte und die Emotionalisierung sich in diesem Kontext im Rahmen einer spezifisch bürgerlich-modernen Universalisierungsstrategie entsprechend an 'das' Subjekt richtet, sie geschlechtsindifferent an Frauen und Männer gleichermaßen adressiert ist." Andreas Reckwitz, Umkämpfte Maskulinität. Zur Transformation männlicher Subjektformen und ihrer Affektivitäten, in: id., Unscharfe Grenzen. Perspektiven der Kultursoziologie, Bielefeld 2008, pp. 177–196, here p. 185.

11 "Keinesfalls sind Männer hier der Emotionalisierung und Psychologisierung entzogen, sie liefern vielmehr selber als *man of feeling* eines ihrer Modelle." Ibid.

12 "[dass] Modernisierung als 'Entzauberung der Welt' bzw. als zunehmende Affektkontrolle beschrieben und sich dabei, wenn auch implizit, vorwiegend auf maskuline Subjekte als Agenten 'okzidentaler' Modernität bezogen [wurde]. " Manuel Borutta / Nina Verheyen, Vulkanier und Choleriker? Männlichkeit und Emotion in der deutschen Geschichte 1800–2000, in: id. (Ed.), Die Präsenz der Gefühle. Männlichkeit und Emotion in der Moderne, Bielefeld 2010, pp. 11–40, here p. 13.

strong narratives of masculinity were to be broken up. This is particularly emphasised by the authors mentioned in terms of issues of masculinity and emotionality who note that the time period between the end of the eighteenth century and the early twentieth century was not just a "wellenförmige[s] Auf und Ab maskuliner Gefühlsproduktion und -reduktion" (a wavelike up and down of masculine emotional production and reduction).[13] These thoughts, breaking apart narratives of masculinity, affect reflections on heroism and gender, not only because around 1800, heroism as a gender model seemed to be linked (at least implicitly) to heteronormativity.

The following explanations are not to be understood as a re-fixing of the idea of heteronomy in the gender discourse before and around 1800. I am not interested in corroboration of heteronormativity in this field, but rather in differentiation. This differentiation can succeed if representations of masculinity (and of femininity) are analysed with regard to their codes of the heroic. Therefore, no coincidence of masculinity and the heroic is reinforced, but the interest clearly focuses on how the heroic was used to stabilise, but also to criticise, contradict and redesign the mechanisms of gender – either as a criticism of the dichotomous sex model or also as corroboration, namely whenever heroic femininity or unheroic masculinity was held up to ridicule.

Giving two brief insights into the discourse, I mean to emphasise the differences between these examples: regionally, medially and even intentionally. This is why the two examples will not be taken for comparison but are regarded as two different forms of the discourse. With the first example, I would like to look ahead to the role of music in the masculinity discourses: In his early life, the caricaturist George Cruikshank made some caricatures in which music (or rather: scenes of musical practises and musical listening) plays an important role. One of them is entitled *Humming-birds or a Dandy Trio* (Image 1). We see three young men in an English salon. We see them singing and dreaming and abandoning themselves to music. The conspicuous attributes refer to a discourse conducted intensively before and around 1800, which found a symbol in the figure of the 'lovesick swain'. Now these three men are on no account 'swains' but rather veritable dandies. And even "humming-birds" in the caption refers to a type of bird more likely to be exotic than domestic. The figure of the 'lovesick swain' is thus broken in a number of ways and staged as an illusion to which the three men abandon themselves; it stands for a discourse about the 'healthy' individual often discussed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century: the individual who is in a humoural balance in accordance with the doctrine of the temperaments and humours. Any imbalance, however, was interpreted as an excess of a certain temperament, and thus also as

[13] Ibid., here p. 20. For criticism, see also Reckwitz, Umkämpfte Maskulinität (Fn. 10), and Martina Kessel, Heterogene Männlichkeit. Skizzen zur gegenwärtigen Geschlechterforschung, in: Friedrich Jäger [et al.] (Ed.), Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaften, Vol. 3: Themen und Tendenzen, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 372–384.

Image 1: George Cruikshank (etcher) and John S. Sheringham (draughtsman), *The Humming-Birds or A Dandy Trio*, from the *Cruikshankiana* series, published by Thomas McLean, London, etching, 1835, 229 × 328mm, BM Satires 13446 ii/ii; Cohn 212, 1216 ii/ii; Reid 895 ii/ii, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria.

an illness. Melancholy[14] in particular, as an excess of 'black humours', was considered problematic for men, as it stood – besides for a large number of other connotations, e.g. the romantic genius – not least for the loss of manliness. The loss of manliness caused by melancholy was perceived as a social disorder, so that the 'lovesick swain' – while 'lovesickness' was seen as "one of the most problematic kinds of malady"[15] – can also be interpreted as an attack on social order.

Music plays an important role in this discourse[16] inasmuch as it is considered the means capable of fostering this disorder, as already investigated by Amanda Eubanks Winkler for the seventeenth-century English stage. She emphasises: "Music, like a beautiful woman, communicated directly to a man's passions, which, overstimulated, supplanted his reason – the hallmark of masculinity – thereby reducing the ravished man to a womanish (i.e., overwrought) emotional state."[17] Especially for men, music was considered a potential risk to self-control; thus, an excess of musical enjoyment was interpreted not only as anti-rational but as a downright attack on manliness. The 'effeminate' behaviour in practicing music was considered particularly problematic, with the focus especially on singing: "If the lovesick swain has completely lost his reason, he sings himself, his musical outburst making clear his effeminacy and irrationality."[18] Music is an art form that renders man feminine. First and foremost, 'effeminate behaviour' was seen as problematic: "If the erotomaniac has not succumbed to madness, his musical outpourings of grief are foisted upon a young boy servant, an acceptable 'feminine' mouthpiece for the lovesick gentleman's lament."[19]

Another sheet by Isaac Cruikshank, father of George Cruikshank (see Image 2), shows a similar situation, once again linking the admiration of music, especially opera, to effeminacy: We get a look into a private opera box where a dandy has fainted and is leaning back in a chair. Three other dandies support him and a fourth closes the curtain which marks the line between the private box on the one hand and the public sphere of stage and auditorium on the other. Beyond the curtain – in the public sphere – we can see a castrato opera singer gesturing and performing on stage. The fourth supporter, who holds the curtain, imitates the singer, the stage figure of a hero. Another supporter holds a bottle of *Eau de Cologne* to the fainter's nostrils and says, "I dread the consequence! that last Air of Signeur Nonballenas

14 Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann gives a deep insight into the diversity of manifestations of melancholy around 1800, particularly reflecting the connex to music and the musician (expecially: composer/genius): Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann, 'Ein Mittel wider sich selbst'. Melancholie in der Instrumentalmusik um 1800, Kassel [et al.] 2010.

15 Amanda Eubanks Winkler, O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note: Music for Witches, the Melancholic, and the Mad on the Seventeenth-Century English Stage, Bloomington, IN 2006, p. 16.

16 See Wald-Fuhrmann, 'Ein Mittel wider sich selbst' (Fn. 14).

17 Winkler, O Let Us Howle (Fn. 15), p. 7.

18 Ibid., p. 16.

19 Ibid.

Image 2: Isaac Robert Cruikshank, *A Dandy Fainting or An Exquisite in Fits*, published by George Humphrey, London, hand-coloured etching, 1818, 241 × 345mm, Chicago, Art Institute.

has thrown him in such raptures, we must call in Doctor – immediately!" The sheet caricaturises the

> effeminacy and performed exaggerations of the 'dandy' as a type, and strengthens associations between the pursuit of fashion, the cultivation of art and aesthetic experience, and femininity or transgressive sexuality. […] This print connects dandies to artistic commodification, effeminacy, and homosexual desire.[20]

These two caricatures direct our attention towards the fine links between stage and audience in general, between presentation and representation, but also between the representation of the effeminate and non-heroic eighteenth-century dandy and the representation of the heroic on stage: The dandy on the left imitates the gesture of the castrato on stage, thus imitating the gesture of the heroic. The contradiction between the representation of the heroic (on stage) and the helpless imitation of the heroic (in the opera box) makes us laugh. Both gestures, however, are marked by gender codes: on stage, the focus is on the castrato, in the opera box, on the homosexual dandy. In this discourse, music – as a practice as well as a stage performance – plays an eminent role even discernible as visual code.

My second example regards two operas which were first performed in Vienna and Hamburg and which are linked by the exemplary function the older one had for the other. Especially when compared, they are suited for shedding light on questions of heroism, sensitivity and their musical or operatic representation around 1800: on the one hand, Wolfgang Amadé Mozart's *Zauberflöte* (which premiered in 1791 in Vienna), in particular the figure of Tamino, and on the other, Louis Spohr's opera *Der Zweikampf mit der Geliebten*, with a libretto by Johann Friedrich Schink, based on Francisco Antonio de Bances y López-Candamo, a Spanish writer of the seventeenth century. This opera was first performed in Hamburg in 1811. In *Der Zweikampf*, the male protagonist is named Enrigue, and it is no coincidence that he seems to be related to Tamino, albeit as a counter-image elevated to heroic stature, particularly as many contemporaries recognise Spohr's strong affinity to Mozart. Spohr himself writes in his autobiography:

> [The reviewer] Schwencke wrote a comprehensive, very favourable review of the opera in which he even managed to skilfully counter the opponents' well-founded claim that it contained many reminiscences of Mozart's operas, as he admitted that the shape of the musical pieces as well as the entire facture were, in fact, reminiscent of Mozart, but, at the same time, tried to make this count as a virtue.[21]

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20 Romantic Circles Gallery, *A Dandy fainting or – An Exquisite in Fits. Scene a Private Box Opera*, http://www.rc.umd.edu/gallery/dandy-fainting-or-%E2%80%93-exquisite-fits-scene-private-box-opera%E2%80%94, 7 June 2018.

21 "[Der Rezensent] Schwencke schrieb eine ausführliche, sehr lobende Beurteilung der Oper und wußte in dieser selbst die wohlbegründete Behauptung der Gegner, daß sie viele Reminiszenzen aus den Mozartschen Opern enthalte, mit Geschick zu bekämpfen, indem er zwar zugab, daß die Form der Musikstücke sowie die ganze Faktur an Mozart erinnere, dies aber zugleich als einen Vorzug geltend zu machen suchte." Louis Spohr, Selbstbiographie, Kassel/Göttingen 1860/1861, Vol. 1, p. 147.

In comparing the opening scenes of both operas, this borrowing from Mozart's *Zauberflöte* becomes clear, as does, however, the clearly different heroic contouring of the male protagonist: Tamino has to battle a serpent, but does not take it on. He does not undertake the heroic act but is overwhelmed by his emotions (fear). In his stead, the three ladies slay the beast while Papageno is trembling with fear, too. And anyone who, up to this point, still doubts Tamino's status a sensitive hero will be convinced no later than in the "Bildnis-Arie". But what does 'sensitive hero' mean?

Following Andreas Reckwitz's reflections on modern subject culture, the second half of the eighteenth century establishes a subject culture that attempts to reform the handling of sensitivity. This special focus on emotionality does not represent, as Reckwitz convincingly contends, any contradiction to the central idea of the Enlightenment, namely rationality. On the contrary: the revaluation of rationality makes it advisable to rethink emotionality, particularly in dealing with the self and in dealing with the other. Here, *control*, or better, emotional culture, plays an essential role. Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (1771) states the following:

> […] he [man] must not lose sight of the general rule of wisdom, which is not to overstep the *measure of sensitivity*. For as much as the *lack of sufficient sensitivity is a great imperfection*, insofar as it renders man stiff and idle, as much is it *harmful in abundance*, because it renders him soft, weak and unmanly. This important warning not to carry things too far seems to be required by some of our German poets in particular, who in every other respect are among the best. They seem to suffer from the delusion that the temper can never be stimulated enough. They would escalate pain into madness and desperation, repulsion into the utmost extreme of horror, any pleasure into frenzy, and every tender feeling into the dissolution of all senses. This is aimed precisely at making man into a miserable, weak thing, so overpowered by pleasure, tenderness and pain that no efficiency of power remains him, that all fortitude and all manly courage escape him.[22]

In this sense, at the close of the eighteenth century, clear trends can be observed in the guise of, as Reckwitz summarises:

> a rationalisation of the modern self which assumes a wide range of different emotions (lust, fear, wrath, grief, empathy, etc.) to be problematic and attempts to either control or altogether suppress them, and a degendering of this self, i.e. a subjectivisation in which 'gender'

[22] "[…] die allgemeine Regel der Weisheit muß er [der Mensch] nicht aus den Augen lassen, daß er das *Maaß der Empfindsamkeit* nicht überschreite. Denn wie der *Mangel der genugsamen Empfindsamkeit eine große Unvollkommenheit* ist, indem er den Menschen steiff und unthätig macht, so ist auch ihr *Uebermaaß sehr schädlich*, weil es ihn weichlich, schwach und unmännlich macht. Diese wichtige Warnung, die Sachen nicht zu weit zu treiben, scheinen einige unsrer deutschen Dichter, die sonst unter die besten gehören, besonders nöthig zu haben. Sie scheinen in dem Wahn zu stehen, daß die Gemüther nie zu viel können gereitzt werden. Den Schmerz wollen sie gern bis zum Wahnsinn und zur Verzweiflung, den Abscheu bis zum äussersten Grad des Entsetzens, jede Lust bis zum Taumel, und jedes zärtliche Gefühl bis zur Zerfliessung aller Sinnen treiben. Dieses zielt gerade darauf ab, den Menschen zu einem elenden schwachen Ding zu machen, das von Lust, Zärtlichkeit und Schmerzen so überwältiget wird, daß es keine würksame Kraft mehr behält, dem alle Standhaftigkeit und aller männliche Muth fehlt." Empfindung, in: Johann George Sulzer, Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste, Vol. 1, Leipzig 1771, pp. 311–316, here p. 313. Emphasis in the original.

> does not represent a central aspect of differentiation, and which instead subjects every person to certain performance criteria, in independence of this and other features of origin.[23]

To put it another way: besides naturalising the gender gap, the idea arises that emotional control is key to each subject – independent of his or her sex. The consequence of this idea admittedly is the convergence of the sexes, specifically in emotional situations. Fear is thus not weak or 'unmanly', but rather – in the spirit of the sensitive *hero* – the appropriate reaction to the monster. Even the *strength* of Tamino's emotions is still too uncontrolled in the first scene. During the following trials of initiation, he must learn to control them. Thus, the trials can be understood as exercises in finding the right "Maaß der Empfindsamkeit" (measure of sensibility) between "Mangel" (lack) and "Uebermaaß" (excess). Along this "Maaß", Tamino is able to develop his own masculinity as a 'sensitive hero', which is not represented by physical power but by the right balance of sensitivity.

It is worth taking another look – before drawing the comparison to Spohr – at the consequences this form of sensitive emotional culture had for the female counterpart. Opera stages at all times were full of female heroines. But what changes when the male character is a 'sensitive hero'? In line with Reckwitz' idea of a *degendering* of the emotions, female figures could indeed be furnished with character traits which hitherto had a clear male connotation. But degendering does not mean the dissolution of gender, rather its renegotiation and reorganisation. Thus, while for the male character this degendering brings up a diversity of emotions, the female character is much more guided into middle-class moral standards: all these heroines can be traced back to a heteronormative accuracy of fit; the goal that the women are heroically struggling for is marriage or partnership. Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*, for example, where one could easily comprehend this process, bore the alias title *Die eheliche Treue* in its first version from 1805; in its second version, the opera was called *Leonore oder Der Triumph der ehelichen Liebe*. On the other hand, however, the sensitive emotional culture raises difficulties for the female figures because they remain in a far narrower frame of emotions whenever they do not venture into the heroic. Pamina is a very clear example of this: even her attempted suicide is conceived not as a moment of strength but as an inappropriate "Uebermaaß" (excess) of the emotion of grief.

But let us return to the 'sensitive hero' Tamino and his 'heroic' counterpart Enrigue in Spohr's opera *Der Zweikampf mit der Geliebten*. It was already mentioned that the beginning of Spohr's opera is structured in analogy to *Die Zauberflöte*. The analogy affects the scenery, the battle and the introduction of the hero and his

23 "[…] eine Rationalisierung des modernen Selbst, die Emotionen verschiedenster Art (Lust, Angst, Zorn, Trauer, Empathie etc.) als problematisch voraussetzt und versucht, sie entweder zu kontrollieren oder gar nicht erst aufkommen zu lassen, und ein degendering dieses Selbst, das heißt eine Subjektivierung, für die 'Geschlecht' kein zentrales Unterscheidungsmerkmal darstellt und die stattdessen jeden Menschen unabhängig von diesem oder anderen Herkunftsmerkmalen bestimmten Leistungskriterien unterwirft." Reckwitz, Umkämpfte Maskulinität (Fn. 10), p. 178.

servant. But unlike Tamino's first appearance, Enrigue is energetic and ready for battle: not only does he make fun of his fearful servant Decio, ridiculing him for his timidity, but he battles four poachers, winning confidently and courageously. The music underlines this setting. Enrigue's part is characterised by large intervals in the melodic line and a rather distinct rhythm. Decio as the counterpart is characterised by quick and tremulous notes. In the orchestra we hear the sound of clanking swords (Image 3 a-c). So whilst Tamino as the male protagonist is unambiguously drawn as a sensitive hero, Spohr's Enrigue appears to be virile and pugnacious in the beginning of the opera. He is the Spanish hero contesting for his honour and his love. The emphasis on his nationality is accompanied with a Don Juanism, here standing for bravado and virility. Spohr's contemporaries were thus definitely able to read the opening scene as a superimposition of the Tamino figure with the Don Giovanni figure. The counterpart who registers she has won the fight is Isabella, who appears, however, disguised as a man. Isabella pretends to be Don Rosardo, Prince of Aragon, and on the spot imitates the bearing of the Spanish prince: it is his/her wounded honour that she wants to restore in the duel.[24] The opera's basic conflict arises from this motive of wounded honour, together with the *gender-cross-dressing* figure[25] of Isabella. Especially in this way, there arises a particular gender-contouring and heroic-contouring of the two protagonists Enrigue and Isabella. Princess Mathilde, the second main female figure of the opera, in contrast, is clearly characterised as a sensitive woman.

When we take a closer look at the music, we see that Enrigue and Isabella are 'dressed' musically in a very similar manner, meaning that they both receive distinctive melodic lines with frequent large intervals, strident rhythms, exposed dynamics and an orchestral accompaniment roiling in rapid note values, underscoring the emotional restlessness. (These musical parameters are structured not least in contrast to the Mathilde figure.) As an example, consider the finale of the second act (Image 4 a-c), where we can see how the two figures are similarly managed musically; the scene features the duel between Enrigue and Isabella alias Don Rosardo. Enrigue, Isabella and the men accompanying her reflect on battle as a 'masculine game' in a melodic phrase that jumps from figure to figure without changing its essential structure. Isabella is thus not differentiated compositionally from the other male figures in any way. And as the opera progresses, it is she who takes on the characteristic style of aggressive music or even invokes it: complete with mimicry in sound of clanking swords, march rhythms and, again and again, strikingly large intervals. Isabella approaches thus to the heroic-masculine concept while Enrigue retires: Spohr lavishes him with self-doubt, clearly highlighted in the libretto and just as clearly in the musical score which has plenty of sigh motives, making Enrigue appear

24 Cf. Ute Frevert, Ehrenmänner. Das Duell in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, Munich 1991.

25 For a wide discussion of gender-cross-dressing figures, see Kordula Knaus, Männer als Ammen – Frauen als Liebhaber. Cross-gender Casting in der Oper 1600–1800 (Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft; 69), Stuttgart 2011.

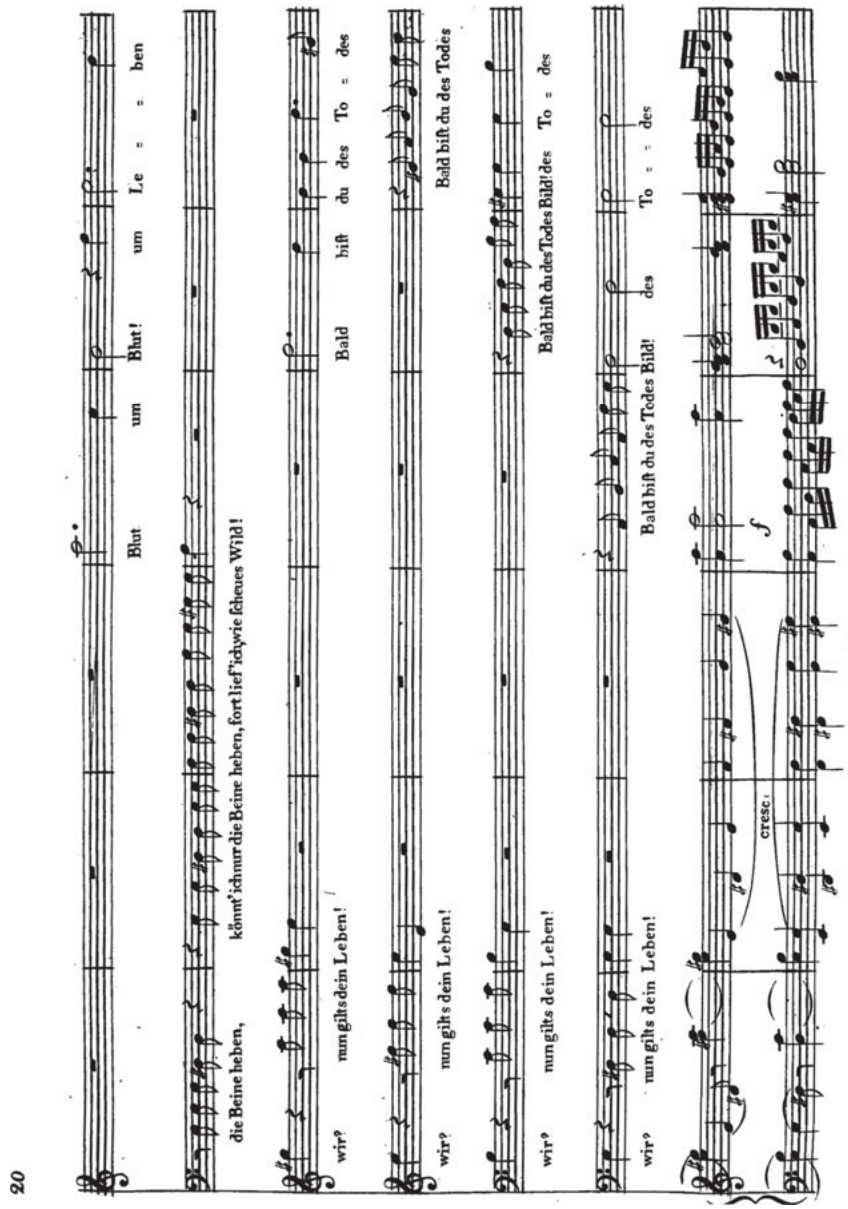

Image 3 a: Louis Spohr, *Der Zweikampf der Geliebten. Oper in drey Aufzügen*, piano reduction by Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke, Hamburg, c. 1813, excerpt from "No. 1 Introduzione", p. 20.

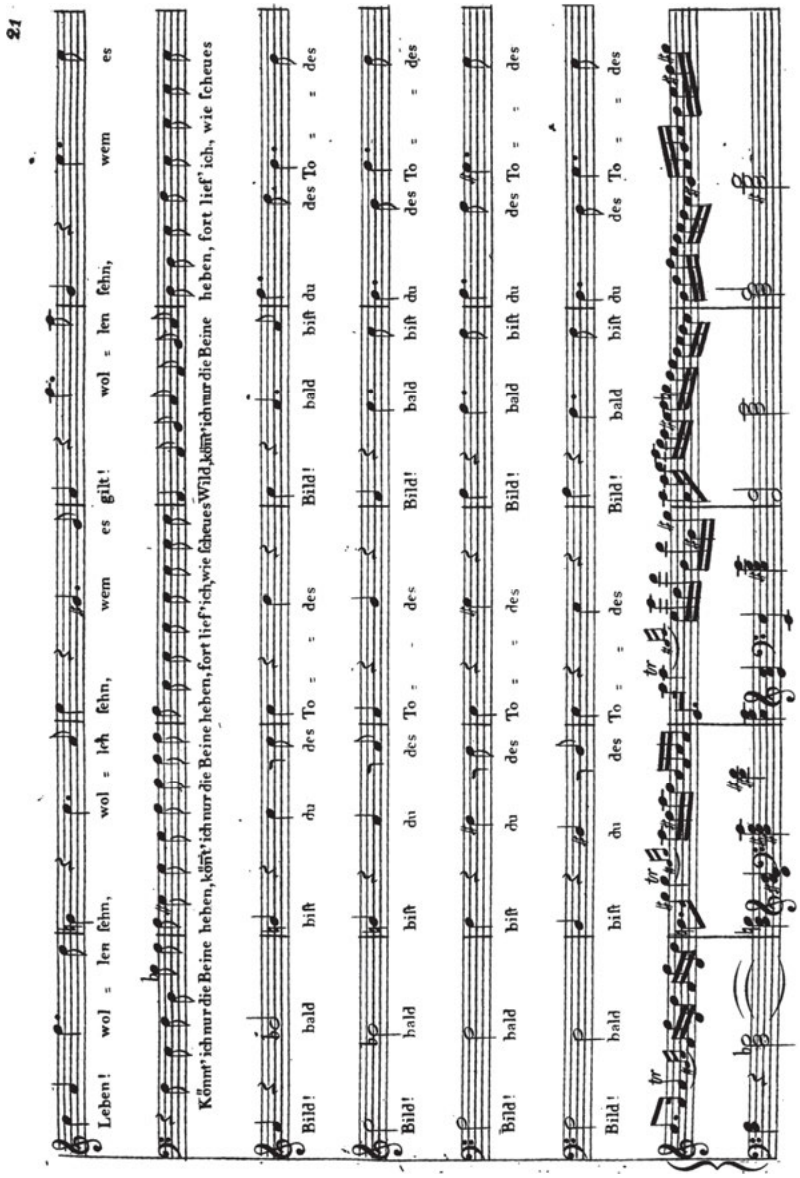

Image 3 b: Ibid., p. 21.

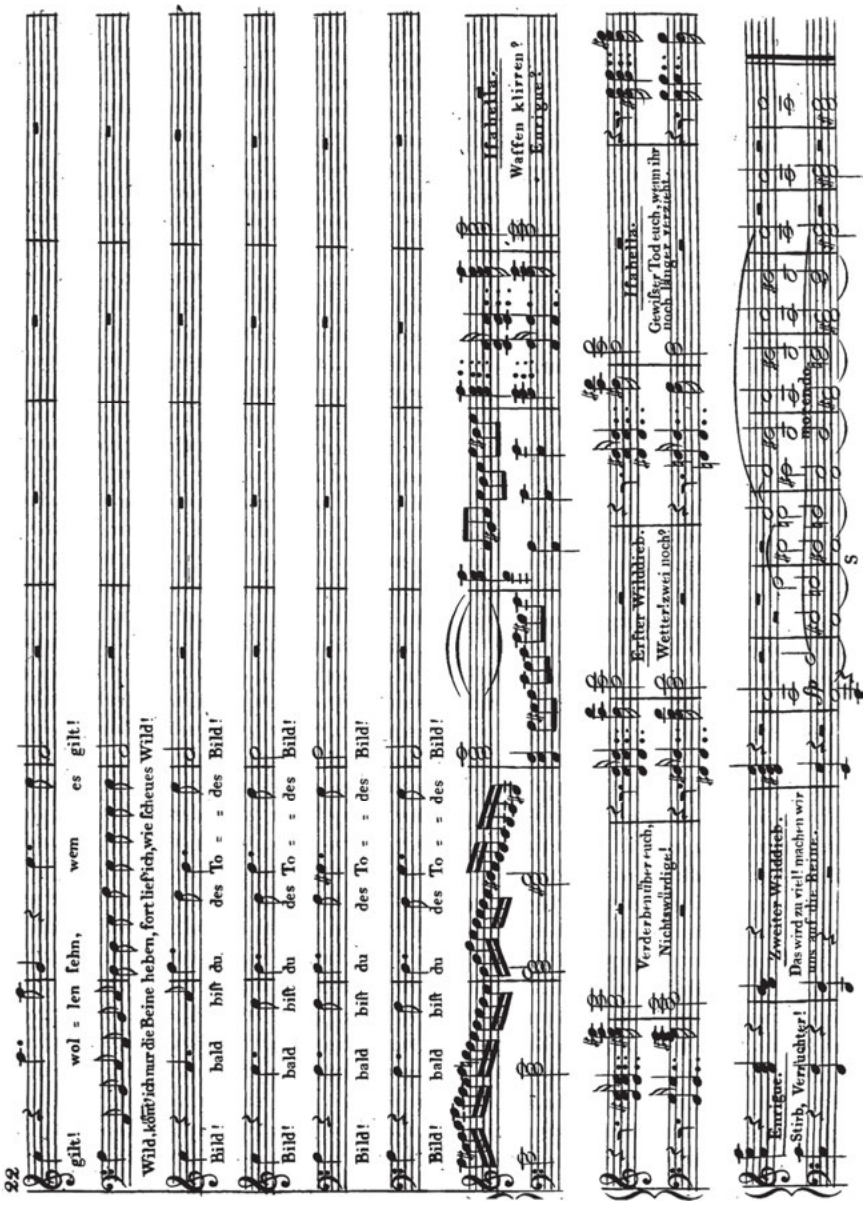

Image 3 c: Ibid., p. 22.

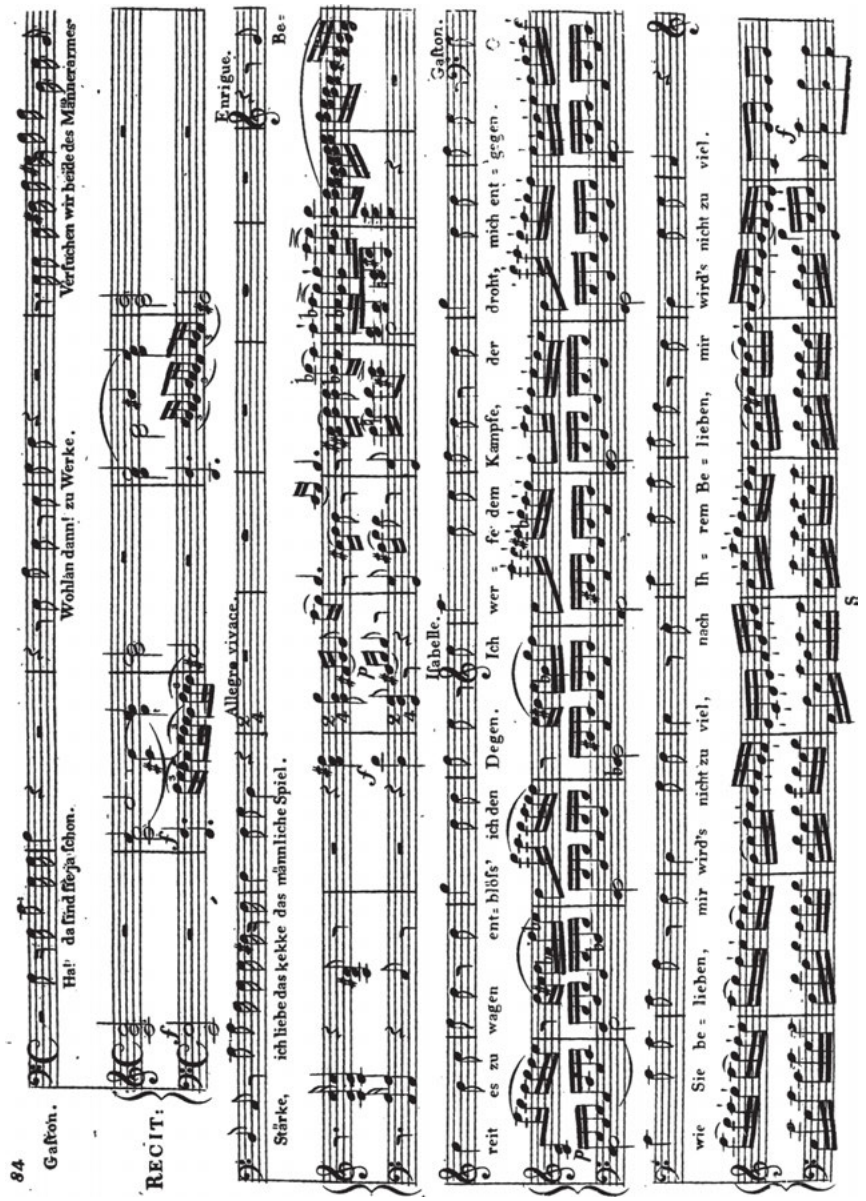

Image 4 a: Ibid., excerpt from "No. 9 Finale" [act 2], p. 84.

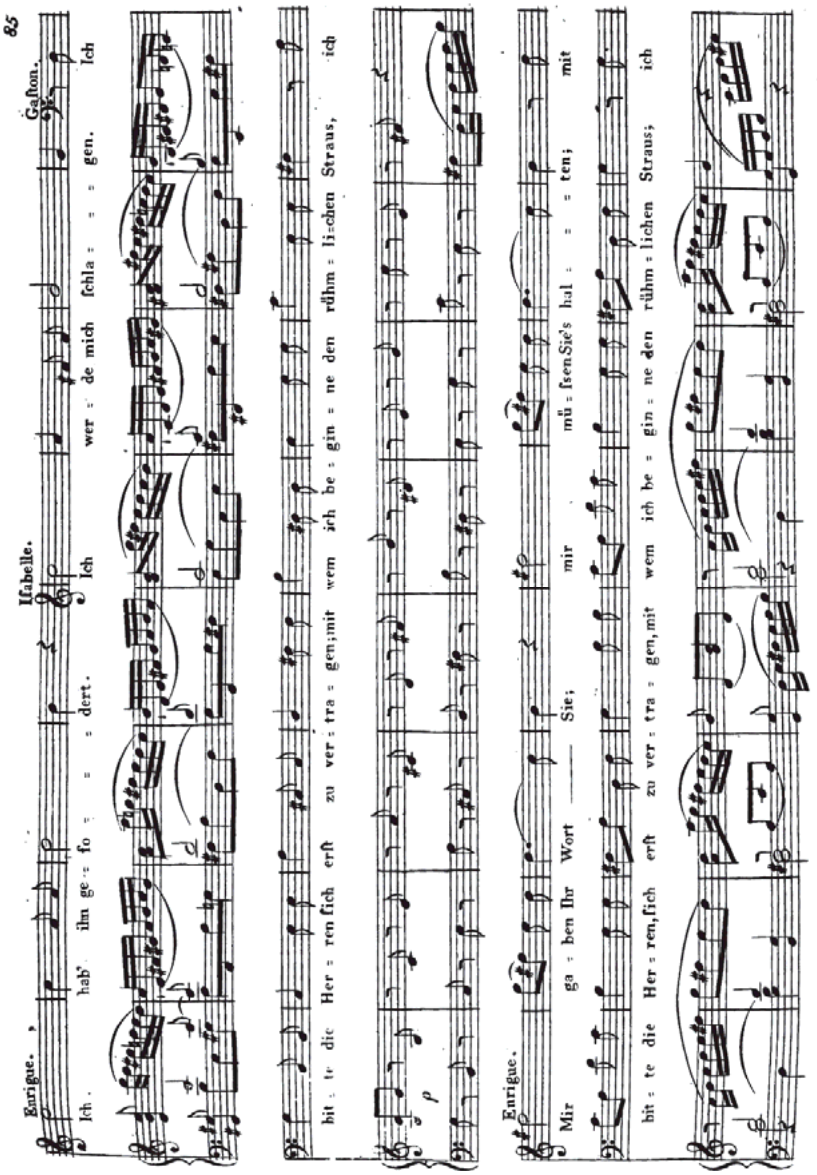

Image 4
b: Ibid., p. 85.

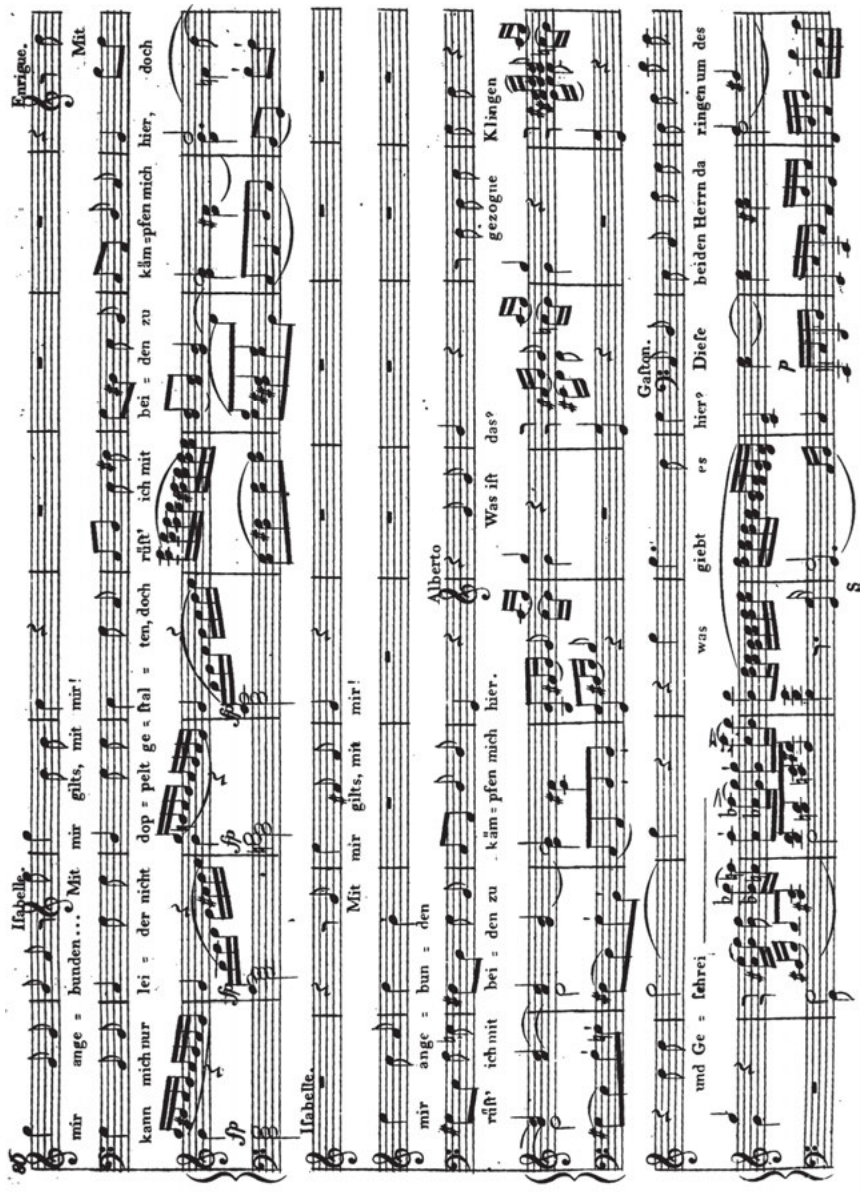

Image 4 c: Ibid., p. 86.

as a *crying hero* at the moment before the duel (Image 5). In addition, the audience knows that he will be embarking on a duel against a woman, so that – according to duelling rules – the duel cannot lead to a restoration of his honour. By admitting his guilt at the moment of the duel, Enrigue follows the sentimental emotional culture. Unlike Don Giovanni, for whom adherence to the heroic-virile concept of masculinity results in death, Enrigue can confess his guilt, transform his virile heroism into a sentimental heroism and thus win back his beloved Isabella.

That these ambivalent concepts of heroism in the figures of Isabella and Enrigue – on the one hand, the gender-crossing heroism in the female figure, on the other, the changing heroism in the male figure – caused turmoil on stage was extensively described by Spohr in his autobiography:

> Long before commencing my work, I had carefully inquired with Herr Schwencke about the vocal range and ability of the Hamburg singers and arranged the major parts of the opera accordingly. However, since I was lacking any experience in this respect, I had neglected to have the singers' personalities described to me, and it had thus come to pass that for Madame Becker, a small and frail figure, I had written the part of Donna Isabella who, dressed as a man, confronts her unfaithful lover at the court of Princess Mathilde and eventually challenges him to duel to the death. So long as she was not familiar with the rest of the opera apart from her own part, Madame Becker was very content and commenced rehearsing the latter with great eagerness. However, as soon as she had read the book, she declared that she could not take the part, as she would end up making a complete fool of herself.[26]

Madame Becker's refusal reveals that with the concept of a sensitive hero as the counterpart to a strong heroine, firstly, the constellations of characters were fundamentally affected, above all the concepts of the female characters, and secondly, the sensitive hero held particularly high potential for confusion. Similarly to the 'lovesick swain', the genre borders evidently blurred so much in this heroic disposition of the figures of Isabella and Enrigue that the prima donna had to fear for her reputation. And here, the place of performance is not completely insignificant. As Birgit Kiupel has worked out, there was a particularly extensive thematisation of love as war at the Hamburg Opera of the early eighteenth century.[27] Spohr's

[26] "Ich hatte mich, bevor ich meine Arbeit begann, bei Herrn Schwencke nach dem Stimmumfang und der Fähigkeit der Hamburger Sänger zwar sorgfältig erkundigt und die Hauptpartien der Oper danach eingerichtet. Da es mir aber noch an aller Erfahrung in diesen Dingen fehlte, so hatte ich versäumt, mir auch die Persönlichkeit der Sänger beschreiben zu lassen, und so war es geschehen, daß ich für Madame Becker, eine kleine, zarte Figur, die Partie der Donna Isabella geschrieben hatte, die in Männerkleidung ihren ungetreuen Geliebten am Hofe der Fürstin Mathilde aufsucht und ihn zuletzt in Ritterrüstung zum Zweikampf auf Leben und Tod herausfordert. Madame Becker war, solange als sie von der Oper nichts kannte als ihre Partie, höchst zufrieden und begann das Einüben derselben mit großem Eifer. Sobald sie aber das Buch gelesen hatte, erklärte sie, die Rolle nicht übernehmen zu können, weil sie sich damit total lächerlich machen würde." Spohr, Selbstbiographie (Fn. 21), p. 145.

[27] Birgit Kiupel, Zwischen Krieg, Liebe und Ehe. Studien zur Konstruktion von Geschlecht und Liebe in den Libretti der Hamburger Gänsemarktoper (1687–1738), Kenzingen 2010.

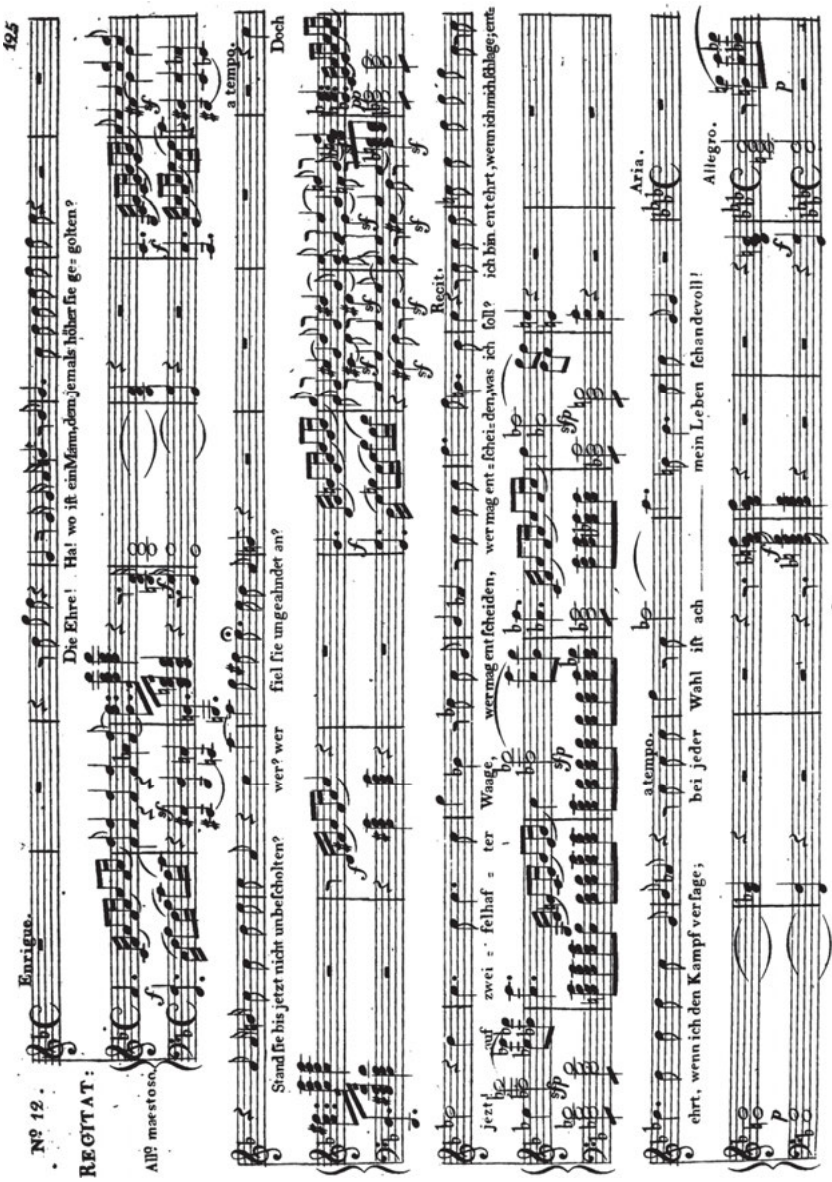

Image 5: Ibid., excerpt from "No. 12. Recit: ed Aria", p. 125..

Zweikampf mit der Geliebten, a composition commissioned by the Hamburg Opera some decades later, is still in this tradition. The character Enrigue is thus a particularly striking example of the configuration of a sensitive hero, and at the same time of its potential for confusion on the opera stage.

Image credits

Image 1: © National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Mr. B. Moore, 1899 (4203.13-3).

Image 2: © Art Institute Chicago. Gift of Thomas F. Furness in memory of William McCallin McKee, 1928.1225.

Image 3: Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke, *Introduzione Nr. 1*, vollständiger Clavierauszug aus *Der Zweikampf mit der Geliebten*, Oper in drey Aufzügen von Louis Spohr, Hamburg, 1813, pp. 20-22.

Image 4: Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke, *Finale of the 2nd act*, vollständiger Clavierauszug aus *Der Zweikampf mit der Geliebten*, Oper in drey Aufzügen von Louis Spohr, Hamburg, 1813, pp. 84-86.

Image 5: Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke, *Recitativ und Arie* Nr. 12, vollständiger Clavierauszug aus *Der Zweikampf mit der Geliebten*, Oper in drey Aufzügen von Louis Spohr, Hamburg, 1813, p. 126.

The Reigning Woman as a Heroic Monarch?

Maria Theresa Traced as Sovereign, Wife, and Mother

Anne-Marie Metzger

> The Empress is one of the most beautiful princesses in Europe: despite all her vigils and puerperia, she has held up very well. When she was younger, she loved hunting, games, and theatre. Today, her only pleasures are governing her empire and the education of her children.[1]

This quotation from Carl Joseph, Baron of Fürst and Kupferberg, contains essential aspects that can be found very often in representations of Maria Theresa: the dual nature of her representation, namely on one hand the monarch and on the other the mother. Maria Theresa consciously used – among others – these two elements to create her identity. It is interesting to see how contemporaries perceived these two contrary public personas and how these personas promoted the adoration of Maria Theresa as an "Austrian heroine",[2] as she was called in a eulogy for her husband, Francis Stephen.[3] The impact was at any rate so strong that

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1 All English translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. "Die Kaiserin ist eine der schönsten Prinzessinnen Europas: all ihren Nachtwachen und Wochenbetten zum Trotz hat sie sich sehr gut erhalten. Früher liebte sie Jagd, Spiel und Theater. Das einzige, woran sie jetzt Geschmack findet, ist die Regierung ihres Staates und die Erziehung ihrer Kinder." Carl Joseph Maximilian Freiherr von Fürst und Kupferberg. Severin Perrig (Ed.), "Aus mütterlicher Wohlmeinung". Kaiserin Maria Theresia und ihre Kinder. Eine Korrespondenz, Weimar 1999, p. 17.

2 "Österreichische Heldinn", Ignaz Mayrhoffer, Trauerrede auf Franzen den Ersten römischen Kaiser, Grätz 1765, p. 11.

3 Research on female sovereigns during the Early Modern period is a comparatively recent subject. Until the 1990s, female sovereigns had been presented as rare exceptions in a male system of government and as temporary solutions without agency of their own. Exemplary summaries and overviews of female rule are: Heide Wunder, Herrschaft und öffentliches Handeln von Frauen in der Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit, in: Ute Gerhard (Ed.), Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts. Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart, München 1997, pp. 27–54; Claudia Opitz, Hausmutter und Landesfürstin, in: Rosario Villari (Ed.), Der Mensch des Barock, Frankfurt am Main [et al.] 1997, pp. 344–370; Pauline Puppel, Die Regentin. Vormundschaftliche Herrschaft in Hessen 1500–1700 (Geschichte und Geschlechter; 43), Frankfurt am Main/New York 2004; Regina Schulte (Ed.), The Body of the Queen. Gender and Rule in the Courtly World, 1500–2000, New York/Oxford 2006.
For Maria Theresa's situation see especially Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Maria Theresia. Eine Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit. Eine Biographie, Munich 2017, pp. XIV–XXIV. Please note that this profound and comprehensive biography was not yet published in 2015, when the main work on the text at hand was done.
Elizabeth I seems to be the queen who was most often an object of research, also with regard to gender aspects. See e.g. Carole Levin, The Heart and Stomach of a King. Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power, Philadelphia 1994; Ursula Machoczek, Die regierende Königin – Elizabeth I. von England. Aspekte weiblicher Herrschaft im 16. Jahrhundert,

Joseph von Hormayr noted in his *Österreichischer Plutarch* about thirty years after Maria Theresa's death: "There has been no woman who was greater on the throne and more exemplary in her private life at the same time."[4]

This shows that Maria Theresa acted in many different roles, or, to be more precise, that she was marked in different ways and spheres: she was marked by status, descent, and gender, to name just a few areas of importance. Contrary to the fairly inflexible sociological concept of roles,[5] for example, the tracer concept as it is discussed in this volume highlights allusions, overlaps, and slight differences of several markers. The meanings that were associated with these differences were used with a certain intention. They are resources, which means that they achieved something for the one who used them, either for Maria Theresa or for other persons.

Along these lines, the exemplarily selected representative spheres of monarch, wife, and mother discussed here interpenetrate and overlap in the case of Maria Theresa. The different spheres are presented with various ascriptions, attributes, and properties. It is therefore important to take a close look at the respective situation in which a marker or resource was used.

Maria Theresa as Sovereign

Treatises on the state and moral writings from the Early Modern period usually exclude women from rule because of their sex. Nevertheless, there were in fact many female sovereigns at all levels in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period.[6] Like Maria Theresa, who ruled from 1740 to 1780, most women inherited the right to rule when there were no male descendants.[7]

Pfaffenweiler 1996; Louis Montrose, The Subject of Elizabeth. Authority, Gender, and Representation, Chicago/London 2006.
For biographic research concerning Maria Theresa, her governance, and her motherhood, see e.g.: Adam Wandruszka, Maria Theresia. Die große Kaiserin (Persönlichkeit und Geschichte; 110), Göttingen 1980; Heinz Rieder, Maria Theresia. Herrscherin und Mutter, Munich 1999; Klaus Günzel, Der König und die Kaiserin. Friedrich II. und Maria Theresia, Düsseldorf 2005; Werner Telesko, Maria Theresia. Ein europäischer Mythos, Vienna [et al.] 2012.

4 "Die Frau hat nicht gelebt, die zugleich größer auf dem Thron und musterhafter im Privatleben gewesen wäre." Joseph von Hormayr, Österreichischer Plutarch oder Leben und Bilder aller Regenten und der berühmtesten Feldherren, Staatsmänner, Gelehrten und Künstler des österreichischen Kaiserstaates, Vol. 11, Vienna 1807, p. 123.

5 For the role concept, see e.g. Ralph Linton, The Study of Man: An Introduction, New York [et. al.] 1936; Ralf Dahrendorf, Homo Sociologicus. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte, Bedeutung und Kritik der Kategorie der sozialen Rolle, in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie; 10 (Issue 2), 1958, pp.178–208 and 10 (Issue 3), 1958, pp. 345-378.

6 For instance, Elizabeth I, Christina, Queen of Sweden, Elizabeth of Russia, and Catherine the Great were all monarchs in their own rights. Moreover, many female rulers reigned custodially for their underaged sons, for example Margaret of Austria, Marie de' Medici, her daughter Christine of France, Amalie Elisabeth of Hanau-Münzenberg, and Elisabeth

That a daughter could assume the throne had been an established right in the Habsburg Empire for a fairly long time. In the case of Maria Theresa, this right was guaranteed explicitly by the Pragmatic Sanction.[8] Nevertheless, ruling a country was considered a primarily male domain. Charles VI, Maria Theresa's father, and the Austrian power elites also hoped for a male descendant to be born before Charles died.[9] Because this male descendant failed to appear, Charles VI tried more and more to establish Maria Theresa's husband, Francis Stephen, as the next regent and to present him as a great warrior – but Francis Stephen had failed during the war with the Ottoman Empire (1736–1739). Moreover, he was rather unpopular with the Austrian power elites because of his family's French ties. Maria Theresa herself was neither involved in the business of reigning alongside her father, nor was she presented on a large scale as the heiress to the imperial throne.[10] The extent to which Maria Theresa really was prepared to serve as regent cannot be determined with certainty.[11] The fact is that she was educated in history, religion, and the common languages, Italian, French, Spanish, and Latin, and enjoyed an excellent musical education as well.[12]

The demands on female sovereigns were high: in addition to exercising authority and representing the institution (which could be called the body politic, according to Ernst H. Kantorowicz),[13] they had to produce a successor (this

Dorothea of Hesse-Darmstadt. See Claudia Opitz, Hausmutter und Landesfürstin (Fn. 3), pp. 360–361; Pauline Puppel, Die Regentin (Fn. 3), pp. 190–235 and 279–302.

7 Puppel, Die Regentin (Fn. 3), pp. 15–17.

8 Ilsebill Barta, Familienporträts der Habsburger. Dynastische Repräsentation im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (Museen des Mobiliendepots; 11), Vienna 2001, p. 40.

9 Ibid., pp. 63–65.

10 Ibid., pp. 65–66.

11 Karl Ludwig von Pöllnitz, author, educated traveller and member of the Saxon court, visited Vienna in 1735 and noticed: "The oldest archduchess Maria Theresa is educated with the intention that she will be the sovereign of the imperial hereditary lands someday." (Die älteste Erzherzogin Maria Theresia wird in dem Absehen erzogen, daß sie mit der Zeit die Regierung über die grossen Kaiserlichen Erb-Lande erhalten werde […].) Carl Ludwig von Pöllnitz, Des Freiherrn von Pöllnitz Brieffe welche das merckwürdigste von seinen Reisen und die Eigenschaften derjenigen Personen woraus die vornehmsten Höfe von Europa bestehen, in sich enthalten. Aus der letzten vermehrten französischen Auflage ins deutsche übersetzt, Vol. 1, Frankfurt am Main 1738, p. 295. Maria Theresa herself stressed her lack of experience. She complained that her father "never involved me in foreign or inner affairs and did not inform me about them either" (niemals gefällig ware, mich zur Erledigung weder der auswärtigen noch inneren Geschäften beizuziehen noch zu informieren). Josef Kallbrunner (Ed.), Kaiserin Maria Theresias politisches Testament, Munich 1952, p. 26. Today, the opinion of Maria Theresa being educated as a common noble girl and not as a later monarch predominates. See e.g. Wandruszka, Die große Kaiserin (Fn. 3), pp. 18–21; Victor Lucien Tapié, Maria Theresia. Die Kaiserin und ihr Reich, trans. Uta Szyszkowitz / Eugen Wacker, Graz [et. al.] 1980 [Paris 1973], pp. 52–55; Perrig (Ed.), "Aus mütterlicher Wohlmeinung" (Fn. 1), pp. 1–5.

12 Wandruszka, Die große Kaiserin (Fn. 3), pp. 18–21.

13 Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theory, Princeton, N.J., 1981 [1957].

would be the body natural). Female regents had to deal with political power on the one hand, and the female body on the other hand. They had to balance these two poles and create certain images of themselves. Finally, these images had to be communicated to the public.

At the beginning of her reign, Maria Theresa had to deal with high expectations. With her political body, she had to secure the Empire's lands and boundaries and direct the government. With her natural body, she had to give birth to a male heir after having initially birthed three daughters. The natural body was therefore linked very closely to the political body.[14] Additionally, the usual requirements such as beauty, loveliness, and gracefulness were placed on the natural female body. These special aspects of the female body offered Maria Theresa the opportunity to increase the emotionalization within her self-representation.

In contrast to Maria Theresa's, Francis Stephen's education was aimed at the rule of his homeland Lorraine – and he already had some experience in governing. But the Habsburg legacy with its long tradition was sufficient for the legitimacy of Maria Theresa's reign. This reliance on ancestors is an important aspect of her representation (as well as of the representation of the Habsburgs in general). Apart from the divine right of kings, the continuity of the dynasty over several centuries was the most important factor to ensure Habsburg authority. Many copperplates and paintings present Maria Theresa together with her ancestors and their main virtues. These images were supposed to remind contemporaries of the magnificent past of the Empire and to show that Maria Theresa combined the ancestors' best qualities in her person.

Such measures were necessary because a woman on the throne was yet unknown to the Austrian Empire, even if reigning women were quite common in the Early Modern period.[15] There had never been a female sovereign in Austria before Maria Theresa, so she was confronted with widespread scepticism at the beginning of her reign. Furthermore, her government was neither custodial nor that of a widow. She was the only legitimate successor to the throne and was therefore crowned Queen of Hungary in 1741 and Queen of Bohemia in 1743. The coronations were celebrated with all the common traditions. For this reason, Maria Theresa had to learn to ride a horse for the ceremony in Hungary.[16] The crowning ride was documented with her in a chivalric and, therefore, traditionally heroic, pose (generally marked as masculine). The engraving in Image 1 shows Maria Theresa wearing the splendid coronation dress and the Holy Crown of Hungary, riding on a horse during the ceremonial sword stroke in all four directions of the compass on the coronation hill in Bratislava. A divine hand puts

14 Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), pp. 71–72.
15 Ibid., p. 14.
16 Carl Hinrichs (Ed.), Friedrich der Große und Maria Theresia. Diplomatische Berichte von Otto Christoph Graf von Podewils, trans. Gertrud Gräfin von Podewils-Dürnitz, Berlin 1937, p. 51.

Image 1: Franz Leopold Schmittner, *Maria Theresia, römisch-deutsche Kaiserin*, engraving, 1741, Paris, Hachette Livre.

a laurel wreath at the point of her sword, which also states her legitimacy. All these symbols of monarchic power or even of the heroic itself were chosen deliberately according to that specific situation to present the young queen as a sovereign with high heroic potential.

Her official Hungarian title, *Domina et Rex noster*,[17] can be regarded as a compromise which takes into account both her female sex and her male role. However, in documents, captions and the like, the female form *regina* is usually used. The Marian connotation of this title evokes an even stronger Christian association if one considers that in 1740, Maria Theresa gave birth to Joseph, the long awaited male successor, and that representative iconography pointed out her role as a mother in an unprecedented way.[18] As Elizabeth I of England before her, Maria Theresa was likened to Mary, the mother of Christ, but Elizabeth primarily embodied Mary's virginity, whereas Maria Theresa embodied the role of a mother.[19] This example shows that gender as a resource can be used in different ways. The way a symbol can be used and understood depends on the context and on the specific situation. In this example, Maria Theresa refers to Mary's motherhood, because a reference to her virginity would have been at odds with her fertility. Maria Theresa already had three children when she gave birth to Joseph. Moreover, the reference to motherhood and the family aspect stressed the connection to the long tradition of the Habsburg dynasty. The motherhood symbol allowed Maria Theresa, too, to present herself as a caring, motherly monarch for her subjects in contrast to the steadfast, hard-stance monarch that the anecdote from Thomas Robinson – which will be discussed later in this text – illustrated. This shows that a person can be marked differently within one role.

The fact that Maria Theresa exercised a male role was also reflected as the subject of operas. During her time, operas were a crucial part of the courtly medial representation and supported the legitimization of the political rule. Thus, the relationships presented on the stage did have significance for a broader context. Operas were entertainment, but also instruments of propaganda. Especially in the first years of her reign, Maria Theresa supported the idea that opera could serve as an apologetic substantiation of the monarchic principle by introducing strong sovereigns and leaders on stage, and that it could emphasize the importance of certain formal occasions. Thus, she followed the opinion and practices of her father. After a couple of years, she focused more and more on the entertainment factor of opera and opened the courtly theatre to the public. This does not mean, however, that the plot of an opera became less important for her representation.[20]

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17 Augusta von Oertzen, Maria Theresia. Bildnis einer deutschen Frau. Unter Verwendung zahlreicher Selbstzeugnisse in Briefen, Zeulenroda 1943, p. 34.

18 Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), p. 15.

19 Ibid., p. 72.

20 Elisabeth Fritz-Hilscher, Musik im Dienste einer Staatsidee. Aspekte höfischen Musiklebens zwischen 1735/1740 und 1745, in: id. (Ed.), Im Dienste einer Staatsidee. Künste und

One of the occasions that needed to be celebrated with an opera was Maria Theresa's coronation in Prague in 1743, where the festive opera *La Semiramide riconosciuta* was performed in the evening. Although the score of this opera is probably lost and we cannot make any statements about the music, it is interesting to see that the court chose that well-known subject for this very important occasion in the midst of the War of Succession: Semiramide, a woman disguised as a man, rules over the kingdom of Assyria. After some trouble and a love affair, Semiramide is unmasked. Because of her good manner and rule, she is finally accepted and praised as a reigning woman, and can live freely without her disguise. This subject fit perfectly to Maria Theresa's political situation at that time and confirmed her claim to the throne.

A few years later on 14 May 1748, the newly renovated Burgtheater was reopened with another musical performance of *Semiramide*, composed by Christoph Willibald Gluck as his first major dramatic work for Vienna. The fact that more performances took place on Maria Theresa's birthday, as well as on the day the Pragmatic Sanction was ratified as part of the peace treaty of Aachen,[21] shows that Gluck's opera clearly served as a musical representation and embellishment of festive and political courtly events.

Although Gluck's operas were not Maria Theresa's favourites, she attended *Semiramide* five times – more than any other opera written by Gluck. *Semiramide* specifically seemed to be *her* opera: Gluck and the librettist Pietro Metastasio provided it with a *licenza*, an aria of obeisance sung by Semiramide in the end. This *licenza* is directly addressed to Maria Theresa; she is mentioned as a "glorious lady, daughter of Charles and spouse of Francis".[22] Gluck never again wrote such a personal obeisance in his later operas.[23]

The subject of *Ascanio in Alba* by Mozart is also related to Maria Theresa and her political position. Here the goddess Venere is to be understood as an allegory of the female sovereign, who brings together her son Ascanio and the nymph Silvia as lovers and thus ensures a continued, benevolent reign in Alba when Ascanio becomes the new king of Alba. This opera was staged, for example, on the occasion of the wedding of Maria Theresa's son Ferdinand and Maria Beatrice

Künstler am Wiener Hof um 1740 (Wiener Musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge; 24), Vienna [et. al.] 2013, pp. 209–225, here pp. 212–218.

21 Josef-Horst Lederer, Von der Schwierigkeit, den "Göttern" und der Kunst zu dienen. Christoph Glucks Wiener Musikdramen, in: Pierre Béhar / Herbert Schneider (Ed.), Der Fürst und sein Volk. Herrscherlob und Herrscherkritik in den habsburgischen Ländern der frühen Neuzeit. Kolloquium an der Universität des Saarlandes (13.–15. Juni 2002) (Annales Universitatis Saraviensis; 23), St. Ingbert 2004, pp. 197–239, here p. 198.

22 "Donna gloriosa di Carlo figlia, e di Francesco sposa": Christoph Willibald Gluck, *La Semiramide riconosciuta*, in: id., Sämtliche Werke, Vol. III/12, Kassel [et al.] 1994, p. 354.

23 Lederer, Von der Schwierigkeit (Fn. 21), pp. 199–200.

d'Este in Milan in 1771.[24] In contrast to the majority of *opere serie*, in this case a woman controls destiny, not a man. Numerous choruses show the adoration of Venere / Maria Theresa, being particularly obvious in the final chorus in which Venere's reign of the whole world is praised: "The noble goddess rules the whole world; / how happy the earth will be."[25]

In reality, Maria Theresa was confronted very quickly with the difficulties of ruling and she experienced that this business was anything but easy. In the first few months, she seemed to feel quite frightened and worried about her situation, as she tells us in her first political memorandum from 1750/51, according to which she was "without money, without credibility, without an army, without experience and knowledge and, ultimately, without any advice"[26]. Moreover, Maria Theresa was confronted with an attack by the Prussian King, Frederick the Great, who marched into then-Austrian Silesia and occupied that area – thereby starting the War of the Austrian Succession. But Maria Theresa learned quickly and showed ambition and determination in her new position as queen. A short time after her coronation as Queen of Hungary during the War, she allegedly mentioned: "I am a poor queen, but I have the heart of a king."[27]

Despite her lack of experience, Maria Theresa turned out to be a strong-willed and brave queen. On no account would she accept the occupation of Silesia, and ordered the counterattack on Prussia against the advice of her Council, on which the British envoy Thomas Robinson commented: "The deathly pale ministers fell back in their chairs; only one heart remained steadfast: that of the Queen."[28] Regardless of the veracity of this anecdote, its deeper meaning is interesting. The storyteller emphasizes Maria Theresa's fearlessness and determination in a difficult situation, which can be read as a heroic virtue: the heroine is the only person who is not afraid. Moreover, the anecdote could have been used to make Maria Theresa look good in front of her subjects. In the hard time of a war, the subjects probably needed encouragement by a strong figure by which they could orient themselves.

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24 Christine Siegert, Oper als Fest: *Ascanio in Alba* (KV 111) und *Il sogno di Scipione* (KV 126), in: Dieter Borchmeyer / Gernot Gruber (Ed.), Mozarts Opern. Teilband 1, (Das Mozart-Handbuch, Vol. 3/1), Laaber 2007, pp. 202–212, here pp. 203–205.

25 "Alma Dea tutto il mondo governa; / Che felice la terra sarà", Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Ascanio in Alba*, in: id., Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, Vol. II/5/5, Kassel [et al.] 1956, pp. 263–264.

26 "ohne Geld, ohne Credit, ohne Armee, ohne eigene Experienz und Wissenschaft und endlich auch ohne allen Rat": Josef Kallbrunner (Ed.), Politisches Testament, Munich 1952, pp. 26 and 29.

27 "Ich bin eine arme Königin, aber ich habe das Herz eines Königs." Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), p. 76.

28 "Da fielen die Minister leichenblass in die Stühle zurück. Nur ein Herz blieb standhaft, das der Königin." Karl Vocelka, Glanz und Untergang der höfischen Welt. Repräsentation, Reform und Reaktion im habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat, Vienna 2001, p. 166.

Later, Maria Theresa refused Prussian peace proposals. She would make no concessions and wanted to defeat her enemy using military force. In doing so, she prevailed against her husband, who would have preferred a diplomatic solution to the conflict and tried to assert his position with anonymous letters to some ministers.[29] It is noteworthy that Francis Stephen – a man – used indirect and secret communication channels, which were usually used mainly by women. In contrast, Maria Theresa acted in a way that was considered to be typically male: she publicly voiced strong opinions and returned the Prussian aggression.

This 'inverted world' at the Viennese court did not pass unnoticed. Frederick the Great, for example, chose a special biblical quotation for a service of thanks after an important victory during the war: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."[30] But the young queen was anything but silent. Although she had to suffer painful defeats during the war, she ensured the cohesion of her empire and her sovereignty. For her people, Maria Theresa was the heroic defender of the realm who had successfully repelled the attack of a male aggressor.

Frederick commented on Maria Theresa's success with cynicism and amazement. For instance, he wrote: "For once the Habsburgs have a man, and he turns out to be a woman."[31] In his *Politische Testamente*, written in 1786, he stated: "This woman, whom one could regard as a great man, solidified the dynasty of her forefathers."[32] In doing so, Frederick, the great enemy, gave Maria Theresa credit for her accomplishments.[33] Therefore, he denied her the female sex and attributed the male gender to her, which had a positive connotation in this situation.

Otto Christoph von Podewils[34] also reported some of Maria Theresa's virtues and weaknesses and concluded: "She makes every attempt to deny the weaknesses of her sex and strives for virtues that do not at all correspond to her personality

29 Renate Zedinger, Franz Stephan von Lothringen (1708–1765). Monarch, Manager, Mäzen (Schriftenreihe der Österreichischen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts; 13), Vienna [et al.] 2008, pp. 203–206.

30 "Ein Weib lerne in der Stille mit aller Bescheidenheit. Einem Weibe aber gestatte ich nicht, daß sie lehre, auch nicht, daß sie des Mannes Herr sein, sondern ich will, daß sie stille sei." 1Tim 2, 11–12.

31 "Einmal haben die Habsburger einen Mann, und dieser ist eine Frau." Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), p. 15.

32 "Diese Frau, die man als einen großen Mann ansehen könnte, hat die schwankende Monarchie ihrer Väter gefestigt." Ibid., p. 15.

33 In many ways, Frederick the Great represented the complete opposite of Maria Theresa: he was a man, a protestant, had no children and no happy marriage, he did not descend from a centuries-old dynasty and was mostly portrayed as a general wearing his uniform or as an enlightened monarch in touch with his subjects. The representation of Maria Theresa is very likely to be seen as an opposite reaction to him. Ibid., pp. 51–52.

34 Otto Christoph Graf von Podewils (1719–1781) was a Prussian diplomat at the Viennese court. On behalf of Frederick the Great, he wrote literary characterizations of the court society and the members of the imperial family.

and that women rarely own. It seems as if she is angry to be born a woman."[35] As can be seen here, her entire behaviour is regarded and judged in the context of her sex and the prejudice associated with this sex. Even the *Oberstbofmeister* Johann Joseph von Khevenhüller-Metsch alluded to Maria Theresa's femininity whenever she showed a weakness like caprice that was considered to be typically female: "The Empress has, due to her sex, the inherent disposition to get upset by every insinuation and to overturn today's plans tomorrow."[36]

Maria Theresa was very conscious about her femininity and tried to use it to cultivate her image; for example, by finding suitable references and allegories from the arts to represent herself as a queen. Right at the beginning of her reign, the pamphlet *Die durch die Neu-aufgegangene Sonne Triumphierende Tugend und Liebe […]*, published on the occasion of Joseph's birth in 1741, glorified Maria Theresa as Pallas Athena, who was an important reference within antique mythology. Numerous illustrations followed. A copperplate made by Martin Tyroff shows the young queen disguised as Athena, wearing a helmet and a suit of armour. This clearly relates to another copperplate made by Jeremias Falck in 1649 that depicts Christina, Queen of Sweden; the picture detail and the posture are almost identical. Marie de' Medici also had herself portrayed as Minerva, the Roman equivalent of Athena, or with a figure of Minerva. Minerva allowed the association of many different qualities such as wisdom and the protection of the arts and sciences, but she was also a goddess of war.[37] By referring to Athena/Minerva, Maria Theresa not only linked herself to antique mythology, but also to former European queens.

It was not only allegorical illustrations but also typical state portraits that presented Maria Theresa with the usual insignia of power, such as a lifted curtain, pyramid, sceptre, sword or cornucopia. The portrait by Martin van Meytens in Image 2, for example, shows Maria Theresa with these symbols plus four crowns: the Hungarian and Bohemian crowns, the archducal hat, and the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire. Although Maria Theresa refused coronation as empress when her husband was crowned emperor, she is often portrayed with the imperial crown in her official portraits.

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35 "Sie gibt sich überhaupt Mühe, die Schwächen ihres Geschlechts zu verleugnen und strebt Tugenden an, die am wenigsten zu ihr passen und die Frauen selten besitzen. Es scheint, als sei sie ärgerlich, als Frau geboren zu sein." Carl Hinrichs (Ed.), Friedrich der Große und Maria Theresia (Fn. 16), p. 48.

36 "[D]ie Kaiserin [hat] das ihrem Geschlecht angebohrne Faible […], sich von jedem nur in etwas in sinuanten Délateur irr machen zu lassen und, was heut beschlossen ware, morgen wieder umzustossen." Ilsebill Barta, Maria Theresia – Kritik einer Rezeption, in: Beatrix Bechtel [et al.] (Ed.), Die ungeschriebene Geschichte. Historische Frauenforschung. Dokumentation des 5. Historikerinnentreffens in Wien, 16. bis 19. April 1984 (Frauenforschung; 3), Himberg 1984, pp. 337–357, here p. 341.

37 Matthias Schnettger, Die wehrhafte Minerva. Beobachtungen zur Selbstdarstellung von Regentinnen im 17. Jahrhundert, in: Martin Wrede (Ed.), Die Inszenierung der heroischen Monarchie. Frühneuzeitliches Königtum zwischen ritterlichem Erbe und militärischer Herausforderung (Historische Zeitschrift, Beihefte, N. F.; 62), Munich 2014, pp. 216–235.

Image 2: Martin van Meytens, *Maria Theresia (1717–1780) im rosafarbenen Spitzenkleid*, oil on canvas, c. 1750/55, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inventory number GG 8762.

When Francis Stephen died unexpectedly in 1765, his son Joseph, who had already been crowned Roman king by that time, became Roman emperor and was crowned promptly. But he did not, in fact, get an actual dominion with this title. In the hereditary lands, Maria Theresa – his mother – was still the queen and therefore the only sovereign due to the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 and the legal coronations. Moreover, Maria Theresa considered herself to be a ruler by the grace of God. For these reasons, it was impossible for her to delegate the responsibility of the rule to Joseph. She decided to appoint her son coregent and assigned for example the military affairs to him, but this was arranged in a way that made Maria Theresa's decision reversible at any time and that ensured that she would not lose a single part of her own power.[38]

In his speech on the occasion of Maria Theresa's 45th birthday, Joseph von Sonnenfels retrospectively admits: "We have to apologize for not expecting a woman to be so wise, so quick-witted, so fearless, brave, and steadfast, because to us, the burden seemed too heavy even for the shoulders of a man."[39] It is therefore not surprising that Maria Theresa was also mentioned in contemporary Enlightenment argumentation because she embodied the equality of the two sexes:

> Our glorious reigning monarch shows the whole living world, to the credit of the female sex, that the greatest art of all arts, the art of governing countries, is not too difficult for women. She is a woman and a mother of her country, in the same way as a sovereign can be a man and a father of his land.[40]

All these examples show that Maria Theresa's sex and gender were important for herself, for her self-representation, and for her perception by her contemporaries. Gender played a part in several heroization strategies: ascribing masculinity to the female body, emphasising female qualities such as motherhood, and portraying gender-neutral heroic symbols such as the laurel wreath. Moreover, Maria Theresa used specific markers that related to former reigning women. But she put them in a new context and used other meanings of these symbols to make them fit her various personal situations.

The ascriptions, attributes, and symbols presented through gender often relate directly to the heroic itself. Contemporaries ascribed heroic virtues and qualities to Maria Theresa. From the beginning of her reign, this may have helped to es-

38 Stollberg-Rilinger, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), pp. 532-533.

39 "Wir sind zu entschuldigen, wenn wir so viele Klugheit, so viele Gegenwart des Geistes, so viele Unerschrockenheit, Muth, Standhaftigkeit von einer Frau nicht erwarteten, weil eine so schwere Bürde auch männlichen Schultern unerträglich schien." Joseph von Sonnenfels, Rede auf Marien Theresien, Kaiserinn, Königinn von Hungarn und Böheim, Vienna 1762, n.p.

40 "Unsere Glorreich herrschende Monarchinn überführt zur Ehre des weiblichen Geschlechts die ganze itzt lebende Welt, daß die größte Kunst aller Künsten, die Kunst Länder zu beherrschen, nicht über die Seele eines Frauenzimmers sey. Sie ist eine Frau, und eine Mutter ihres Landes, wie ein Fürst ein Herr, und Vater seines Landes seyn kann." Anonymous, Der Adel. Eine Wochenzeitschrift, Prague 1775, 9. Stück, 27 December 1775, p. 144.

tablish her as the first woman ruling the Habsburg Empire and to stabilize her position when interacting with enemies.

Maria Theresa as Wife

In contrast to her powerful political image, Maria Theresa also was presented as a loving wife and caring mother. Thus, she was defined unambiguously as a woman – unlike Elizabeth I, who never got married and had no children and could therefore be both king and queen in her one body.[41]

It was obvious that Maria Theresa had married the man she loved. At the Viennese court she established a relatively intimate married and family life. This was also recognized by visitors. The Grand Chancellor of the Prussian King reported in 1752 that "very few private persons live in such profound concord as the Emperor and the Empress".[42] Francis Stephen's doctor of many years, Alexandre-Louis Laughier, wrote in a letter to Madame de Graffigny on 24 December 1756: "What is so charming is to see that honourable couple loving each other like good bourgeois people."[43] Maria Theresa insisted on the common double bed – which found its equivalent in the magnificent sarcophagus in the Imperial Crypt – and showed her love and affection again and again. She demanded absolute fidelity, which caused Podewils to utter the remark: "She wants to have a bourgeois marriage with the emperor."[44]

But regardless of how much she loved her husband, it was clear that she was the ruler and therefore contradicted her husband harshly, as Podewils tells us:

> A reliable source told me that one day, during a conference, the Empress was passionately defending an opinion with which her ministers disagreed. The Emperor offered his own opinion in response, but was sharply silenced by the Empress when she made it clear that he should not interfere in matters he knew nothing about.[45]

Of course, a wife was not usually supposed to contradict her husband so harshly, but in this case, Maria Theresa put her role as sovereign first. She made her own decisions and therefore also refused to be crowned Roman empress in 1745, even

41 Schulte (Ed.), The Body of the Queen (Fn. 3), esp. Louis Montrose, Elizabeth through the Looking Glass. Picturing the Queen's Two Bodies, ibid., pp. 61–87.

42 "wenig Privatleute in einer so innigen Eintracht leben wie der Kaiser und die Kaiserin", Zedinger, Franz Stephan von Lothringen (Fn. 29), p. 260.

43 "[…] ce qui est charmant, c'est de voir ce digne couple s'aimer comme des bons bourgeois", ibid., p. 261.

44 "Sie möchte eine bürgerliche Ehe mit dem Kaiser führen." Hinrichs (Ed.), Friedrich der Große und Maria Theresia (Fn. 16), p. 50.

45 "Es ist mir aus guter Quelle versichert worden, eines Tages während einer Konferenz habe die Kaiserin, die eine Meinung mit großer Wärme gegen die Ansicht ihrer Minister verteidigt hatte, dem Kaiser, als er seine Auffassung bekannt gab, in sehr scharfer Weise Schweigen geboten, indem sie ihm zu verstehen gab, daß er sich nicht in Angelegenheiten mischen solle, von denen er nichts verstände." Ibid., p. 49.

Image 3: Anonymous imitator of Joseph Ducreux, *Kaiserin Maria Theresia als Witwe*, after 1769, oil painting.

if that was one of Francis Stephen's biggest wishes, causing many disputes among the couple.[46]

After the sudden death of Francis Stephen in 1765, Maria Theresa fashioned herself as a grieving widow for the rest of her life, which gave her the appearance of an especially loyal wife even after the death of her husband. To a friend, she wrote: "I lost the most perfect, the most amiable man; for 43 years, my heart was devoted solely to him; he was my comfort in the difficult course of my life."[47]

46 Zedinger, Franz Stephan von Lothringen (Fn. 29), pp. 188–190.

47 "Den vollkommensten, den liebenswürdigsten Herrn habe ich verloren; seit dreiundvierzig Jahren war mein Herz ihm allein ganz zugethan; er war mein Trost in allem in meinem

To show her grief, she had herself portrayed as a widow after 1765, wearing black clothes and a widow's veil. This typical black clothing is to be found in solo portraits, in pictures with her children, and also in combination with her insignia of power. This created a standardized image and communicated a lot of emotion, because her personal misery was transmitted to the public.

Maria Theresa as Mother

With her 16 children, among them five sons, Maria Theresa kept up with the contemporary expectation that wives give birth to as many children as possible. Four sons and six daughters of Francis Stephen and Maria Theresa reached adulthood.

In some letters, Maria Theresa complained about crying children in her room who made it difficult for her to focus on the correspondence at hand. She liked to create the image of a normal family and presented herself as a loving and caring mother who was close to her children. Her daughter Marie Antoinette tells a friend about her mother's constant focus on her outward image: "As soon as one was informed about the arrival of an important foreigner in Vienna, the Empress surrounded herself with her family, and invited the foreigner to the dinner table; this shrewdly calculated proximity to her children created the impression that she managed her children's upbringing herself."[48]

In fact, Maria Theresa seemed to be very interested in her children's education. She influenced their teachers and gave strict instructions. Of course, it was part of any mother's duty to control her children's education and for a female sovereign, there was no exception. But Maria Theresa's extended correspondence with her children when they left the Viennese court shows an extraordinary interest in them. She did send strict instructions and demands but also showed a lot of affection. Isabella, Joseph's first wife, reports: "The empress loves her children, but she operates on the wrong assumption that extraordinary strictness is best. Thus, one is always supposed to look after her, advise her to be lenient, and protect the children."[49]

harten Lebenslaufe." Maria Theresa to Rosalie von Edling, 21 February 1766, Maria Theresia, Familienbriefe. Mit einem biographischen Anhang, Berlin/Vienna 1916, p. 107.

48 "Sobald man von der Ankunft eines Fremden von Bedeutung in Wien Kenntnis erhalten hatte, umgab sich die Kaiserin mit ihrer Familie, zog ihn zur Tafel, und erweckte durch diese wohlberechnete Annäherung den Glauben, als leite sie selbst die Erziehung ihrer Kinder." Martin Mutschlechner, Maria Theresia als Gattin und Mutter, http://www.habsburger.net/de/kapitel/maria-theresia-als-gattin-und-mutter, 13 January 2015.

49 "Was ihre Kinder betrifft, so liebt die Kaiserin sie, doch geht sie von einem falschen Grundsatz aus, der in allzugroßer Strenge besteht. Man muß sich ihrer daher jederzeit annehmen, zur Milde raten und die Kinder in Schutz nehmen." Letter from Isabella to Maria Christina. Barta, Maria Theresia (Fn. 36), p. 343.

Sovereign women had to deal with conflicting spheres of life at times. Maria Theresa had to weigh political interests and maternal affection when planning the marriages of her children, for example. In light of her daughter Maria Josepha's intended marriage to Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies, she wrote in a letter: "I cannot deny that I do see the advantages of this marriage, but my motherly heart is nevertheless extremely concerned. I consider poor Josepha to be a victim of politics."[50] In terms of marriage, the interests of the state were more important than the children's personal happiness; such political marriages were usual in noble families at that time. But the quoted letter also shows something else: in private, Maria Theresa distinguished between her different roles as sovereign and mother even more so than in public.

Her daughters and sons were treated equally when Maria Theresa made their wedding plans. For instance, she forced Joseph to marry again after the early death of his beloved first wife Isabella. With the greatest reluctance, he finally married Maria Josepha of Bavaria because he could not stand the pressure from his mother.[51] There was only one exception: Maria Christina, Maria Theresa's favourite daughter, was allowed to marry the man she really loved.[52]

When her children got married, Maria Theresa gave them strict instructions. She told them how to behave and what to do to ensure a happy marriage, and always demanded many grandchildren. In her instructions for Maria Christina, for example, she wrote: "You know that we women are subjects to our husbands, that we owe them obedience and that our only aim is to serve our spouse, to be useful to him, to make him a father and a friend."[53] That Maria Theresa herself had contradicted her husband many times, not only on political topics, was nothing she mentioned explicitly in these letters. Obviously, the complex field of dynastic prestige and family advancement, personal rule of the monarch, and female (mostly informal) influences in the courtly political sphere were apparently not part of the prescriptive canon of the time. One might wonder if she

50 "Ich kann Ihnen nicht verhehlen, daß ich die Vorteile dieser Verbindung wohl einsehe, aber mein Mutterherz ist durch sie doch aufs höchste beunruhigt. Ich betrachte die arme Josepha als ein Opfer der Politik." Unfortunately, Josepha died before the wedding, so her sister Maria Carolina had to marry Ferdinand. Letter from Maria Theresia to Maria Walburga Gräfin Lerchenfeld, 13 October 1763, Perrig (Ed.), "Aus mütterlicher Wohlmeinung" (Fn. 1), p. 52.

51 Henry Vallotton, Kaiserin Maria Theresia. Herrscherin und Mutter. Eine Biographie, trans. Ulla Leippe, Hamburg 1968. Maria Theresa herself wrote to her daughter Maria Christina in November 1764 that Joseph would get married again and that she had convinced Joseph of that marriage "against my convictions, against my feelings" ("[g]egen meine Überzeugung, gegen mein Gefühl"). Perrig (Ed.), "Aus mütterlicher Wohlmeinung" (Fn. 1), p. 62.

52 Ibid., p. 9 and Tapié, Die Kaiserin und ihr Reich (Fn. 11), pp. 222–224.

53 "Sie wissen, daß wir Frauen unsern Männern unterworfen, daß wir ihnen Gehorsam schuldig sind, daß unser einziges Streben sein soll, dem Gemahl zu dienen, ihm nützlich zu sein, ihn zum Vater und Freund zu Machen." Maria Theresia to Maria Christine, 1766, Perrig (Ed.), "Aus mütterlicher Wohlmeinung" (Fn. 1), p. 89.

viewed her performative public acts and other practices of rule as incompatible with the instructions to her daughters. But to Maria Theresa's mind, the dynastic position[54] was decisive for the role one was given in life and it was unthinkable to break out of it. Her public behaviour as a sovereign was therefore the consequence of the dynastic position she took because her father had no male heir. Since she herself had enough sons to ensure the succession to the throne, there was no reason why her daughters should be eligible for a ruler's position. Her daughters were meant to live the lives of common noble women in the eighteenth century.

For this reason, Maria Theresa wanted her daughters to keep their distance from the business of ruling. Of course, the daughters were important instruments for Maria Theresa to extend and ensure her influence in Europe by forming dynastic alliances.[55] The best example is Marie Antoinette who became Queen of France. But she did not want them to get personally involved in such affairs, even if they were intelligent and well educated. How clearly Maria Theresa drew lines of distinction between the different personas and spheres – notwithstanding that she herself transgressed them constantly – is visible in the example of Maria Amalia. Maria Amalia married Ferdinand of the Two Sicilies after the death of Maria Josepha. Despite several warnings, she interfered in political business and treaded less carefully than her mother wished. Eventually, Maria Theresa broke off all ties with her daughter and even forbade her other children from sending letters to her.[56]

But Maria Theresa was also capable of showing affection for her own children as well as for other people. In one instance, her differing views on war led to an argument with her son and coregent Joseph II. in 1772. He supported the idea of waging a war against Prussia and Russia in the context of the first Partition of Poland, while Maria Theresa opposed such a war. According to an anecdote, she told her son: "You think as a statesman, and I as a woman and mother."[57] Furthermore, she is said to have explained that she did not want to force mothers to send their sons to war. This once again marks Maria Theresa as a motherly monarch with female qualities – as someone who cares for the common people. After the wars against Prussia, the people likely longed for peace, so this anecdote presents Maria Theresa once more as a sovereign who tries to understand and fulfil the people's

54 The importance of the dynastic element in early modern politics is now often discussed among historians: Johannes Kunisch (Ed.), Der dynastische Fürstenstaat. Zur Bedeutung von Sukzessionsordnungen für die Entstehung des frühmodernen Staates (Historische Forschungen; 21), Berlin 1982; Wunder (Ed.), Dynastie und Herrschaftssicherung (Fn. 3); Anne-Simone Knöfel, Dynastie und Prestige. Die Heiratspolitik der Wettiner, Köln 2009.

55 Stollberg-Rilinger, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), p. 777.

56 Barta, Maria Theresia (Fn. 36), p. 343.

57 "Du denkst als Staatsmann, und ich als Frau und Mutter." Peter Reinhold, Maria Theresia, Wiesbaden 1957, p. 345.

needs. Her femininity (in terms of sex and gender) is used as a positive resource here, in contrast to Joseph's more aggressive – i.e. masculine – stance. Taking into account considerations of expedient political strategy, Maria Theresa's views might also have been shaped by her fear of losing that war, which could have led to the loss of power and influence in that region.

The iconographic representation of the imperial family was very important for Maria Theresa, which is why she established a new type of family portrait in her realm: while ancestors became less important, the children became more important as symbols for the future. Thus Werner Telesko states, "The *Domus Austria* concept of a dynastic family line shifted profoundly towards a new emphasis on the family nucleus, and the dynasty was thus iconically 'familiarized', so to speak."[58] Such portraits of the imperial nuclear family became a main characteristic of the representation of the Habsburg-Lorraine family in the second half of the eighteenth century. It seems as if Maria Theresa saw her own family, her own children, as the beginning of a new dynasty.

Several portraits of Maria Theresa with her immediate family exist. One of the most famous ones is a painting by Martin van Meytens (Image 4), which has Schönbrunn Palace as the backdrop and depicts Maria Theresa as both sovereign and mother. She sits on a red throne on the right side of the picture; her husband sits on a similar throne on the left side. Between them, their children are positioned in several groups, thereby visually connecting their parents. Francis Stephen points to his wife with his hand and the two oldest sons stand close to her. Maria Theresa herself points to her breast with her right hand. Both Francis Stephen and Maria Theresa are represented with their respective insignia of power such as crowns, *globus cruciger* and sceptre. A flowing curtain and massive pillars frame the scene and endow it with grandeur. Two little dogs playing in the foreground likely symbolize fidelity.

The number of children in this painting was adapted several times – when a child died or another was born. Therefore, this picture exists not only in this version with eleven children, but also in versions with nine and 13 children. The version with 13 children was widespread thanks to a copperplate engraving by Johann Christoph Winkler. At the bottom of that copperplate, there is a list of all the children with their names and dates of birth, which shows that this picture was meant to document and demonstrate the imperial family's fertility and ensured succession.

Fertility was considered the most important guarantee for the stability of a dynasty. For the Habsburg dynasty, it was even more important after the trouble with the War of the Austrian Succession. Only ensured succession guaranteed –

58 "Der genealogisch-dynastische Familienbegriff der *Domus Austria* wurde einer tiefen Wandlung zugunsten einer neuen Betonung der 'Kernfamilie' unterworfen und die Dynastie somit gleichsam bildlich *familiarisiert*." Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), p. 48.

Image 4: Martin van Meytens d. J., *Kaiserin Maria Theresia mit ihrer Familie auf der Schloßterrasse von Schönbrunn*, oil on canvas, 1754, Vienna, Schönbrunn Palace, inventory number GG.007458.

according to the common view at the time – peace, independence, and welfare.[59] In this context, it is easy to understand why Maria Theresa's enormous fertility was considered very positive by contemporaries.[60]

Some interesting unofficial pictures of the family were also drawn by Maria Christina, Maria Theresa's favourite daughter, including one showing a family on Saint Nicholas Day in 1762 (Image 5). She based her picture off of an example: a graphic print in the form of copperplate and etching by Jacobus Houbraken and

59 Barta, Familienporträts der Habsburger (Fn. 8), p. 62.
60 Ibid., p. 73.

Image 5: Unbekannter Künstler, *Erzherzogin Isabella von Parma, Nikolobescherung in der kaiserlichen Familie*, Gouache on paper, 1762, Vienna, Schönbrunn Palace, inventory number GG.007521.

Cornelis Troost from the year 1761, so, of course, the presented scenery does not show a realistic event. Maria Christina just replaced the original faces by some of her own family. The scenery is located in a room which looks, with its open fireplace and its longcase clock, more like a bourgeois living room than a typical room in a castle. Francis Stephen sits on a chair near the fireplace and Maria Theresa stands behind him, her hands on the back of his chair. Four children are located in the left half of the picture. Although the family life of Maria Theresa in fact never took place in such a bourgeois setting, it is nevertheless interesting to see that Maria Christina painted her mother without any insignia of power and her father wearing clogs, a housecoat, and a turban. A younger sister shows off her puppet while a younger brother nibbles gingerbread on the floor. Maria Christina's unpublished drawings create a very bourgeois and emotional image of a happy imperial family, and suggest a very close relationship among the family members.

The imperial family also made music together. Pieces of music were composed or arranged specifically for Maria Theresa and her children, so they could play instruments or sing together. In 1759, Maria Theresa organized a little concert on the occasion of Francis Stephen's saint's day. All the children (except Leopold, who was ill) participated:

> Archduke Ferdinand played the overture on the tympani, whereupon the youngest, Maximilian, recited an Italian felicitation written by Metastasio. The youngest archduchess, Antonia, sang a French *vaudeville*; the others Italian arias. Archduke Charles played a violin concerto with the oldest archduke on the violoncello; and at the end, the archduchesses Maria Anna and Maria Christina played piano concertos, while the former, who because of her ill chest has a weak but very pleasant voice, sang in accompaniment.[61]

Another example is the *Litaniae Lauretanae* in G major with *Sub tuum praesidium* in B flat major and *Salve regina* in F major, written by Maria Theresa's former singing master and favourite composer, Johann Adolf Hasse. This litany was written for the imperial family and performed on 5 August 1762 with the participation of Maria Theresa and all the children plus her daughter-in-law, Maria Isabella, in a private circle in the Augustinerkirche in Vienna. Maria Theresa herself and several daughters sang solo arias, while archduke Joseph played the organ, and the other children took part in the choir.[62] The original sheet music is located in the archive of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna today and notes which

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61 "Der Erzherzog Ferdinand machte die Ouverture mit der Paucken, sodann recitirte der kleinste Herr Maximilian [einen] von Abbate Metastasio componirten welschen Glückwunsch […]. Die kleinste Ertzherzogin Antonia sange ein französischen Vaudeville, die übrige alle aber italiänische Arien. Der Ertzherzog Carl spillete ein Concert auf der Violine und der älteste Herr auf dem Violoncello; und zum Schluß haben die Ertzherzoginnen Maria Anna und Maria [Christina] auf den Clavier Concerti geschlagen und die erstere, welche wegen ihrer üblen Brust eine zwar schwache, aber sehr angenehm- und raine Stimme hat, sich selbsten accompagniret." Friedrich Walter, Männer um Maria Theresia, Vienna 1951, pp. 208–209.

62 Wolfgang Hochstein, Verzeichnis der Litanei-Vertonungen von Johann Adolf Hasse, in: id. / Reinhard Wiesend (Ed.), Hasse-Studien, Vol. 5, Stuttgart 2002, pp. 58–77, here pp. 58–60.

family member sang which parts. "It is a piece of music for the mother and all of her children and, moreover, a testimony to the family's devotional exercises",[63] writes Otto Biba.

The children also had to accompany their parents to public events such as public masses, the annual Corpus Christi procession or the 600-year celebration of the Mariazell Basilica in 1757. Thus, Maria Theresa tried to win the hearts of her people and "styled herself as 'a figure the common subject could identify with'".[64]

This domestic happiness was extended to everyone. Maria Theresa was presented as a good mother not only to her children but also to her subjects, and it was conveyed that she felt responsible for them. Her maternal affection was transported into the political sphere and created the feeling that Maria Theresa cared well for her people and showed a political sense of responsibility.[65] She was perceived as a caring, loving, motherly sovereign, not as a cruel one. This humanity is the reason why, according to Sonnenfels, other sovereigns "stand far below our queen in the ranks of heroes".[66] Therefore, Sonnenfels considers Maria Theresa's private and emotional image, which is in line with the bourgeois family ideal, to be part of the heroic, although intimacy and affection were in fact contradictory to the heroic and to common imperial self-presentation at that time. It is a moot point whether the heroic sphere is in this case extended to the intimate presentation of the family or whether Sonnenfels understands the heroic as a vague concept that can be applied to anything connected with Maria Theresa, no matter whether it corresponds to the common idea of a heroic monarch or not.

Conclusion – The Heroic Queen

Maria Theresa and her contemporaries used their gender difference as a resource with a wide range of meanings. Some of those meanings originate in the semantic field of femininity and masculinity, others in the semantic field of the heroic itself. The way that gender was used as a resource depended on the respective political and personal situation. But Maria Theresa has never been marked solely by her gender, but also by her status, her age, and her qualities as queen.

Queen Maria Theresa was perceived as a reigning woman at all times. She never masqueraded as a man. She did not deny her natural body, but instead put

63 "Es ist ein Musikstück für die Mutter und alle ihre Kinder und darüber hinaus wohl auch ein Zeugnis familiärer Andachtspflege." Otto Biba, Die private Musikpflege in der kaiserlichen Familie, in: Roswitha Vera Karpf (Ed.), Musik am Hof Maria Theresias. In memoriam Vera Schwarz (Beiträge zur Aufführungspraxis; 6), Munich [et al.] 1984, pp. 83–92, here p. 89.

64 "stilisierte sich zur 'Identifikationsfigur für den einfachen Untertan'", Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 12), p. 76.

65 Wolfram Mauser, Konzepte aufgeklärter Lebensführung. Literarische Kultur im frühmodernen Deutschland, Würzburg 2000, p. 147.

66 "in der Reihe der Helden tief unter unserer Monarchinn stehen", von Sonnenfels, Rede auf Marien Theresien (Fn. 39), n.p.

its qualities into service of her political body. Nevertheless, Maria Theresa as a sovereign was attributed masculine qualities several times, to her advantage. Body natural and body politic permeated and replenished one another. Thus, several old and new strategies of heroization became possible, some with male connotations and others with female connotations. Contemporaries reflected on and discussed her sex and her gender as important aspects of the discourse surrounding her heroization (and after her death even for her mythologization). Male and female qualities are combined by permanent transgression in her one royal body, which is incorporated into the political concept of monarchy. Hence, she created a flexible game with social roles that expanded her authority.[67] Very consciously, she used her royal body to represent her political power interests so as to become a figure of emotional identification for her subjects. Additionally, her self-presentation was a reaction to contemporary rulers and historical models.[68]

Maria Theresa's self-fashioning alternates between different interpretative patterns and follows a wide frame of reference. The simple life with the happy family was not fitting for heroization at that time, especially for a royal family. Any official representation of Maria Theresa therefore had to stick to common strategies of heroization, using, for example, heroic aspects in connection to the military and the imitation of figures from antiquity, and show her in typical heroic poses. But it is not sufficient to reduce Maria Theresa to the image of a military monarch, nor to just the image of the motherly queen. The roles of sovereign and mother should be perceived as complementary to one another.

To answer the introductory question: indeed, the reigning woman acts as a heroic monarch and is perceived as such, though female rule was deemed marginal for a long time.[69] Employing gender as a tracer and tool to analyze manners of representation and structures of Early Modern monarchical power has made visible the complex interrelations and markers affecting the processes of heroization, thus helping us to better understand the inherently versatile, relational, and manifold character of heroic figures.

Franz Bourgeois phrased it aptly: "We asked for a successor who would resemble Charles VI, and see, we were given a princess who unifies all the male advantages with her feminine charms. – Let us add: we received a heroine."[70]

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67 Telesko, Maria Theresia (Fn. 3), p. 77.

68 Ibid., pp. 75–77.

69 Due to secularization and mediatisation and therefore an altered ruling system, female rule as a common form of rule was forgotten during the nineteenth century. Besides, historians neglected female rule by the end of the twentieth century. Wunder, Herrschaft und öffentliches Handeln (Fn. 3), pp. 27–29.

70 "Wir baten um einen, Karl dem Sechsten ähnlichen Erben, und sieh, wir erhielten eine Prinzessinn, die mit allen Vorzügen des Mannes die Reize Ihres Geschlechtes vereinigte. – Laßt uns hinzusetzen: wir bekamen eine Heldinn." Franz Bourgeois, Rede von den militarischen Tugenden Marien Theresiens, Prague 1781, p. 14.

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