Autonomy and Subjugation:
The Dynamics of Emancipation and Race
in the Writings of Precolonial German Women Authors

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Germanic Languages and Literatures in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2006

UMI Number: 3213236

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Germanic Languages and Literatures
in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

April 24, 2006 — Professor Tamara S. Evans
Chair of Examining Committee

April 24, 2006 — Professor Tamara S. Evans
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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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Adviser: Professor Tamara S. Evans

This dissertation is a study of certain contradictions in texts written by three authors of the nineteenth century, Ida von Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880), Fanny Lewald (1811-1889) and Ottilie Assing (1819-1884). The seeming discrepancy between the general enlightenment principles of their work and their position vis-à-vis the racial Other is at the center of my exploration. My position in this dissertation is that it is not possible to discuss their emancipatory ideas separate from their racializing metaphors. In fact, such metaphors are vital to their articulation of progress and emancipation. The discursive context of precolonial Germany can in part explain the relationship between these two seemingly contradictory strands.

I assert that previous theoretical perspectives fall short in assessing the contribution of emancipatory women authors of the nineteenth century, such as Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing, either because they do not engage with women authors at all or because they tend to view women authors as "feminist" or "masculinist." If even considered, then, women authors are either deemed resistant to a dominant, patriarchal discourse or as complicit in such discourse. In both cases, the discursive exercise of power is defined as "masculinist," and

neither case allows for an active assertion or textual articulation of female autonomy.

It is the assertion of this dissertation that in order to fully appreciate the contribution of nineteenth-century German women's writing, one needs a more comprehensive theory that combines aspects of both approaches. The fact that Hahn-Hahn, Lewald, and Assing strive to live up to enlightened ideals while at the same time participate in a racializing discourse, demands that such a perspective be utilized.

For a theoretical starting point, I rely on the discussions of "colonial fantasies" advanced by both Susanne Zantop and Meyda Yeğenoğlu. Such a foundation allows me to examine the works of these nineteenth-century women authors for the subjugation of a variety of "Others," such as the Oriental, the African-American, the Chinese American and the Native American. At the same time, however, the definition of precolonial needs to be expanded: the very existence of the works under consideration here demonstrates that the scope of what has previously been understood as "precolonial" has been too narrow.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many people, some of whom were a constant presence and others who just showed up, as if by magic, when I needed them. A few need to be mentioned specifically.

I thank Tamara Evans, my “Doktormutter,” for her continued faith in my ability to do this even when I could only see doubt. Our many discussions about this project never failed to (re)inspire me so that I could persevere. Her willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty has called forth in me a better professional and a better person.

Gita Rajan helped me out of a sticky theoretical tangle. She and Dagmar Herzog are both brilliant women, and I thank them for their many insightful comments.

Many thanks as well to Nadine Lavi for her encouragement and much needed proofreading skills.

My dissertation group (Lisa Downward, Sarah Standing, Al Gorman, Tammy McJannet) provided a place to discuss the unique difficulties involved in the dissertation process. Whether at the GC, in O’Reilly’s, or on the beach in O.C., the group made even growing pains fun!

My parents, Robert and Susan Ednie, provided me with unconditional support, especially during crucial times. They demonstrated their faith in me by often rearranging their overly busy lives to ask, “how can we help?” and then offering up a door-closing space, trusted babysitting and innumerable games of bowling.

To my son, Brian Guillen, whose arrival in my life coincided with the beginning of full-time graduate work, I dedicate this dissertation. Without him, I would not have experienced the joy to be found in balance, commitment, and perserverance.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Blurring the Boundaries: Emancipation and Subjugation in Precolonial German Women's Writing

This dissertation examines the ways in which women were writing about and redefining autonomy for the Self in interaction with the racial Other in the precolonial space of nineteenth-century Germany. I will show that a racializing gesture towards the Other in part secures for the chosen subject a position of emancipation and autonomy in selected texts by three women authors of that period, Ida von Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880), Fanny Lewald (1811-1889) and Ottilie Assing (1819-1884).

While each of these authors attempted to resist the restrictions that limited a woman's definition of her own role in society, the focus here is not exclusively one of gender, but rather encompasses a spectrum that certainly includes gender in addition to race, class and ethnicity. In varying ways, each author tries to reimagine boundaries of Self to provide her subject with a richer, freer life and increased self-determination. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to this more self-determined subjectivity as autonomy. In Hahn-Hahn's case, the focus is on

the White aristocratic female, while Lewald is active in both the women's movement and the cause of Jewish emancipation in Germany. Assing is perhaps the most complicated figure here in that her journalistic work comes to support the abolitionist movement in the United States, and she is less interested in the women's movement. Her inclusion in this trio of authors thereby necessitates an analysis that goes beyond exclusion based on sexual difference. What unites these authors in my view is the framework of Enlightenment ideals upon which each one relies to question the role of domination in her society and which, in turn, also facilitates a dominating relationship with a racial Other.

Recent work on the history of both feminism and liberalism has provided a useful paradigm in which to examine the interrelatedness of Self/Other in feminist works.[1] It also underscores the enmeshed nature of this relationship. However, my intention is to approach the problem from a somewhat different perspective; hence, I rely on the concept of the precolonial to provide a useful theoretical basis to examine the power relationships between Self and Other and the seeming discrepancy between the advocacy of the general principles of Enlightenment and the position vis-à-vis the racial Other in the texts under investigation here. This shift of focus allows the reader to think about women in a

[1] There are mechanisms behind the construction of selfhood or individuality that are not acknowledged but nonetheless vital to the process. As Joan Scott points out in her history of feminism in France, this process was "one of the useful, even necessary, contradictions in the concept of the abstract individual: articulated as the foundation of a system of universal inclusion [...], it could also be used as a standard of exclusion by defining as nonindividuals, or less than individuals, those who were different from the singular figure of the human. [...] The abstract individual, a singular type with specified characteristics, did not allow either for the existence of varieties of individuals or for the role of an other in securing any individual's existence. Yet the notion of individuality also carried with it a sense of distinction and differentiation" (7). Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996).

position of autonomy and authority rather than merely the gendered, and therefore excluded, Other in a masculinist, political discourse.

In the following, I also show that the narrow definition of the term precolonial needs to be expanded to include female authors. Since it was coined, the term has been invoked to explain the furthering of a masculinist enterprise in texts for the most part authored by men. When discussing women authors, critics tend to place them into one of two categories: either they are feminist and therefore resistant to the dominant discourse of subjugation or they are masculinist because they align themselves with the dominant discourse. I propose to reject a masculinist/feminist or alternatively a dominating/resistant reading of Hahn-Hahn's, Lewald's and Assing's precolonial texts. Instead I examine them from the universalist standpoint which each individual author creates and then contradicts.

In this introductory chaper, I will first sketch the "enlightened" position of each author. In order to accomplish this, I will briefly discuss facets of the reality of women's lives in the nineteenth century. This is necessary not only because it provides a background for the emancipatory agenda of both Hahn-Hahn and Lewald, but it also demonstrates how Assing's journalist career is a path to her own personal autonomy. Next, I will summarize critical literature surrounding the "Black in German Literature" which has developed as a discourse over the last 30 years and show how it shifted with the seminal publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Subsequently, I interact with the theory of "colonial fantasies" put forth by both Susanne Zantop and Meyda Yeğenoğlu in order to locate my inquiry

theoretically as they both question Said's treatment of gender. In turn, this will necessitate the discussion of how different critics place female authorship within the context of colonial fantasies. Finally, I provide chapter synopses of what is to come.

Enlightenment Ideals and Feminine Autonomy

As an independent and critical thinker, each of these three authors sees herself as an agent of change in a society that was just beginning to open a public venue to women and their writing. This increased access to authorship and, thus, power, authority, and influence, is vital to their notions of progress. Because they recognize such access had been limited mainly to adult White males, they chart progress, in part, according to increased human rights for other groups. Despite commonalities in their general investment in progressive values, the individual manifestations of such values are disparate. All three position themselves and their texts according to individual moral and ideological markers within the discourse of their time. As mentioned above, Hahn-Hahn is a woman of aristocratic birth for whom emancipation means an opportunity for personal development; Lewald is a passionate advocate of rights for working class women and also for the Jews in Germany; Assing, half-Jewish, emigrates in her early thirties to the U.S. and becomes a strident abolitionist.

While adhering to a notion of fixed universal ideals, Lewald, Assing and Hahn-Hahn nevertheless define progress dynamically against the backdrop of their social and political realities, thus bringing to the fore their notions of an

autonomous female Self. As Richard Evans has pointed out, Germany "was quite unlike other countries which boasted a strong feminist movement."[2] He attributes this atmosphere of greater hostility towards feminism to the overall failure of liberalism in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany and mentions several ways in which opportunities for women in Germany lagged behind those for their counterparts in other Western European nations, such as laws governing marriage and marital property, the right to vote, and admission to institutions of higher learning.[3] In this way, his history of feminism in Germany is useful in showing the resistance to and limitation of women's legal autonomy. In addition, he indicates the importance of the *Vereinsgesetz*, passed in Prussia in 1851, which deprived women of the right to join political parties or attend meetings at which political issues were discussed in public. However, Evans pays no attention to texts written by women before 1865.[4]

Although the backlash against progressive movements after the failed revolution of 1848-49 is important in terms of this study, one must note that both Hahn-Hahn and Lewald started publishing in the *Vormärz* era. In addition, as Renate Möhrmann shows, there was an abundance of women writing about

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[2] Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London: Sage, 1976) 8. In the following, I will give the full citation for all primary and secondary sources after which I will indicate page numbers in the text directly following the quote.

[3] See Evans 10-24.

[4] A serious problem with Evans' study is that he does not discuss women or their texts in great enough detail or depth. In addition, he sets the beginning date of the feminist movement as 1865 because this is the year in which the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* was founded (by Louise Otto-Peters) and organized women for women's issues, such as increased educational and employment opportunities. Ultimately, however, his primary goal in this work is to show how feminism, a middle-class phenomenon, was a manifestation of the liberal movement in Germany, and its failure is tied to the general failure of liberalism.

women's issues prior to 1865, and these are primarily women of the middle and upper classes.[5] In regard to "Frauenemanzipation im Vormärz," Möhrmann writes, "[d]as entscheidend Neue ist, daß sich in dieser Epoche erstmals eine größere Anzahl Frauen ihrer untergeordneten Stellung in der Gesellschaft bewußt wird und publizistisch darauf aufmerksam macht" (9). Women start writing and publishing in large numbers. Basing their requests for more power and authority on the revolutionary ideals that are now coursing through the Western world, they demand education and more autonomy. They are casting in doubt the idea that "die Vermittlung und Vertiefung von Kultur auch weiterhin nicht als etwas der gesamten Menschheit Aufgegebenes verstanden wird, sondern lediglich als Verbindlichkeit für den Mann gilt" (9). Möhrmann notes, as others did, "daß die Frauen eine Macht in der Literatur geworden sind" (11).[6]

For the first time, women are writing on a large scale about the problems that are female specific. For example, the lack of education and professional training for women of the middle and lower income classes leaves them unable to support themselves, and, if there is no family to provide for them, they end up in poverty. As Möhrmann points out, "[e]s ist […] Verdienst [dieser Frauengeneration des Vormärz], daß sie solche schreienden Mißstände erstmals

[5] Renate Möhrmann, *Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Vormärz* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978).

[6] Here it is perhaps necessary to draw the distinction between different meanings of the term "feminist." Although historians seem to use the term in a stricter sense to mean women who actively sought to change things politically, e.g. campaign for suffrage, Möhrmann is refering to women writers who made the disadvantages attached to sexual difference a topic in their writings. For my purposes, I assert that Assing also qualifies as a feminist. While she did not actively publish in this vein, she certainly lived life according to feminist ideals and viewed equal rights for women as the eventual byproduct of a civilized society. In addition, her writings enabled her to achieve independence, and claim a voice for change in the world. Hence, I assert that she still qualifies as a "force" in the way that Möhrmann describes.

vor ein größeres Öffentlichkeitsforum brachte. In Vorträgen, Zeitungsaufsätzen und Romanen polemisierten sie gegen den weiblichen Rollenzwang, der jeglichem Humanitätsverständnis hohn sprach" (10). Thus, general Enlightenment principles are being used to support increased rights for women.

As Ute Frevert has discussed the idea of female autonomy within the discourse of Enlightenment,

> [t]he fact that women were excluded from this universal vision of progress and freedom struck very few people at the time as a contradiction in bourgeois thought. The Enlightenment ideal of autonomous, self-determining beings who would freely develop their talents and interests applied, of course, only to men (12).[7]

The contradiction inherent in women's exclusion from legal protections and privileges based on sexual difference, such as the right to vote, was indeed brought out by some. As Joan Scott underscores in her history of feminism in France, feminists

> exposed the contradictions and omissions in the definitions of gender that were offered in the name of nature and imposed through law. Feminist claims revealed the limits of the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity and raised doubts about their universal applicability (xi). [8]

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[7] Ute Frevert, *Women in German History. From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation* (trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans with Terry Bond and Barbara Norden. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

[8] Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*. As stated above, Scott's work is also an attempt to expose the fundamental paradox at the center of feminist political writings and actions in France from 1789-1944. Looking at specific campaigns for women's political rights, Scott asserts that these feminists attempt to protest their exclusion from democratic politics by arguing that sexual difference should have no bearing on the issue. However, in order to protest this exclusion, "they had to act on behalf of women and so invoked the very difference they sought to deny" (x). Scott also argues that the paradox was necessitated by the "ambiguous" meanings of the word "individual," used to define an abstract citizen entitled to equal rights under the law but also to refer to a "unique self" who specifies his uniqueness by a "differentiation from an other" (5). While this latter point could be useful to my inquiry because I, too, am looking at the Self/Other dynamic and the ways in which this "differentiation" actually helps to define the parameters of Self, Scott stops short of applying it in a racialized context. She focuses exclusively on the "infinite variety of the self/other difference [...] reduced to a matter of

Hahn-Hahn, Lewald, and Assing advocate for change in their contemporary social and political realities because in their view the reality falls short of these Enlightenment ideals and they are cognizant of exclusionary tendencies. It is therefore necessary to introduce these authors within that context, and the arguments they make in protest. Because they each challenge the notion of autonomy as exclusively male, these women authors are an example of opposition to such definitions of gender. In addition, they each experience personal suffering as a result of belonging to a group that was denied equal protection under the law: all are women and both Lewald and Assing are of Jewish heritage.

Enlightenment and Autonomy in a Pre/Colonial Context

The ways in which the authors represent the racial Other seem to run contrary to the main thrust of their works. Hahn-Hahn has an aristocratic and exclusionary definition of emancipation, Lewald is periodically dismissive of non-whites, and Assing, while championing the cause of abolition, is unduly scornful of the Native Americans and Chinese-Americans in the United States, her

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sexual difference" (8) and investigates the ways that "maleness was equated with individuality, and femaleness with otherness in a fixed, hierarchical, and immobile opposition (masculinity was not seen as femininity's other). The political individual was then taken to be both universal and male" (8). Her investigation points to how feminists "not only pointed to [this] inconsistency; they attempted to correct it by demonstrating that they, too, were individuals according to the standards of individuality of their day" (11). While she points out that "individuality was not only a masculine prerogative; it was also racially defined," she also asserts that "the superiority of the white Western men to their 'savage' counterparts lay in an individuality achieved and expressed through the social and affective divisions of labor formalized by the institution of monogamous marriage" (11). Because she limits her inquiry to feminist texts with a very specific feminist agena, and because the racializing gesture is considered secondary, there is no room for the configuration I am proposing with these women, these texts, and their agendas.

adopted country. While it is not new to argue that emancipatory texts often contain racist metaphors, I argue that it is this move to exclude the Other that provides the momentum behind their drive for autonomy, and it is where these seemingly contradictory ideas intersect.[9] These women authors affirm a vision of autonomy derived, in part, from their assumptions about the experiences of the Other. My inquiry will show that their positions are problematic because they base their concepts of autonomy and defend them from an "enlightened" position that is inherently unstable. This instability is a result of their exclusionary definitions of the Other.

These authors are vulnerable to this "contradiction" both because of their belief systems based on individual conceptions and "enlightened" ideas about progress and because of something that Susanne Zantop has called "precolonial" discourse about race in Germany.[10] The mid-nineteenth century is part of a time period she designates as precolonial and attempts to explain the

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[9] Dagmar Herzog and David Kazanjian have done similar investigations in different contexts whereby the racialization of an Other is a part of another type of agenda in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. See Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion. Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996) and David Kazanjian, "Race, Nation, Equality. *Olaudah Equiano's* Interesting Narrative *and a Genealogy of U.S. Mercantilism*," in *Post Nationalist American Studies*. Ed. Juan Carlos Rowe (Berkeley: U of California P, 2000: 129-163). There are many more studies about racializing discourse from within nations actively participating in colonial domination.

[10] Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies. Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997) 1. It must be made clear that Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing were not writing in the actual discursive space of colonialism, in contrast to authors such as Frieda von Bülow (1857-1908), for example, who lived in and later wrote about life in the German colonies in Africa. In fact, each of the authors in this dissertation had a distinct and clear emancipatory agenda. Nonetheless, the dynamic of Self and Other in a mid-nineteenth-century context makes the discussion of a precolonial time period relevant. As others have shown in the context of travel writing, for example, there is a history to this relationship, i.e. colonial domination, before the fact. Thus, while none of these authors was outrightly supporting a system of colonial domination, their texts were unwittingly complicit in the racialized discourse which supported such domination.

deployment of a racial hierarchy for a hidden, alternative, and subjective agenda. These authors inadvertently contribute to a discourse of racialization during a critical time period. In order to investigate the matter fully, it is necessary to focus on both the discourses of emancipation and Enlightenment as well as of racialization within the works of each author. Having briefly discussed the former, I now turn to the latter discussion.

The Racial Other in German Literature

My analysis of the ways in which these authors employed race in their texts allies it with a large body of literary criticism that has grown in the last 30 years, namely the discussion surrounding the "Black in German literature." An examination of the ways in which race is discussed in German literature is useful in order to understand how these three female authors address the subject and formulate their own ideas. It was not Germany's scramble for colonies in Africa that provided writers with the first opportunity to consider race or the image of the Black, as the image of the Black had already become a "fixture" in German art during the eighteenth century.[11]

The critical literature which discusses what it "means" to have the image of the racial Other appear in a literary text has undergone a major shift since its inception. When it was first "discovered" that there were actually Black figures in German literature, literary critics contributed to this discussion by examining the racist ways in which the Black had been portrayed. For example, Beverly Harris-

[11] See Sander Gilman, "The Figure of the Black in German Aesthetic Theory" (*Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8 [1975]: 373-391).

Schenz defined four categories of the "Black" in eighteenth-century German literature: the noble savage, the exotic savage, the slave and the devil.[12]

In his early work, Sander Gilman maps racism onto the aesthetic perception of "Black," both as color and as person, and his main focus is how the Black was perceived in eighteenth-century arts and letters.[13] Gilman traces the image back to works by Lessing, Kant and Herder whom he implicates in "racist" thinking. In such research, the emphasis is placed on how the Black was perceived and portrayed.[14] With the publication of the essay collection *Blacks and German Culture* in 1986, the scope of the discussion expanded to include the ways in which racist depiction and political advantage intersected.[15] Examples included in this collection are Marian Musgrave's "Literary Justifications of Slavery" and Amadou Booker Sadji's "African Nature and German Culture: Colonial Women Writers on Africa." However, more recently the discussion has moved away from the question of accurate portrayals of the Black. Whether or not a description is racist is no longer the central issue but rather the very process by which the Other is constructed and for what purpose.

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[12] Beverly Harris-Schenz, *Black Images in 18th Century German Literature* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1981).

[13] Gilman has, of course, continued to produce much more on this topic. He is perhaps the best-known of those working in this area; his texts are oft-cited but not uncontested. See Andreas Mielke, "Hottentots in the Aesthetic Discussion of Eighteenth-Century Germany" (*Monatshefte* 80. 2 [1988]: 135-148).

[14] Uwe Moeller has an informative overview of German narrative and the image of "Blackness" in the introduction to his dissertation, "A Place in the Sun: The Image of the Black in German Realism and the Colonial Novel" (Diss. U of Texas at Austin, 1997).

[15] Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand, eds. *Blacks and German Culture* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1986).

The interpretation of literature of this time period in general, and as concerns these three women authors in particular, was influenced by Edward Said's book, *Orientalism*.[16] Though also extensively criticized, it undertakes to examine the portrayal of the "Other" from a more comprehensive viewpoint. In Said's view, the Orient is a European invention, created from a European perspective. The Orient became the "Other" to the West, an Other that was examined and known, and against which the Western self was defined. Said scrutinizes the connection between power and knowledge and, in so doing, calls into question the idea of knowledge itself as something empirical or scientific:

> [T]he imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections (8).

This theoretical position is relevant to an examination of the three authors under study here because each claims knowledge about an Other, either Oriental or Black, supposedly based on assumptions of scientific legitimacy.

However, as Zantop states, "[Said's] investigation focused on the representation of the Oriental other and on the collusion between knowledge and power, not on the formation of the colonizing subject" (4). Thus, Said's focus is not on the process by which the colonizing subject is formed through interaction with the Other it intends to dominate. However, as critics have pointed out, the Western Self only maintains its cohesion through the continued existence of an

[16] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

Oriental Other, and thus Said's analysis of the Other only describes half the dynamic.

Pre/Colonial Fantasies

In *Colonial Fantasies*, Meyda Yeğenoğlu also seeks to explore "the discursive dynamics that secure a sovereign subject status for the West. [The book] is about the cultural representation of the West to itself by way of a detour through the other." [17] Precisely this process is mirrored in the texts of the three authors I will focus on: the Other is present, in part, to help "secure" autonomy for the Self, to itself. Thus, while Yeğenoğlu is not focused on a specifically German context, her theoretical discussion of subject construction is indeed useful because she consistently emphasizes the dynamism of the interaction between Self and Other which occurs in the realm of fantasy and desire. However, Yeğenoğlu, as well as Zantop, discuss the role of fantasy and desire not in order to "reduc[e] them to individual psychological motivations" but rather to highlight a "set of discursive effects that constitute the subject" (2). [18]

[17] Yeğenoğlu's book came out in 1998 with the same title as Zantop's book. Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies. Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge UP, 1998) 10.

[18] Zantop's approach is similar: "I use the terms 'desire' and 'unconscious' metaphorically, not in their strictly psychoanalytic context, since I am less concerned with the fantasies and the unconscious of individuals than with a collective mentality, whose object 'escapes historical individuals, because it reveals the impersonal content of their thought.' However, fantasy does provide a link between individual and collectivity, the individual subconscious and the political subconscious of a society" (4).

In addition, according to Yeğenoğlu the Western subject does not exist *a priori* but rather constitutes itself continuously though interaction with its own cultural values. She describes the process as

> a position or positioning, to a place, or placing, that is, to a specific inhabiting of a place. It refers to a process of generation, to a process of coming into being, of invention and of fashioning of a place called "Western." [...] [T]he process of "becoming" a Western subject refers to its members becoming ontologized. One is not a Western subject because there exists a pre-given structure called the Western culture which imposes itself upon its members. [...] One "becomes" and is made Western by being subjected to a process called Westernizing and by imagining oneself in the fantasy frame of belonging to a specific culture called the 'West.' This imaginary, however, is not a private or an individual undertaking. It is a process that exists externally and objectively (3-4).

Thus, one can understand the process by which Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing seek to redefine cultural boundaries and limitations, as a similar kind of "positioning" which requires a "fantasy" frame. One part of the framework is their Enlightenment value system.

There is another aspect to this framework which informs their "detour through the other." In her description of precolonial Germany, Zantop asserts that the "colonialist imaginary" is not located solely within the time period when Germany was actually a colonizing power (1884-1914).[19] Zantop exposes the dynamic by which desire for colonial power for at least a century prior to its actual realization leads to a fantasy of domination of the Other and how that is specifically generative for the Self. According to Zantop, the fantasy about such a relationship was circulating in the national consciousness even well before the

[19] Previously considered by many, including Said, to be too short to merit study, there has recently been a surge of interest in Germany's colonial history. See Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*. 4th ed. (Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich: Schöningh, 2000).

time period in which Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing were writing, and she attempts to track the political and discursive consequences of such longing.

As a result, Zantop is more "concerned with the emergence of 'latent colonialism,' as an unspecific drive for colonial possession, than with 'manifest colonialism' targeted at a specific object" (2). Her identification of the precolonial era in Germany makes explicit the discursive desire to create a racialized identity for political purposes:

> German fantasies of colonial mastery continuously rewrote the colonial history made by others: they created an imaginary German colonial history on paper and in the minds of their readers; they were recycled, over and over again, until they acquired the status of factual 'reality.' Proliferating in the late 1700s and early 1800s they had become so firmly entrenched in Germany's collective imagination that they formed a cultural residue of myths about self and other(s) that could be stirred up for particular political purposes – progressive as well as reactionary ones – whenever the need arose (3).[20]

The fact that Germany had not yet achieved what France and Great Britain had, created a feeling of national insecurity that led to "a crisis in the self-perception of a demoralized, politically impotent bourgeoisie in search of affirmative models of collective identity" (43). Thus, when she examines texts from the mid-nineteenth century, she looks for elements of this "pervasive desire for colonial possessions" (7). Equally important to my inquiry, she does not exclude progressive political purposes from the discussion; on the contrary, as the above quote shows, they

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[20] Zantop responds to Said's assertion that "the lack of colonies made German colonialist discourse more abstract, scholarly, and by implication, less powerful" (7). She proposes "that it was precisely the lack of actual colonialism that created a pervasive desire for colonial possessions in the minds of many Germans. Since a colonial discourse could develop without being challenged by colonized subjects or without being tested in a real colonial setting, it established itself not so much as 'intellectual authority' (Said) over distant terrains, than as mythological authority over the collective imagination" (7).

are also potentially affected by "cultural residue of myths of self and other(s)." Thus, in theory, the works under consideration here can be viewed from this perspective.

Just as importantly, more recent work in both feminist and post-colonial studies attempts to correct the lack of focus on gender in Said's work.[21] Like Yeğenoğlu, I would question the usefulness of "simply adding the gender 'variable' to the accounts of Orientalism" (1) in order to account for texts by female authors who participate in a discourse of othering.[22]

As Zantop has mentioned, "issues of gender and sexuality are [...] conspicuously absent from Said's *Orientalism*, an oversight Said himself later acknowledged yet diffused by relegating gender analysis to analogous structures

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[21] There are those such as Tamara Felden who have attempted to bridge the gap by highlighting similarities between the "Other" as the Oriental and the "Other" as woman. Felden notes some "surprising parallels" in that both are subordinated within the Western, white, male patriarchal power structure. Such work seeks a critical entry to the texts of women authors through the "femaleness" of their position, i.e. the resistance to the dominant, or male, discourse. Tamara Felden, "Reiseliteratur von Vormärzlerinnen: Zur literarischen Repräsentation der Geschlechterrollenerfahrung" (Diss. U of Maryland, 1990) 271. See also Annegret Pelz, "Europäerinnen und Orientalismus," in *Frauen Literatur Politik*. Ed. Annegret Pelz, Marianne Schuller, Inge Stephan, Sigrid Weigel, Kerstin Wilhelms (Hamburg: Argument, 1988: 205-218). More recently, however, Shubhangi Dabak has written a dissertation about Hahn-Hahn and Ida Pfeiffer in which she argues that female authors are, in fact, capable of othering. However, Dabak relies alternately on the dichotomy woman/man or European/Oriental to support her argument that Hahn-Hahn and Pfeiffer are "presenting images of the Other that are colonial in nature" (111) when she concludes that gender identity alone does not "guarantee that those women will necessarily have a non-colonial attitude toward others who have an inferior position in relation to that society. More than gender, what contributes to the colonial or non-colonial attitude is an awareness of a power relationship between the Self and the Other and the willingness or unwillingness to show solidarity with the marginalized group" (165). Shubhangi Dabak, "Images of the Orient in the Travel Writings of Ida Pfeiffer and Ida Hahn-Hahn" (Diss. Michigan State U, 1999). Such critics are more relevant to the discussion of Hahn-Hahn's *Orientalische Briefe* and thus will be discussed in the next chapter.

[22] Yeğenoğlu explains that it is her "contention [...] that if we are to engage the complex significations that constitute Orientalism we need to examine closely how the discursive constitution of Otherness is achieved simultaneously through sexual as well as cultural modes of differentiation. A more sexualized reading of Orientalism reveals that representations of sexual difference cannot be treated as its sub-domain; it is of fundamental importance in the formation of a colonial subject position" (1-2).

(patriarchy), rather than exploring gender dynamics within Orientalism itself" (5). In her work, Zantop shows that

> racial and sexual stereotypes intersect and overlap in the colonialist imaginary creating the peculiar dynamics of attraction and repulsion within colonialist subjectivity identified by Bhabha and others [… and that] the concept of 'race,' in its modern, biological definition, emerged at the same time as modern gender roles were conceived (5).

Thus, in addition to emphasizing the complex nature of these fantasies and feelings of "attraction and repulsion," Zantop's project is to highlight the role of gender in the discourse of colonial fantasies:

> This construction of a race-gender model occurred within a decidedly 'colonial' context. Only by recourse to colonized peoples, to men and women of color, whom they displaced or desired, could white European males define themselves as the White European Male, predestined by biology to a position of physical and cultural dominance (5).

According to Zantop, these suppressed fantasies "gave rise to theories of gender and race that would profoundly alter European and German self-perceptions" and they served "the development of constructs that assigned the white European male a position of power and authority over all kinds of feminized others, be they wives/children/servants, colonized women/feminized natives/colonized territory, or the effeminate aristocracy" (43).

However, while they certainly provide a theoretical space to look at unequal power relationships between Self and Other in a discursive space situated outside of manifest colonialism, neither Zantop nor Yeğenoğlu address the issue of gender in a way that can adequately account for the existence of and desire for feminine autonomy on the part of female authors. As we have just

seen, Zantop does not address the problem of female authors at all but rather offers only the popular colonialist metaphor of the White male European aggressor, possessing all feminized Others in order to naturalize the force of colonialism from within discourse. It is right, or natural, for men to possess women and "(hetero)sexual desire across a racial divide had to legitimize and veil the libidinal drive for possession of foreign territory and the power relations within the European bourgeois household" (6). One can conclude that Zantop does not address aspects of female authorship because female authors are subsumed into a discourse that was predominantly male or masculinist.

Female Autonomy in a Masculinist Paradigm?

What happens to a theory of the exclusively "masculinist" gesture of appropriation when the discussion revolves solely around female authors and the feminist thrust of their texts? While Zantop avoids the question of female-gendered authorship by positioning her study solidly within a masculinist paradigm, other critics have attempted to discuss female authorship to varying degrees of success. It seems as though the problem is in the very nature of the inquiry. As a result, the question remains whether we can distinguish between male and female authorship in the context of power hierarchies without making essentialist claims? And how can we evaluate and critique women authors if we cannot agree on the role they play within power structures? Such essentialist claims in turn undermine the validity of the arguments presented as we see below.

In her oft-cited work, *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt also approaches the problem of discussing female authorship within what is considered a masculinist project or discourse of travel writing.[23] She refers to a "specifically female" relationship to the project of European expansion:

> By 1828 there were enough European women travel writers in print to form a category for men to complain about. Some of them were traveling beyond the borders of Europe; a literature was emerging to create specifically female relationships to North European expansionism, a female domestic subject of empire, and forms of female imperial authority in the contact zone (170).

Women travelers and authors write, according to Pratt, from "feminocentric perspectives" (166), which means they notice and comment on the situation of other women in places they visit, and construct "feminotopias" (166), which are "episodes that present idealized worlds of female autonomy, empowerment, and pleasure" (167). While certainly ambivalent about the woman writer as "imperial," she reports a distinction between female and male authors in regards to the different ways they relate to their subject matter:

> While the [capitalist, exclusively male] vanguardists tend to emplot their accounts as quests for achievement fueled by fantasies of transformation and dominance, the exploratresses emplot quests for self-realization and fantasies of social harmony (168).

While Pratt attributes more socially just motives to the female explorers, she also leaves unexamined the methods of "self-realization" they employ and what it is that comprises these "fantasies of social harmony." The end result is that the category "female" remains intact. However, there is very little discussion as to what contributes to the creation of a dynamic female position.

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[23] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

For Sara Suleri, on the other hand, the presence of women authors only serves to show how redundant they are in male colonialist discourse by calling into question its myth of heterosexual fantasy as the driving metaphor behind colonial domination.[24] Suleri notes in the context of English India that

> representations of the picturesque are not only important documents of the female anxiety generated by colonialism, but further serve as an implicit critique of the metaphorical heterosexuality with which the colonial project is traditionally imaged: while the Anglo-Indian woman writer has much invested in maintaining standard Orientalist stereotypes to mystify the East, her work, far more than that of her male counterpart, engages in an incipient questioning that dismantles colonialism's master narrative of rape. […] [T]he woman writer seems to be at a better vantage point to assess how much the colonial encounter depends upon a disembodied homoeroticism rather than on the traditional metaphor of ravishment and possession (77).

Suleri's contention that the presence of women authors demonstrates their irrelevance completely rewrites the libidinal economy that Zantop and others have described.

While my position necessarily diverges from Suleri's designation of redundancy for women, Suleri raises an essential issue for my own inquiry that is behind most of the discussions about women authors. How can they be discussed legitimately in terms of what is considered a masculinist discourse? Are they irrelevant? As we have seen above, if they are "resistant" to this "masculinist discourse," we can say they are relevant. If they are serving as a supplement to the same discourse, they also earn relevancy. However, if they are only relevant as a "supplement," can the question of female autonomy even be posed? If these women authors are "fashioning a place," to borrow

[24] Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992).

Yeğenoğlu's phrase, or claiming a space for Selfhood which does not need the mediation of masculine subjectivity, can we talk about their efforts as contributions to this "male" discourse, that is, colonial fantasies, in general?[25] My assertion is that we need to shift the focus away from a simple binary of gender in order to be able to begin to assess the contribution of these women authors.

Binary Oppositions

The simple binary of masculine/feminine or masculinst/feminist tends to arise in the discussion about gender within Orientalist or colonialist discourse despite the fact that theorists have tried to get away from binary relationships in recent years. The validity of a simple binary model when analyzing the discursive relationship between seeming pairs of opposites, colonizer/colonized, Black/white, male/female, is cast in doubt. However, the difficulty in actually escaping a binary model of critique is demonstrated by the fact that new theorists cannot quite manage to escape that very binary structure they were trying to dismantle.[26]

Highlighting this difficulty, Lowe tries to create a new paradigm in which to speak about women authors in Orientalist discourse.

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[25] Lisa Lowe puts forth a definition of discourse that is useful here: "Foucault does not describe the regulating activity of discourse as either a set of fixed laws imposed from the outside or a series of determined utterances recited by individuals. Rather, discourse is a changing set of conditions that regulates the range of possible articulations at any time; yet with each articulation, the set of conditions shifts and adapts." Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains. French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) 14. This definition makes it possible to include women in the discussion of dicourse as individuals. In addition, contrary to what many write about women in the project of colonization, it allows for unmediated contact with the discourse.

[26] Lisa Lowe, Sara Suleri, Meyda Yeğenoğlu all assert this in the interaction with their predecessors.

> Whether the pair is figured as a binary synthesis that considers difference as always contained within the 'same,' or as one that conceives of the pair as a totality in which *difference* structurally implies *sameness* – or even if difference is posited as a third term, an absolute alterity outside the structure of binaries – it is necessary to understand each of these figurations as versions of the same binary logic. Ironically, even the positing of an outside third term depends on a binary opposition between structure and nonstructure, or inside-the-binarism and outside-the-binarism; the closure and uniformity of the Hegelian dialectic is upheld. My argument for heterogeneity seeks to challenge the tradition that conceives of difference as exclusively structured by a binary opposition between two terms – represented by the orientalist logic of Occident and Orient – by proposing instead another notion of difference that takes seriously the conditions of heterogeneity, multiplicity, and nonequivalence (24).

As an antidote to the binary opposition, she proposes to invest in what she calls heterotopicality. Lowe posits that it is by revealing the multiplicity, heterotopicality, and multivocality in a text, that one can expose, and therefore resist, dominance.

> I have said that the unresolved multiplicity of representational forces emphasizes how orientalism, rather than existing as an isolated, univocal discourse, takes place in a plural and mutable field of varied positions and representational practices. When one grasps this plurality and mutability as the given condition of an orientalist situation, or any situation of cultural domination, then one also identifies the destabilized moments where resistance begins and transformation becomes possible (35).

Lowe's concept of multiple momentums converging in a text allows for a complicated discussion of "orientalist" authors. In one text, an author might be thoroughly "orientalist" but later on could come to question and break down the stereotypical images that he or she previously used.

In contrast to Zantop's study of colonial fantasy, Yeğenoğlu includes writings by a Western female author in her work, namely Lady Mary Worthley

Montagu who traveled to the East 125 years before Ida von Hahn-Hahn.[27] In fact, in order to discuss the nature of female authorship, Yeğenoğlu interacts with Lowe's theory of multivalence and more specifically with Lowe's analysis of Lady Mary Montagu's letters. In the following, I briefly highlight aspects of the discussion in order to foreground Yeğenoğlu's position.

Although she does call Lowe's search for moments of resistance "a very promising project" (79), she rejects Lowe's characterization of Montagu's discourse of a "combination of two different rhetorics: the rhetoric of identification (or similitude/similarity) and the rhetoric of differentiation (difference)" (82), whereby the former renders Montagu's text feminist because of identification with Turkish women and the latter is where she lapses into "orientalist" discourse.[28] The problem is that the measure of the degree of resistance is based on the truth value of the text in question. In other words, according to such a position, the more accurately an author portrays the Orient, the more resistant the text.

Unlike Lowe or even Pratt, Yeğenoğlu does not define a "rhetoric of identification" as resistant or feminist. In my view, Yeğenoğlu is absolutely correct to shift the discussion of resistance away from the relative truth value of the depictions of the Orient and to cease to look for feminist rhetoric outside of the masculinist discourse. As she says, the former is simply a reversal of the latter. In other words, "if we accept the premise that Orientalism is not simply a

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[27] Yeğenoğlu discusses Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, citing from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters*, 1708-1720, vol. I, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965).

[28] Yeğenoğlu, however, investigates the possibility of resistance to domination as well: "[N]ot only the very identity of the Western subject is constituted in the movement of desire, but also the potential resistance to this constitution is also inscribed in this very process" (60).

question of the dissemination of negative images, [...] then we cannot merely posit the depiction of positive images of the Orient and its women as a means of shattering the power of Orientalism" (87). The idea of a "positive" image of the Orient is also problematic because a sentimentalizing or romanticizing image is potentially just as inaccurate. Yeğenoğlu's well-taken point is that resistance is not found in the relative accuracy of, or good vs. bad, portrayals of the Orient but rather in the claim to the authority of representation which reinforces a certain power relationship. In that case, accuracy is beside the point altogether.[29]

> Rather than positing (Western) women's discourse in an external relation to Orientalism, we need to demonstrate how it can and has become imperialist – a "feminist" discourse which both benefits from and criticizes discourses such as Orientalism. [...] But ironically, for Lowe, it is [...] this "feminist" discourse which allows Montagu a language, a rhetoric, and a set of arguments through which she can interrogate and intervene against traditional Orientalist writings about the Orient. [...] For Lowe: "Montagu's interventions in the orientalist tradition are primarily articulated in a feminist rhetoric and take place in the moments when her text refutes the constructed topos of the enslavement of Turkish women." There is no question that Montagu uses her access to the interior space of the Orient as a powerful tool to claim that she is the one who possesses *the authentic* information of Turkish women. [...] But to argue that this indicates a refutation of the established topos of Orientalism is to reduce the power of Orientalism to a mere constellation of "distorted" representations, and thus prevents us from grasping the more subtle Orientalizing operations of Orientalism which construe difference in a particular way (86).

[29] As Yeğenoğlu explains, "one of the principal mechanisms that sustains this latent structure is what Said calls the 'citationary nature of Orientalism.' Orientalism, for Said, is constructed as a systematic symbolic universe not simply because various representations constitute a unity through their reference to a common geographical place called the Orient. Although the large number of writings on the Orient give the appearance of a multifarious body of work, they are in fact 'a reworking or direct repetition of earlier descriptions.' In this sense, each individual representation functions as a referent for another text" (70).

Thus, instead of looking for resistance in Montagu's texts, Yeğenoğlu implicates Montagu in a "masculinist act." She argues

> that Montagu's apparently dissenting and critical distance from Orientalism, which she achieves through the rhetoric of identification, does not prevent her from exercising the imperialist and masculinist act of cultural translation and subject constitution. Her understanding of 'difference' within an economy of sameness ensures that the other becomes comprehensible by being rendered as an object of knowledge (85).

While Montagu, or any other Western woman, is capable of rendering the Other an object of knowledge, it is only by being "inextricably complicitous with masculinism" that this is possible (86). In this way, Yeğenoğlu places Western women within the discourse, but they do not have unmediated or autonomous access. According to her, the very desire to acquire knowledge of an Other is *a priori* a masculine act.

> Rather than positing (Western) women's discourse in an external relation to Orientalism, we need to demonstrate how it can and has become imperialist – a "feminist" discourse which both benefits from and criticizes discourses such as Orientalism. [...] But ironically, for Lowe, it is [...] this "feminist" discourse which allows Montagu a language, a rhetoric, and a set of arguments through which she can interrogate and intervene against traditional Orientalist writings about the Orient. [...] For Lowe: "Montagu's interventions in the orientalist tradition are primarily articulated in a feminist rhetoric and take place in the moments when her text refutes the constructed topos of the enslavement of Turkish women." There is no question that Montagu uses her access to the interior space of the Orient as a powerful tool to claim that she is the one who possesses *the authentic* information of Turkish women. [...] But to argue that this indicates a refutation of the established topos of Orientalism is to reduce the power of Orientalism to a mere constellation of "distorted" representations, and thus prevents us from grasping the more subtle Orientalizing operations of Orientalism which construe difference in a particular way (86).

Unfortunately, after the fruitful discussion of concepts of subjectivity within a colonialist imaginary, Yeğenoğlu then falls back on a phallocentric interpretation of female participation in the discourse.[30] In trying to find a "missing link between Orientalism and Western women's discourse" (68), she rejects the notion that "women's [feminist] discourse functioned to cultivate a critique of the unified and male colonial subject" (69). Instead, relying on Luce Irigaray's feminist deconstruction of Western phallocentrism, she shows how "woman can not be a subject in the sense Man is " (9), and that "[t]he desire to see and the desire to penetrate this 'unknown' and 'unknowable' domain also positions the subject of representation as masculine" (90). With this position, Yeğenoğlu is recapitulating the basic binary essentialism of gender whereby femininity is always already excluded and masculinity is always already unified and strong.

If masculinity is the only conduit to authority and strength, the only way a Western female author can participate in the dominant discourse is as a "supplement."[31] Following this logic, Yeğenoğlu asserts that Montagu, or by extension any Western female author, "needs a phallic substitute" in order to

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[30] Yeğenoğlu provides very thorough background on "the modern subject" (4-7) and "deconstructing the subject" (7-9).

[31] She credits Derrida's idea of supplement. In a chapter entitled, "Supplementing the Orientalist lack: European ladies in the harem," she writes, "I have suggested [...] that whether male or female, the Western subject's desire for its Oriental other is always mediated by a desire to have access to the space of its women, to the body of its women and to the truth of its women. What explains such an obsession with the Oriental woman is the metonymic association established between the Orient and its women" (73), hence, the desire to penetrate the mystery of the Orient as a feminized Other. However, Western women were granted more access to the hidden spaces of the Orient and are "called upon to supplement the masculine subject's lack." The "Western woman is happy to report 'faithfully' what she witnesses in this hermetically sealed world" (75), thus, her authority comes from being a supplement to the colonialist enterprise.

appropriate and intrude upon the Orient and the Oriental woman.[32] She continues:

> [I]n her relation with the Orient, she attaches a phallus to herself so that she can enter into the domain of the other, to the origin of all civilizations, to the 'mother-nature-Orient,' and thereby *be*. Thus she finds the life-enhancing origin, which has been denied to her (in the West) within the phallocentric economy, in the Orient, in the space of its women. It is by entering into the harem/Orient/womb that she can reproduce herself and constitute her identity. She thus becomes the One/Self in relation to the Orient and the Oriental woman" (93).

Thus, she calls the urge to re-define oneself as an autonomous Self, or to find "the life-enhancing origin," in the face of limitations imposed by a male-dominated, or "phallocentric" economy, in relationship to an Other, inherently masculine.

My approach to the texts by Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing, who are certainly part of a history that Lady Mary Montagu began, diverges from Yeğenoğlu's at this point. I find these authors "resistant" not because they are women, but because I am calling the urge to autonomy – or to "reproduce oneself" and to "constitute an indentity" – universal and unmediated. As the above quote from Zantop points out, masculine models were unstable and were

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[32] In an interesting parallel, such an argument is similar to that of male literary critics of the nineteenth century who were looking to keep women out of the canon. For example, Karl Barthel writes "[d]ass das Weib eben so wie der Mann zur Poesie angelegt sei, kann nicht bezweifelt werden, da die Poesie ein allgemeinmenschliches Erbtheil ist. Wohl ist aber oft gefragt worden, ob die Frauen auch Autorberuf hätten, ob sie auch als Schriftstellerinnen an die Oeffentlichkeit treten dürften. Man verneinte das hier und da geradezu, indeß man hat damit doch zu viel gethan. Wenn das Weib als Schriftstellerin eben weiblich bleibt, wenn es die Schranken, die seinem Geschlechte von Natur und Sitte gezogen sind, nicht überschreitet, so muß ihm auch, sobald es nur überhaupt dazu befähigt ist, eben so wie dem Manne gestattet sein, die poetische Welt seines Inneren zur allgemeinen Anschauung zu bringen" (562). *Die deutsche Nationalliteratur der Neuzeit, in einer Reihe von Vorlesungen*, 6th ed. (Braunschweig: Leibrock, 1862).

looking for “affirmative models of collective identity.” Hence the struggles to define the Self cannot be viewed solely in terms of sexual difference.

I also resist the urge to call the unequal power relationship between Self and Other something inherently male. I find that the phallocentric idea upon which Yeğenoğlu’s argument is based is an attempt to avoid making reference to some universal truth because that has been the domain of the European White Male. Thus, while Yeğenoğlu rejects the theory that women are inherently resistant because they can see and understand and, therefore, write more truthfully about the marginalization of other groups, I reject the idea that interaction with power and autonomy is necessarily masculine.

My first objection is that “masculinist” has become the standard and essentialized position for strength and domination. In so doing, Yeğenoğlu is recreating a binary that is just as unstable as the claim that “feminist” discourse is resistant because it was written by women. Even if one rejects the idea that “resistance” is inherently feminine, if domination is solely the domain of the masculine and women must borrow masculinity to enter, the dichotomy of essentialist gender roles is rigidly recreated. In addition, Yeğenoğlu’s discussion revolves solely around the issue of domination or resistance to domination, thus creating another binary system from which there is no escape. As she states, “it is the Derridean notion of supplement which helps me to examine this relation [between Western woman and Oriental woman] and suggest that Western women, as the excluded other of Western men, nevertheless occupy a masculine position in relation to Oriental women” (12). Again, the “masculine position” has

become synonymous with uncomplicated dominance, and as such, is itself a problematic standpoint.

The other serious problem with Yeğenoğlu's position is that the universal ideal she wishes to avoid is paradoxically implicit in her attempts to expose domination and in the subsequent wish to posit a non-dominating relationship between the Self and the Other. In order to posit that something exists outside the binary of domination, it is necessary to imagine there is some kind of universal ideal of an authentic Self beyond the dominated or excluded Other as Self. However, if the Western subject is only "masculine" then it follows that there is no way to have an authentic self unless you are male. However, that is not the case in the works under consideration here.

Thus, I will be examining the process by which each female author attempts to create a space for an "authentic" or rather, autonomous Self. As I demonstrate, individual claims of equality based on European "enlightened" values cannot be interpreted outside of the interaction with the racial Other in the same works. The intention in these works was to employ Enlightenment ideals in order to re-imagine the constellation of unequal power relationships such as existed between women and men, and in Assing's case, between White and Black. For assistance each author calls upon stereotypes of Others to make comprehensible the drive toward autonomy and to justify it according to the norms available to her, which included precolonial metaphors of race. Thus, the conception of idealized values becomes racialized both as White – or deserving – and non-White – not deserving of human rights, even in Assing's texts.

While the attempts of these authors fail their ultimate vision because of this unintentional interplay, it does not mean that they have to "borrow the phallus" in order to have the desire to be autonomous individuals. In all cases, the feminine quest for knowledge is predicated on being able to subsume the Other; in the end, the imagination of the Self as different from and superior to the racial Other is more easily sustained than universal equality. Ultimately, I must also conclude that Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing were unwittlingly complicit in the systems of domination they wished to resist.

Chapter Summaries

Over the next three chapters, I examine selected works by Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing in order to show how each author conveys a desire for autonomy while interacting with an Other to whom she denies such autonomy.

In Chapter 2, I look at two works by Ida von Hahn-Hahn, *Gräfin Faustine* (1840) and *Orientalische Briefe* (1844). I proceed in this chapter to examine first Hahn-Hahn's conception of female autonomy and "Bewußtseinsemanzipation" in the novel, *Gräfin Faustine*, which tells the story of an independent aristocratic female heroine who betrays her own independence and marries. While Hahn-Hahn both shows her development and foreshadows its end, I highlight how this development is intertwined with her conception of the "Orient." Next, I discuss Hahn-Hahn's *Orientalische Briefe* as a continuation both of the theme of female development, in this case, the author's own, and of the "Orientalizing" gaze of the

traveler. This interaction has important implications for a female author's position in the context of the precolonial.

In Chapter 3, I look at two of Fanny Lewald's novels, *Jenny* (1842) and *Diogena* (1847), as well as her later political writings, *Osterbriefe* (1863) and *Für und Wider die Frauen* (1870) in order to highlight Lewald's vision of "Emanzipation zur Arbeit." Cognizant of restrictions placed upon her both as a woman and a member of the Jewish community, Lewald dedicated most of her adult life to writing about and working for change. In the process, however, Lewald could not conceive of an equality that was not in part defined by the exclusion of an Other

In Chapter 4, I propose to look at Ottilie Assing's body of articles published in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* from 1851 to 1865.[33] After she emigrated to the United States and continue to publish her articles in 1853, Assing initially carved out a position for herself as a writer and a cultural critic in the United States; however, she eventually found the abolitionist cause and staked out a stridently moral standpoint. The focus and tone of her "Reports" shift as the race slavery question takes center stage. However, her attachment to an "educated, European elite," which allows her to meaningfully engage in a just social cause, also produces a standpoint that defends the exclusion of other racial groups.

In Chapter 5, the conclusion, I will connect the different authors to each other in a way that was not done during the previous three chapters. In addition,

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[33] Assing's "Reports from America" have been for the first time selectively gathered and translated into English by Christoph Lohmann and cover the time period from her first published article written in New York (1853) through the end of the Civil War (1865). *Radical Passion. Ottilie Assing's Reports from America and Letters to Frederick Douglass*, ed. & trans. Christoph Lohmann (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

I will use a study by Marcia Klotz to suggest a connection to colonialist women authors via their use of the racial Other in order to sketch a possible trajectory of women's writing. Germany's "short" colonial history is brought into consideration by Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies*. Zantop defines the possibility that colonial fantasies "provided an arena for creating an imaginary community and constructing a national identity in opposition to the perceived racial, sexual, ethnic, or national characteristics of others, Europeans and non-Europeans alike" (7). However, while both Zantop's and Yeğenoğlu's contributions to this area provide a useful basis for my work, I conclude that neither theory can escape collapsing into a binary analysis of the relationship between dominating Self and dominated Other. Thus, neither theory can explain the "imaginative momentum" in play in the works of Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing.[34] I end with an attempt to find a theoretical basis which explores the combination of both these important strands: the drive for autonomy and the move to dominate.

[34] I borrow this term from Jeanine Blackwell who uses it to distinguish differences between male and female authorship in "An Island of Her Own: Heroines of the German Robinsonades from 1720 to 1800," *German Quarterly* 58.1 (1985): 5-26.

Chapter Two

A "Daughter of the Occident" Travels to the Orient: Ida von Hahn-Hahn's *Gräfin Faustine* and *Orientalische Briefe*

> Ich kann nun einmal nicht anders als streben und immer streben, und daher geht mir der Drang zur Erkenntnis über das, was ich bereits erkannt habe. Bald nun werde ich wissen, wie der Orient sich im Auge einer Tochter des Okzidents abspiegelt.
> Hahn-Hahn, *Orientalische Briefe*

> Wie soll ich Respekt haben vor irgend einer Wesenheit, wenn ich nicht bei meiner eigenen anfange? und habe ich überhaupt erst diese Achtung für menschliche Entwicklung und menschliches Streben gefaßt, wie sollt' ich nicht suchen, zuerst mich selbst durchzuarbeiten? Das ist unser Ziel, das ist unsere Seligkeit. Muß der Mensch nicht stets diesen letzten Zweck alles Seins im Auge behalten?
> Hahn-Hahn, *Gräfin Faustine*

Ida von Hahn-Hahn's "feminist" agenda, or *Bewußtseinsemanzipation*, is comprised of both a legitimitization of female autonomy and a critique of social institutions such as education and marriage which she saw as antithetical to such autonomy.[35] In Hahn-Hahn's texts, female autonomy is achieved by transgressing the boundaries set by these social institutions. While Hahn-Hahn's portrayal of the racial Other leaves no question that she is not including him/her

[35] In her afterword to a reprinting of *Gräfin Faustine*, Annemarie Taeger uses this term to refer to Hahn-Hahn's emancipatory agenda. Annemarie Taeger, *Gräfin Faustine*. By Ida von Hahn-Hahn. Ed. Annemarie Taeger (Bonn: Bouvier, 1986) 245. Renate Möhrmann calls it "die Entwicklung des weiblichen Selbstbewusstsein." *Die andere Frau. Emanzipationsansätze deutscher Schriftstellerinnen im Vorfeld der Achtundvierziger-Revolution* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977) 100.

in her enlarged definition of humanity, a racialized Other is indeed crucial to this definition.[36] Thus, throughout the two texts under consideration, *Gräfin Faustine* and *Orientalische Briefe*, there is a constant tension between the attempt by Hahn-Hahn to enlarge the definition of humanity by including women and the paradoxical need to limit participation by other groups. The existence of precolonial discourse in nineteenth-century Germany can in part explain this tension.

In the following, I trace the discrepancy between Hahn-Hahn's emancipatory ideas and her portrayal of the racial Other; I show how these seemingly contradictory, or even unrelated, strands are, in fact, thoroughly intertwined. More specifically, I discuss how the female-centered theme interacts with both the imagined and the actual experience of people called "Orientals" and a place called the "Orient."

In *Gräfin Faustine*, a best-selling novel of 1841, a young countess aims to live her own life along a path of her own choosing, but she agrees, in a moment of weakness, to marry, thereby giving up the freedom to choose her own life. Much of the nature of male/female relationships is mediated by the presence of a metaphoric use of the Orient in the novel. Three years before she herself traveled to the "Orient," Hahn-Hahn's preconception(s) about the meaning of

[36] See footnote 1. Joan Scott argues in her history of feminism in France that in the underlying process of self-constitution there are mechanisms that are not acknowledged but nonetheless vital to the process. Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996) 7. While Hahn-Hahn is certainly not arguing for a "system of universal inclusion" as Scott's feminist do, the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are similar.

such a trip for a woman's development were at play in this novel.[37] Such conceptions are revealed in references to Oriental female slaves and Faustine's yearning to make a trip there.

Through references to the Orient, the novel not only harnesses a set of assumptions about it with which Hahn-Hahn's readers could identify, it also creates a direct connection between female development and the Oriental and/or racial Other.[38] This connection occurs via the metaphor of specifically female slavery which Hahn-Hahn uses to describe the position and problems facing aristocratic women in European society, thus appropriating the experience of the female slave's oppression while paradoxically rendering its horror innocuous. As the novel progresses, the metaphor takes on greater importance in the text. By the novel's end, the idealized development of the heroine is made possible by the space called the "Orient," which effectively takes over the space as conducive for female autonomy. Conversely, Faustine's decision to renounce her personal autonomy by choosing marriage is attributed to her "Sklavennatur" and lack of

[37] The starting point of this analysis is that Hahn-Hahn is participating in an already-existing set of assumptions about the "Orient" and "Orientals." Edward Said provides a general picture of such preconceptions. As he explains it, "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.' Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social description, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on." Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 2-3.

[38] The effectiveness of Hahn-Hahn's metaphoric use of the Orient relies on its existence in the consciousness of her readers as well. Said asserts that "[c]ontinued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied – indeed, made truly productive – the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture" (6).

"Besonnenheit," connecting, on a personal level, one's "slavery" to an inability to see one's own situation clearly.

The connection between female slavery and autonomy is established in an imaginary realm: although she was familiar with *Letters from the East*, published in 1763 by Lady Mary Worthley Montagu, Hahn-Hahn had not yet embarked on her own travels to this part of the world.[39] She drew upon the contemporary discourse of this place as a means of critiquing social conventions in nineteenth-century Germany which limited a woman's role.[40]

In her *Orientalische Briefe*, however, Hahn-Hahn is no longer relying simply on cultural "knowledge" about the "Orient," rather her writing is informed by an authority of experience: she is reporting what she witnesses. The highlights of her journey east were stops in Constantinople, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Gaza, Cairo, Alexandria, Syria and even a trip on the Nile.[41] Her letters to family and friends during this eight-month trip from August 1843 to April 1844 were published as the *Orientalische Briefe* in 1844. She has much to say

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[39] Lady Mary Worthley Montagu is an important figure in feminist discourse because of her travel writing. As stated in the introduction, Meyda Yeğenoğlu and Lisa Lowe discuss the theoretical positioning of Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* in both nineteenth-century and contemporary feminist discourse. These letters are found in: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters*, 1708-1720, vol. I, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965). In addition, Hahn-Hahn gives Montagu's letters mention in her own collection: "[D]as ist das kleine thrazische Belgrad. Es hatte seinen Moment von Fashion, als Lady Mary Worthley Montague [sic], Gemahlin des englischen Botschafters bei der Pforte, vor mehr als hundert Jahren die gute Jahreszeit dort zubrachte. Wer englisch gelernt, hat ihre wunderhübschen Briefe aus Konstantinopel gelesen, und es ist wirklich schade, daß man sie immer nur als ein Schulbuch behandelt – so weit ich mich ihrer erinnere." Ida von Hahn-Hahn, *Orientalische Briefe*, ed. Gabriele Habinger (Wien: Promedia, 1991) 89.

[40] At different points in her letters, Hahn-Hahn refers to possible influences on her work in this regard. They are: Goethe's *Westöstlicher Diwan* (37); Tieck (83); Lady Montagu (89); Lady Esther Stanhope (161, 163) who "went native."

[41] During the journey, Hahn-Hahn stopped in many other smaller towns and cities in between that are not listed here.

about sanitary conditions, work ethics, appropriate dress, and other things, prefacing many of her comments with attempts to account for cultural differences and to advocate religious tolerance. However, Hahn-Hahn also establishes a connection between herself as the vital, independent heroine of this travelogue and her analysis of the people and places she visits.

To some modern readers, the author's bold assertion of autonomy and freedom for women might seem at odds with the ongoing attempt to appropriate the Other in the text, as one is emancipatory and the other is not. While it is certainly not surprising that a woman of Hahn-Hahn's background would subscribe to certain racializing tenets, one cannot dismiss such gestures as specific to her time, place and cultural awareness. Contrary to what one might expect, the change from imaginary to real encounter does not significantly alter the imaginary momentum or structure of her work: her emancipatory stance is in part created by racializing the Other in order to provide a new definition for the female self. Thus, Hahn-Hahn's ideal vision fails to meet its own standard because of its participation in this racializing gesture. However, the existence of these two seemingly contradictory elements in the same body of work can be seen as the result of this precolonial element in German discourse that I undertake to examine here.

Ida von Hahn-Hahn and Her Critics

Despite the fact that Hahn-Hahn was criticized by a contemporary for "krankhafte Emancipationssucht,"[42] the modern feminist movement was initially slow to embrace her.[43] Hahn-Hahn's concept of emancipation seems to explain such hesitance: her texts reflect the elitist, aristocratic position which left her uninvolved politically and created an almost obsessive commitment to the Self that was inaccessible to most women. Born in 1805 and raised by a very conservative aristocratic family in a very conservative region, Hahn-Hahn is not interested in questions of the political or professional participation of women in society at large.[44]

Critics generally agree that Hahn-Hahn had no interest in identifying with more revolutionary movements happening in Germany at that time and opposed democractic notions. In fact, at one point in the novel, Faustine refers to adherents of such liberal movements as tainted by the "Monomanie der Gleichheit" (110) and agrees that the dilution of the aristocracy by the selling of titles "unterminiert" the ground beneath it (85). Despite the conservative standpoint which made her work unpalatable to certain modern feminists, it is generally acknowledged that she discovered her commitment to

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[42] This is a description of both Hahn-Hahn's person and her work given to her by Karl Barthel. See Karl Barthel *Die deutsche Nationalliteratur der Neuzeit*, 6th ed. (Braunschweig: Leibrock 1862) 564.

[43] See Renate Möhrmann; Gerlinde Geiger, *Die befreite Psyche. Emanzipationsansätze im Frühwerk Ida Hahn-Hahns (1838-1848)* (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1986); Taeger; and Tamara Felden, "Reiseliteratur von Vormärzlerinnen: Zur literarischen Repräsentation der Geschlechterrollenerfahrung" (Diss. U of Maryland, 1990). They all make mention of such resistance.

[44] Renate Möhrmann makes this direct connection between her upbringing, lack of formal education, and her disastrous marriage to her idea of emancipation, and her reluctance to become committed politically. *Die andere Frau* 85-89.

"Bewußtseinsemanzipation" by experiencing gender inequality in the institution of marriage firsthand.

In order to discuss Hahn-Hahn's concept of female development, it is necessary to highlight briefly aspects of the critical discussion that surround her work. Such an examination emphasizes Hahn-Hahn's struggle with the limitations that challenged women of her time, and it distinguishes her work in an emancipatory context, thus foregrounding more starkly its potentially contradictory nature. In addition, some feminist critics have attempted to account for the contradictory nature of her work but neglect to introduce the element of the racial Other.

Hahn-Hahn was a best-selling but controversial writer in her own time. Hahn-Hahn's depiction of a woman's "proper place" challenged ascendant bourgeois notions of womanhood in such a visceral way that it evoked intense reactions from the reading and critical public.[45] In addition, her unapologetically aristocratic stance drew attention and consequent reactions ran the gamut from praise to condemnation. According to feminist literary critics, seldom had another female author managed to cause such a stir.[46]

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[45] The following excerpt from the literary history of a contemporary critic demonstrates the reaction to Hahn-Hahn's "transgression." Karl Barthel writes that "[d]er Frauen Sphäre ist die engere Häuslichkeit, das Familienthum; der Frauen nächster Beruf ist und bleibt es immer, dieses zu verklären als Priesterinnen der Sitte, der Ordnung und der Zucht, und ihr eigenthümliches Talent ist das der stillen, sinnigen Beobachtung. Halten sie als Schriftstellerinnen die Schranken dieses Berufs und dieser Befähigung inne, so werden sie immer als die naturgemäße Ergänzung zu der schriftstellernden Männerwelt gelten müssen; gehen sie aber als solche darüber hinaus, so fallen sie damit ohne weiteres in die Kategorie der emancipirten, d.h. der von ihrer wahren Natur abgefallenen Weiber, und erregen mit Recht mehr oder minder Anstoß" (562).

[46] Geiger notes that "die Sekundärliteratur über sie in einem Labyrinth von sich widersprechenden Aussagen verhaftet. Da sie die meistgelesene Schriftstellerin ihrer Zeit gewesen sein soll und ihre Werke den Büchermarkt im Zeitraum 1838-50 'beherrschten', gibt es zahlreiche Rezensionen, die ihren Erfolg dokumentieren. Sie ist auch eine der wenigen

After her death in 1880, however, Hahn-Hahn's work continued to be examined sporadically in dissertations and literary histories into the beginning of the twentieth century, but as often happened with best-selling female authors, she was all but forgotten to a modern audience.[47] In the 1970s Renate Möhrmann reintroduced her along with other "pre-March" women authors to a feminist readership.[48] Against the background of the failed 1848 revolution in Germany, Möhrmann's approach in the earlier book is class-based. She divides the *Vormärzlerinnen* into categories based on class but recognizes more substantially in the second book that these rigid classifications do not always hold true. However, for Hahn-Hahn, they seem to.

Möhrmann is gently critical of Hahn-Hahn's elitism which has her depict only the world she knew, namely "dieWelt der Salons und der Parks, der Reunionen und Soireen, der Medisancen und Fadaisen."[49] This elitism is the reason for "ihre Begrenzung und Rückständigkeit im Vergleich zu den anderen Vormärzautorinnen," such as Louise Otto-Peters, Luise Dittmar, and Luise Mühlbach whose work Möhrmann also examines.[50] According to Möhrmann, in contrast to some of her more engaged contemporaries, such as Fanny Lewald

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Schriftstellerinnen im 19. Jahrhundert, die ihren Platz in Literaturgeschichten gefunden hat, allerdings häufig als negatives Beispiel" (17). Möhrmann also explains that, "[w]ohl selten hat eine Schriftstellerin heftigere und widerspruchsvollere Reaktionen hervorgerufen und die Gemüter ihrer Zeitgenossen stärker bewegt als diese mecklenburgische Gräfin." *Die andere Frau* 85.

[47] See Geiger 17-32 for an excellent summary of such work on Hahn-Hahn.

[48] See also Renate Möhrmann, ed. *Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Vormärz* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978).

[49] Möhrmann, *Frauenemanzipation* 233.

[50] Möhrmann, *Frauenemanzipation* 233-234.

and Ottilie Assing, Hahn-Hahn had little intellectual connection to the Young German movement which gave other women access to a discourse of emancipation.[51] Although she cannot praise Hahn-Hahn for political involvement, she excerpts portions of a variety of Hahn-Hahn's texts that are clearly critical of her society's repressive institutions, such as education and marriage. True, she did not use her fame as a platform to advance political issues close to her heart, but Hahn-Hahn was cognizant of the inequality that women faced and created female characters that defied conventional ideals of bourgeois femininity, first and foremost disputing the notion that a woman's proper or natural place was in the home, serving as wife and mother.[52]

Despite differing backgrounds and agendas, Möhrmann credits these women authors, including Hahn-Hahn, with the first wide-scale attempt to bring the repression of women to the attention of a broader public. Möhrmann's position focuses quite clearly on the oppositional stance that the *Vormärzlerinnen* took with regard to oppressively patriarchal conditions in Germany. While certainly grounded in this feminist context, Möhrmann's approach to Hahn-Hahn in both of these works is balanced. She describes Hahn-Hahn's life and work in the context of other female authors of the same time period who are considered to be more feminist.

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[51] Möhrmann, *Die andere Frau* 92-93.

[52] Barthel's quote in a previous footnote suggests how strongly women writers and women in general were encouraged to stay within the sphere alloted them. According to him, there were roughly two groups of women authors: those who remained within a woman's sphere and those who did not. As Möhrmann points out, however, the women's movement itself had then and continues to find the "natural" roles of women problematic. *Die andere Frau* 89-90.

In her 1986 book, *Die befreite Psyche*, Gerlinde Geiger focuses exclusively on Hahn-Hahn's texts and life. She begins with the premise that critics, largely male, both past and present, have been unable to appreciate Hahn-Hahn's work fully. She charges that they were unable to do so because they still believed in the standards of a masculine canon, into which a woman could never gain entry. She attempts to re-evaluate Hahn-Hahn's work with the yardstick of *écriture féminine* and, in the process, re-define "true poetry." In addition to foregrounding literary merit, Geiger also defends Hahn-Hahn against attacks of elitism by attempting to connect seamlessly her aristocratic and her emancipatory ideas.[53]

While Geiger's intention is noble, in the process she avoids interacting with any contradictory aspects of the work. In fact, she attributes the ruptures in Hahn-Hahn's work to "feminine lacunae" which *a priori* must be present in any female author's work, and therefore inherently represent meaning rather than its absence. In the process, she oftens attributes to Hahn-Hahn her own radical feminist agenda:

> Obwohl die Frauenfrage das Hauptthema ihres Frühwerks ist, war Hahn-Hahn keine Frauen**recht**lerin. Sie unterscheidet zwischen Gleichberechtigung und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und setzt sich für letztere ein, da sie damals schon erkannte, daß das Recht von Männern zur Unterdrückung der Frau erfunden sei (41).

While it seems unrealistic to attribute Hahn-Hahn's lack of political engagement to a rejection of law as masculine per se, Geiger's assertion that it was the author's "lebenslängliches Bestreben, die Gleichstellung der Gechlechter durch Bewußtseinsveränderung zu verwirklichen," on the other hand, is more

[53] See Geiger 44.

likely (41). However, this "political" project was not fueled by participation in any political movement to enlarge the legal sphere of rights for all women. The perception of Hahn-Hahn's elitism colored the reception of her work by modern feminist critics, precisely because of Hahn-Hahn's depiction of the role of the aristocracy. Despite Geiger's many attempts to connect the two, Hahn-Hahn's doggedly aristocratic position and emphasis of the moneyed class as the purveyor of culture run counter to more modern and inclusive democratic notions.

In 1986, Annemarie Taeger edited a reprinted edition of *Gräfin Faustine*. In her afterword to this novel, she describes Hahn-Hahn as an important feminist author. She points out that, even though Hahn-Hahn was not interested in taking up emancipation in an outright political venue,

> ermöglicht [sie] strenge Konzentration auf die Darstellung der – die öffentliche Rolle der Frau entscheidend präformierenden – privaten Beziehungen und auf die Analyse jener unbewußten emotionalen Hemmnisse weiblicher Selbstbestimmung, die alle äußeren Erfolge der Emanzipationsbewegung überdauert haben (264).[54]

In *Gräfin Faustine*, Hahn-Hahn tells the story of a young woman of aristocratic birth and her struggle for independence. We learn that Faustine had been involved in a loveless first marriage in which she suffered. She fled and vowed never to remarry, although the subsequent death of her husband made that possible. As the novel opens, Faustine has been living out-of-wedlock with Andlau. Their match is ideal because their temperaments suit. She is happy with him, is able to sketch and paint to her heart's content, and suffers no social

[54] Annemarie Taeger, ed. *Gräfin Faustine*.

sanctions due to their relationship.[55] In fact, she is much sought after in her social circle. While Faustine is intelligent, headstrong and independent, she also lacks an internal stabilizing force, what she calls "Grundsätze," or principles. This flaw leads to her undoing; the equilibrium of her life is threatened by the arrival of Graf Mengen who is immediately smitten with Faustine, but who possesses very traditional views about male/female relationships. During Andlau's prolonged absence from home, the two fall passionately in love, Faustine leaves Andlau and marries Mengen at the latter's insistence. He fails to see that the vitality of Faustine's personality will not survive the confines of their marriage. In fact, her whispered consent to the marriage is the last point at which we hear her voice in the novel. While she is able to achieve great fame as an artist after marrying Mengen, she has sacrificed her personal freedom; this split is emphasized by the fact that she no longer is narrating her own story in the end, but raher it is a tale told by her husband to an adoring fan. However, despite the fact that Faustine marries, her drive for autonomy will not remain confined for long: by the end of the novel, she leaves her family, with her husband's consent, to enter a convent and dies there shortly thereafter.[56]

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[55] Taeger asserts that, "Faustine und Andlau leben zusammen in einer Art Naturzustand; sie setzen die herrschenden gesellschaftlichen Regeln außer Kraft, die für die Frau nur Gehorsam und Unterordnung unter den Willen des Mannes gelten lassen und den Mann, bei Strafe der Lächerlichkeit, zwingen, diesen Willen durchzusetzen" (258). However, my position is that this is precisely not a "state of nature." It is not an attempt to nullify social rules but an attempt to reenvision social roles. At the same time, Hahn-Hahn thematically avoids the repercussions of such unregulated sexuality: Faustine and Andlau never conceive a child.

[56] In this way, Faustine's fictional life again anticipates Hahn-Hahn's own: in 1850, after the 1849 death of her life's companion, Baron Adolf von Bystram, Hahn-Hahn converts to Catholicism, founds a convent for unwed mothers in 1854 and spends the rest of her life there, without ever taking vows herself, until her death in 1880. See Shubhangi Dabak, "Images of the Orient in the Travel Writings of Ida Pfeiffer and Ida Hahn-Hahn" (Diss. Michigan State U, 1999) 55-58. Furthermore, after Hahn-Hahn's conversion to Catholicism in 1850, she turns away from

Whatever one's view of Hahn-Hahn, from Geiger's adulation to Möhrmann's mild criticism, there is no disputing that she is indeed doing something quite radical with femininity and female development in her work.[57] In *Gräfin Faustine*, as in her other fictional works, Hahn-Hahn asserts that the development of humanity depends on the self-development of its male as well as its female members. She claims a space for a woman's fundamental right to find out who she is and develop along a path of her own choosing. In *Gräfin Faustine*, she is clearly rejecting the more widespread notion that renunciation is a woman's true or natural calling.[58]

As a mouthpiece for what can be termed Hahn-Hahn's feminist agenda, Faustine wrestles with her own development as person and as artist throughout the novel, making a virtue of placing her wishes and desires above those around

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more "worldly" prose and writes to persuade others to join her in religious Catholicism. However, most critics agree that her literary production after her conversion never reaches the standard of her previous work and she fades into anonymity. See Habinger 10. For important dates in Hahn-Hahn's biography, see Geiger 13-14.

[57] A more recent analysis of *Gräfin Faustine* yields another interpretation of the relationship between Faustine and her husband, Graf Mengen. In contrast to Taeger's view of the male/female dynamics in the novel, Judith E. Martin sees Faustine's marriage as the possibility for a woman to "have it all," meaning career, marriage and family. Because she considers the marital relationship such a success, Martin explains its "failure" in those terms, and asserts that "Faustine eventually renounces art in spite of enjoying fame and love. She makes this decision independently of her relationships with men, based solely on the realization that she can never achieve artistic perfection" (148). Hence, her withdrawal into a convent. Judith E. Martin, "Nineteenth-Century German Literary Women's Reception of Madame de Staël" (*Women in German Yearbook* 18 [2002]: 133-157). But Martin is incorrect when she states that Faustine does not achieve artistic perfection: she does and it is at this moment that she renounces art and renounces her family. See *Faustine* 240.

[58] Taeger comments on the distinction: "Der heute selbstverständliche Wunsch, sein Leben nach eigenen Vorstellung auszurichten, sich Konventionen und Zwängen nicht ungefragt zu unterwerfen, galt damals für eine Frau als unentschuldbare natur- und sittenwidrige Grenzüberschreitung. Ein eigener Wille stellte sie außerhalb der gottgewollten Ordnung, die auch juristisch noch Geltung besaß" (247).

her. Like her namesake, Faust, Faustine seeks to go beyond prescribed boundaries. She exclaims,

> wie soll ich Respekt haben vor irgend einer Wesenheit, wenn ich nicht bei meiner eigenen anfange? und habe ich überhaupt erst diese Achtung für menschliche Entwicklung und menschliches Streben gefaßt, wie sollt' ich nicht suchen, zuerst mich selbst durchzuarbeiten? Das ist unser Ziel, das ist unsere Seligkeit. Muß der Mensch nicht stets diesen letzten Zweck alles Seins im Auge behalten? (140).

Hahn-Hahn's own reasons for travel echo the language of this passage. She takes on the extraordinary journey to the "Orient" with the goal of knowledge for its own sake. Her travels are begun with the intention of recreating her own personage into someone more wordly and more knowledgable. As Mary Louise Pratt suggests, there are "connections from travel writing to forms of knowledge and expression that interact or intersect with it, outside and inside Europe" (5).[59] However, it is precisely this definition of personhood and humanity that leads to contradiction.

Many feminist critics, while pointing out contradictions in the feminist content of Hahn-Hahn's work, have looked at the role of the female, aristocratic self within patriarchal Germany. At first glance, this emancipatory stance, quite prevalent in Hahn-Hahn's work, might seem the last place to look for an interaction with the Other. One obvious question, however, would be who is included in this humanist development. It is certainly not the Oriental female slave, who comes to play a significant role in the novel and, later, in the *Orientalische Briefe*. In addition to the feminist momentum of Hahn-Hahn's work,

[59] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*. *Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

I am locating the contradiction in her work, the break in the seamlessness of her ideas, in its racializing relationship to the Other.

Ida von Hahn-Hahn as Orientalist?

As mentioned my first chapter, some feminist approaches to Hahn-Hahn's work have tried to place white women within the discourse of Orientalism in order to be more inclusive of the gender variable. In the process, they differentiate between male and female authorship. At the same time, while trying to correct this lack, feminist critical interaction with individual works and/or authors have often deemed the subject of race secondary to discernable feminst content. After all, racism in works of the nineteenth century is hardly uncommon and is even to be expected. For example, Tamara Felden downplays the blatantly racist descriptions in Hahn-Hahn's *Orientalische Briefe*. While she certainly points out that Hahn-Hahn subscribes to a dominant Eurocentric racializing point of view vis-à-vis the female slaves and fails to grasp the systems of domination in place, Felden avoids making conclusions about such views by instead equating the author's position as a European woman to the "Oriental": both are othered by a white, male-dominated society.[60]

[60] See Felden 293-306. She attempts to subsume Hahn-Hahn's eurocentric and racializing statements into a larger, more positive, perspective by stating that in spite of Hahn-Hahn's racism, or perhaps because of it, Hahn-Hahn is able to give "den angetroffenen Frauen eine eigene Subjektivität, die sich in deren Recht zu körperlicher Häßlichkeit ausdrückt. Dies entrückt sie europäisch-männlichen Lustvorstellungen, trägt zu ihrer Befreiung vom geschlechtlichen (und kulturellen) Objektstatus bei" (305). The questions she asks in her work revolve around this dichotomy. She asks, "[f]indet in den Schilderungen von Frauen nun ein Akt der Dominanz statt oder eine intersubjektive Auseinandersetzung? Stellt sich ein Einfühlungsvermögen heraus, welches auf der – zumindest prizipiellen – Ähnlichkeit der Erfahrung beruht?" (284). Annegret Pelz takes up a similar position when she states that Hahn-Hahn "mit 'Orient' ein Reiseziel beschrieb[...], dessen Kolonisierung mit der Zuschreibung von

Gabriele Habinger comments on the issue of Hahn-Hahn's racist understanding of the Other in her forward to a 1991 collection of the letters. While distinguishing between the parallel motions of othering and formulating subjectivity, Habinger privileges the latter. According to her, the letters reveal not only how the author confronts the Other from her European aristocratic standpoint, but also how she learned and grew through these experiences as if these were two separate strands (10). Habinger asserts that the latter was the drive behind Hahn-Hahn's *Wanderlust*. "Reisen [war] ein wichtiger Teil ihres Selbstfindungsprozesses. [Sie] versuchte damit sowohl ihren Wissensdurst und ihre Neugierde zu stillen als auch den beengenden Rollenvorstellungen ihrer Heimat zu entkommen" (8).

As one can see, Habinger centrally locates Hahn-Hahn's experience of gender inequity in her homeland as part of the driving force behind this "process of finding herself," especially within the institution of marriage. She does not establish, however, an inherent relationship between one and the other. Such a statement assumes that there is an already existing self waiting to be discovered once it is free of patriarchal restraints.[61] It also assumes that travel itself was a

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Weiblichkeit einhergegangen ist. [...] Der Reisebericht einer orientreisenden Europäerin beschreibt demnach eine exzentrische Bewegung von einer Peripherie in die andere, die die Chance mit sich bringt, Selbst- und Fremdbilder aufzubrechen und neu zu schreiben" (206). While Pelz finds that Hahn-Hahn uses the opportunity to claim a "erhabenes Subjekt" position for herself, she emphasizes the parallel nature of this relationship rather than bring out ways in which Hahn-Hahn might objectify the Orient (212).

[61] Yeğenoğlu comments on such an interpretation of "Self": "To inquire into the 'mechanism' of the Western subject's constitution through the psychoanalytic concept of desire is not to suggest that its identity is fully determined. On the contrary, it should be seen as an attempt to explain the constituted character of the subject and thereby to argue that both the closure of the subject's identity and the resistance of the other is never final, but always partial and relative. As Judith Butler warns us, it is erroneous to assume the subject in advance so as to protect its agency, because to argue the constituted character of the subject is not to suggest that

straightforward activity. But travel meant interaction, and travel literature meant writing about that interaction, participating in the discourse about it.

The assertion that a Western traveler can objectively and accurately render his or her experiences with other cultures is not unique to Hahn-Hahn. Nor is the hierarchical, and therefore superior, way that travelers interacted with non-white, non-European peoples. In a more recent study of Hahn-Hahn's work, Shubhangi Dabak asserts that an analysis of travel writings by Hahn-Hahn and Ida Pfeiffer shows "that the two women were colonized patriarchal objects within nineteenth-century German society, and that once they stepped outside and entered the non-European world, they too became colonizing, privileged subjects" (9). [62] While I agree that female authors could achieve autonomy "by creating images of the non-European people" (10), Dabak interacts with the authors and the texts as if they were simply part of a male/female or colonized/colonizer dichotomy – either on one side of the binary opposition or the other. She concludes that they can switch identities, from female to oppressor but do not occupy both simultaneously. To avoid this pitfall, I do not focus on the stereotypical nature of the images themselves but rather on what is served by the process of "stereotyping" or racializing itself.

Thus, I find that there is a lack in critical literature about Hahn-Hahn which can precisely account for these seemingly contradictory aspects of her work. In

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it is determined. In other words, the power that constitutes the subject does not cease to exist 'after' constituting its subject, for the subject 'is never fully constituted, but is subjected and produced time and again'" (61).

[62] Dabak's well-researched dissertation synthesizes many different critical voices in the area of travel literature by women in the nineteenth century.

the following, I view these textual motions of othering and search for autonomy as strands that intertwine rather than as parallel events. As stated above, I look at the novel and the collection of letters for a continuity of this particular theme.

The Role of the Orient/al in *Gräfin Faustine*

In the novel, *Gräfin Faustine*, the relationship between the female subject's autonomy and the Other must remain imaginary. Hahn-Hahn has not yet made her "Oriental Trip" but writes about how she imagines it would be for her heroine: generative and inspiring. A few years later, as the first woman ever to request a travel visa in Constantinople for travel further east, Hahn-Hahn claims for herself the right to such development, and such claims to freedom and knowledge are an essential part of this development.[63] Hahn-Hahn freely acknowledges the "Drang zur Erkenntnis" (16) that motivates her trip to the Orient, and the knowledge to be acquired is privileged over already-existing knowledge.

In August of 1843, Hahn-Hahn spelled out her expectations for the trip in the following excerpt from a letter to her mother on the eve of her departure for Constantinople: "[…] ich kann nun einmal nicht anders als streben und immer

[63] Hahn-Hahn herself acknowledges the fact that she is the first woman to receive such a visa and is quite proud of that fact. She writes to her mother: "Zum Schluß etwas Komisches. Endlich habe ich den Firman bekommen, den ich zur Fortsetzung meiner Reise [...] begehrt habe. [...] Es hat aber Mühe gemacht ihn zu bekommen und der Sekretär, dem die Ausfertigung eines solchen Firmans zukommt, hat nicht gewagt die Verantwortung allein über sich zu nehmen und ihn auszustellen; höhere Beamte sind zu Rat gezogen worden. Und nun rate weshalb! Weil noch nie eine Frau einen Reisefirman begehrt hat. Es war mir vorbehalten diesen in den Annalen des osmanischen Reiches unerhörten Fall herbeizuführen und ich werde nicht ermangeln dies außerordentliche Dokument mit mir nach Europa zurückzubringen, weil es vielleicht einzig in seiner Art auf der Welt ist. Übrigens sieht es ganz gemein aus und, wenn phönixselten, ist es doch mitnichten phönixschön" (96).

streben, und daher geht mir der Drang zur Erkenntnis über das, was ich bereits erkannt habe. Bald nun werde ich wissen, wie der Orient sich im Auge einer Tochter des Okzidents abspiegelt."[64] Her observations were fueled by a desire to possess as knowledge all that she observed. These observations were a move to appropriate the site of the Other, both its personage and its living space. Through this use of the Other, Hahn-Hahn was able to claim for herself as author and for women in general access to knowledge, knowing and knowledge production.

This "orientalist" theme permeates the imaginary content of the novel at first subtly and then with increasing visibility. In the following, I discuss the connection between the development of an emancipated heroine with the role of Oriental female slaves and slavery in the novel.

The connection between the European female and the Oriental female slave is at first something casually mentioned, and easily missed: the first reference to slavery and/or the Orient occurs early on in the novel, and the parallel to male/female relationships is established immediately. At this point, Faustine and her lover, Andlau, are in the home they share, discussing an upcoming separation. They live in a state of happiness that belies the lack of legal status of the union and separation is not a pleasant prospect for either one. Despite the fact that she is clearly the more dynamic of the two, Faustine voices concern that she is being dominated by his more thoughtful analytical ability. It gives him the upper hand in arguments. She says petulantly to him: "Wie jene

[64] *Orientalische Briefe* 17

Sklavinnen des Orients als Zeichen ihrer Knechtschaft nur eine kleine goldene Fessel in der Hand tragen, die wie ein Schmuck aussieht, so ist auch deine Liebe wohl ein Schmuck, aber doch eine Fessel" (17). His love might look like jewelry, she says, but it is also pivotal in his dominance over her. He then counters that she needs this "Fessel" for stability because she is not given to thinking things through clearly.

In the context of her relationship with Andlau, Faustine is playfully evoking the image of the female slave and a more sensual aspect to their slavery with a dainty gold chain. It is a childlike exclamation and is hardly a fitting description of their relationship when Faustine continues to explain their love: "[ich] habe eine echte Sklavennatur und liebe da am meisten, wo ich am meisten tyrannisiert werde" (17).[65] However, it does foreshadow the dynamics of her next relationship. Fortunately for Faustine, Andlau is a benevolent patron and sees that Faustine needs to be a whole person. As her complement, he provides all that she lacks, and she returns the favor. He is necessary for her development, which is the primary focus of the novel: "alles war ihr Mittel, um sich daran fort- und auszubilden" (19). Their comfortable complementariness does not survive

[65] One could read this and the previous passage as more ambivalent towards the prospect (and pleasure) of being dominated by a man. While the text is perhaps ambivalent towards passionate love, it is not at all ambivalent towards marriage. I assert that Hahn-Hahn is ultimately rejecting real dominance, i.e. marriage, as a possibility for Faustine's (or any autonomy-seeking woman's) happiness. She does certainly argue that sexual love is a necessary component to the feminine psyche; however, this becomes impossible within the bonds of marriage. Geiger likens the novel to an experiment and highlights the autobiographical parallels: "Daß dieser Roman sehr starke autobiographische Züge trägt, ist allgemein bekannt. Der Handlungsablauf schildert den Liebeskonflikt Hahn-Hahns: 1836 traf sie [...] Heinrich Simon, in den sie sich leidenschaftlich verliebte. Jedoch wollte sie die Verbindung zu Bystram [Hahn-Hahn's companion] nicht aufgeben. Simon entsagte ihr, als Hahn-Hahn sich weigerte, ihn zu heiraten. Die Trennung war für Hahn-Hahn sehr schwer zu überwinden. In *Faustine* schreibt sie sich diesen Schmerz von der Seele, und phantasiert, wie es gewesen wäre, wenn sie (Hahn-Hahn-Faustine) tatsächlich Simon (Mengen) geheiratet hätte. Nachträglich bejaht sie wohl ihre Ent-scheidung, denn die Ehe geht in die Brüche, und das Buch ist Bystram gewidmet" (150).

Graf Mengen's arrival. Without unshakeable internal convictions and without *Besonnenheit*, she betrays her own anti-marriage stance.

The comparison between the aristocratic European woman and the Oriental female, at the beginning, seems merely descriptive. Its dynamic nature has not yet been fully constructed. Yet even at this stage, the comparison serves to highlight Faustine's desire for autonomy as well as the difficulty she has in staying the course. The time spent with Andlau is most of the narrated time of the novel; however, it is preceded and followed by two failed marriages. In both cases, Faustine consented to the marriage. Thus, the comparison to slavery is made synonomous with that aspect of Faustine's personality that will be responsible for her abdication of autonomy.

The comparison is broadened to include an entire class of women during a discussion between Faustine and her sister, who revels in her role as *Hausfrau*. They resort to the slavery metaphor referring to the power that moneyed men wield over (aristocratic) women in marriage. Through her strong language, the author acquaints the reader with Faustine's ideas about such a woman's role in society. Faustine says:

> ich will nur, daß die Männer mit [Frauen] umgehen wie mit ihresgleichen und nicht wie mit erkauften Sklavinnen, denen man in übler Laune den Fuß auf den Nacken stellt und in guter Laune ein Halsband oder ähnlichen Plunder hinwirft. Das demoralisiert die Frauen, es stumpft ihr Zartgefühl ab. Heut lassen sie sich eine Brutalität gefallen, um dafür morgen einen neuen Hut zu bekommen (50).

While equating (aristocratic) wives with slaves, Hahn-Hahn also suggests that they are complicitous in their exploitation, that they are exploiting the situation

themselves (“sie lassen sich eine Brutalität gefallen, um…”). In addition to her general critique of the institution of marriage in which women are bought and sold, she also levels scorn at women who are willing to trade their self-respect and their sexuality for a new hat. Slavery, here specifically the situation of female slaves, has been emptied of any “real” attempt to engage with that system but is rather used to advocate change in the relationship between European men and women. Slavery has ceased to be a structure that is independent of our white, female protagonist but rather is used to bolster her subjectivity.

It was not uncommon to use the metaphor of slavery in order to assert another kind of emancipatory agenda. This use of slavery would be recognizable to her readers as a metaphor, but only as a one-way phenomenon. How much Hahn-Hahn’s concept of emancipation is indebted to the existence of the enslaved Other remains unexplored. Conversely, once this occurs and the two are equated metaphorically, or rather the latter is appropriated into the system of the former, the agency that has been attributed to white, aristocratic, European women is applied to female slaves. They consent, after all. In other words, the implication is that they are in some way at choice or complicit in their situation and could refuse it. It also reduces the complexity of a system to the individual within it. It removes the female slave from her system while locating the European female solidly within hers.

Faustine’s experience of this “enslaved” condition explains her unconventional living situation. In a discussion with Mengen that takes place before they become involved, Faustine explains her aversion to marriage. As a

very young woman, she had been married off for convenience sake despite her wishes and better judgement. It was a business arrangement. She considered it a big mistake, a debasement of female virtue, implying that sex without love is degrading to women. In marriage, however, it becomes unavoidable because of the nature of this institution: a woman becomes her husband's property. In contrast, her relationship with Andlau, neither legal nor businesslike, was based on mutual love and therefore freedom and equality. She says:

> Von meinem kleinen Erbe lebte ich damals wie ich jetzt lebe, einfach, schlicht, unabhängig, aber damals unsäglich froh durch den mir so neuen Genuß der Freiheit. Meine Liebe war nicht erkauft, ward nicht bezahlt! ich fühlte mich weder gekränkt, noch erniedrigt, noch gedemütigt! in meiner Freiheit fühlte ich mich auf derselben Stufe stehend mit dem Mann (195).

In Faustine's experience, love and marriage are not commensurate: marriage precludes the freedom that love finds necessary. However, love is still essential to female existence, and Faustine gives women a "natural" role. She describe it thus:

> Stets war ich gehoben, nie herabgezogen; stets fühlte ich ein Vorwärtsschreiten, eine Entwicklung, keinen Stillstand, kein Zurückgehen, kein Versinken. Ich war glücklich und fühlte mich durch dies Glück befähigt und stark gemacht, in dieser eigentümlichen Weise es festzuhalten. Dies Glück und diese Weise ließen mich in meiner vollen Selbständigkeit und doch zugleich in der Sphäre des Weibes, welches seine Ausbildung und Befriedigung allein in der Liebe findet. Es war eine unendliche Gewißheit in mir, welche keines endlichen Symbols bedurfte und eine endliche *Fessel* verschmähte (196; emphasis mine).

Although women are defined in relationship to love – it is the only way to be truly formed or fulfilled, they are by no means by nature dependent. In rejecting the finite symbol, or the social institution of marriage she is rejecting the comparison

with female slaves. However, the use of the word “Fessel” brings us back to that first conversation about female slaves between Andlau and Faustine which was held in jest. And it is again hitting the tone that foreshadows the development of the novel as the dynamism of the relationship between Faustine and Andlau contrasts starkly with that which Mengen envisions for Faustine and himself.

Their incompatibility, however, does not take the reader by surprise. During Andlau’s long absence, Faustine and Mengen have more than one conversation about the “natural” differences between men and women, and it is clear that Mengen represents a fairly typical “masculinist” viewpoint. The differences occur in the arena of creativity and artistic genius. Mengen says:

> Zum Schaffen, zum Handeln, zum die Welt aus ihren Fugen Heben wird das Weib nie angeregt, nie! wohl verstanden, nie durch Begeisterung. Durch Intrigen, durch Laune – ja, damit amüsiert sie sich zuweilen. Noch keiner Frau ist es eingefallen, den Geliebten unsterblich zu machen, wie Petrark die Laura und Dante die Beatrice; sie beherrschen nicht einmal die Kunst! viel weniger die Wissenschaft! Die Frau soll noch geboren werden, welche im Stande ist, für eine abstrakte Idee sich zu begeistern bis zum gelassenen Erdulden von Kerker und Verfolgung, wie z. B. Galilei mit seinem ‘e pur si muove!’ Ein weiblicher Sokrates läßt sich nun vollends gar nicht denken! (101)

Faustine responds with the argument that men, as writers of history and more concerned with events than motives, merely watch the actors on the stage and have no idea if there were women in the wings feeding the actors their lines (101). “Sie sind unerhört parteiisch für Ihr Geschlecht!” (102) she objects. For Faustine, artistic genius has no gender (155). In Mengen’s smooth narrative of history where only men can play the major roles, Faustine finds rough edges in

the spaces that women have filled and disturbs the unbroken and male-dominated "Kette der Existenz" (101).

This stark difference in their positions on the role of gender does not prevent the two characters from falling passionately in love. However, no good can come of it. As the narrator explains:

> Hätte sie den Mut, die Stärke und die Besonnenheit gehabt, den Verhältnissen fest ins Auge zu sehen, so wäre ihr bald genug klar geworden, daβ in Marios [Mengens] Entfernung ihrer aller Heil liege, und sie hätte durch ein gefaβtes: 'Fahre hin' dem Schicksal vorbeugen können, das sie zerbrach, als es in seiner vollen Macht über sie herbrauste; sie hätte durch eine ruhige Darlegung ihrer innersten Seelenverbindung mit Andlau Mengen auf einmal, ehe er ein Wort gesagt, durch einen einzigen kurzen Schmerz, in sein altes Gleichgewicht, wenigstens äuβerlich, zurückgestellt, und in dem seinen das ihre gefunden; sie hätte alles das tun können, was sie nicht tat, eben weil ihr Mut, Stärke und Besonnenheit fehlten (172).[66]

Unfortunately, from the moment Faustine confesses her love to Mengen, she must align her thoughts and actions with his. We are reminded of her *Sklavennatur* which is contrasted with "Mut," "Stärke," and "Besonnenheit." Slaves cannot possess these qualities. This would seem to place the blame for the failure of the marriage on the individual natures within it. However, as we saw earlier, the Oriental female has already been positioned within the dynamic of this relationship and in the inherent unequal balance of power in the institution of marriage.

[66] The tone of this passage suggests retrospective wisdom on the part of the narrator. We learn later on in the course of events that Andlau does not recover from his break with Faustine. She sees him once more as he lies wretched and dying in a pension in Italy. While the complicated emotions that must be at work in such a dynamic are difficult to pin down, what remains is that much of the conflict is deflected onto and mediated by the Orient/al.

At this moment of marriage between Faustine and Mengen, there is a shift in the role that the Orient/Oriental plays in the novel. The fundamental difference and gendered way in which each character views the Orient/al anticipates the "failure" of the marriage, or Faustine's escape into a convent. When Faustine agrees to marry Mengen despite her distaste for the institution, there begins a series of deeper and more meaningful comparisons between female development and the role of the Oriental as it becomes clear that Faustine's version of life and love conflicts deeply with Mengen's more socially acceptable one. The role of the Orient/al remains metaphoric in this process, but as we will see, it is no longer a metaphor that Faustine uses to define and defend her emancipatory agenda for European women. Instead, the main character's struggle is displaced from the unequal relationship to which she consents. Ironically, the Orient becomes the imaginary place where she could be free.

Due to her "Sklavennatur," Faustine will submit and marry Mengen after which point he carries the "leichenähnliche" Faustine off to his parents' estate, foreshadowing the disastrous consequences that passion over reason will have for her. As stated above, the moment of her consent to marriage is also the last moment that her "voice" is heard directly in the novel. The rest of their story is narrated by her husband, told in flashback after her death to a curious female interlocutor. As Judith Martin has pointed out, this is the story of a female artist who achieves greatness, but it is not one of a woman who can "have it all."[67] In my reading of the novel, Faustine is able to become a great artist at the cost of the ideal relationship she had had, and her own personal development; her story

[67] See footnote 57.

is now told by another. Instead of associating love with freedom and growth as Faustine did, Mengen describes the relationship with words like "Schranken," "sich fügen lernen," and "Gesetz," and thus demonstrates a more "bourgeois" or institutional view of marriage. He explains:

> Bis dahin hatte sie außerhalb der Welt gelebt und sich ihr […] wie ein Fremdling gegenübergestellt. […] [Sie verstand] vielleicht nicht einmal die Liebe, obgleich sie Andlau mächtig geliebt hatte, denn sie wollte sich durch die Liebe außerhalb aller Schranken frei fühlen; und nur innerhalb Schranken kann Freiheit bestehen, außerhalb liegen Willkür und Auflösung (220).

And later he says:

> [I]ch wollte, daß sie sich fügen lernen sollte – nicht mir! ach, […] nicht, daß ich sie dominierte! – aber dem anerkannten festen Gesetz. Ich glaubte, die allmähliche Gewöhnung würde auch ihre innerste Wesenheit nach und nach zügeln können (222).

As Taeger notes, Mengen "gelingt es, sie zu 'zügeln', ohne zu wissen, daß er das zerstört, was sie ihm liebenswert gemacht und worin ihre Kraft gelegen hatte" (255). This psychological interpretation, however, leaves both Faustine's burst of artistic genius unconsidered and the fact that, in a moment of weakness, she gave her consent to this marriage is not addressed either. One could say that she received a "new hat," i.e. passionate love and artistic greatness, which gave her pleasure for a time, but in the end the price was too high.

At the moment of their marriage, the presence of the Orient/al in the novel becomes more pronounced. In fact, the novel's critique of the institution of marriage is "rerouted" through the Orient/al, both symbolically and literally, relying on the dynamics of that particular relationship to explicate its own.[68] As much as

[68] As Ann Laura Stoler points out, such a "rerouting" potentially occupies a significant role in the constituting of self: "If this rerouting of the history of sexuality through the history of empire

Faustine extols its nature, the subjective experience of love cannot bridge the incompatibility between female autonomy and the institution of marriage. According to Mengen, the role that a woman is supposed to play in marriage, that is, conform to the "anerkannten festen Gesetz," seems to agree with Faustine when they are first married. As he remarks: "Zeitenlang war sie weichlich, üppig wie eine Orientalin, lag halbe Tage auf dem Divan mit halbgeschlossenen Augen, träumend, denkend, dichtend, und langweilte sich nicht" (222). Whereas for Faustine the pivotal term was "Sklavin," Mengen chooses the "Orientalin" and in this instance, the Oriental female slave, now interchangeable with Faustine, is laden with fantasies about access to female sexuality.[69] This is, of course, precisely the fantasy that was so distasteful to Faustine and symbolic of what was "demoralizing" for women in a European marriage. How unlike Faustine's own description of herself basking in Andlau's love with its dynamic verbs and striving rhythm.[70]

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makes analytic sense, then we must ask whether the racial configurations of that imperial world, rather than being peripheral to the cultivation of the nineteenth-century bourgeois self, were not constitutive of it. […] Such a perspective figures race, racism, and its representation as structured entailments of post-enlightenment universals, as formative features of modernity, as deeply embedded in bourgeois liberalism, not as aberrant offshoots of them" (8-9). I argue that this process of "rerouting" is vital to understanding Hahn-Hahn's conception of feminine autonomy. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke UP, 1995).

[69] Much has been written on the metaphorical connection between the Orient and, mostly female, sexuality from the white, European male perspective. See Said 188.

[70] Hahn-Hahn is clearly confronting the institution of marriage from the female perspective and also attempting to displace the male fantasy of the harem woman. However, in agreement with Yeğenoğlu's argument, I would not then recategorize this as an example of Hahn-Hahn's resistance because she is confronting the male fantasy of the harem woman. As Said has pointed out "she [the Oriental woman] never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history" (6). It is the *perception* of the female slave which is the site of their disagreement, but in either case, she remains the site.

Mengen's appropriation of Faustine's "story" parallels the consistent move to appropriate the narrative of the Orient/al. While the novel critiques the power structures that enable the former, the latter remains unexamined. Even more importantly, it serves the former. Once Faustine and Mengen are married, their differing perspectives of what is appropriate for female development are further explored by a trip to the Orient at the end of the novel. The "Orient" itself becomes the site of their conflict. Mengen at first denies her the trip, asserting that she should get used to an orderly, monotonous pace of existence, or "den geregelten, einförmigen Gang der Existenz im Verkehr mit anderen wie in der bürgerlichen Stellung" (228). Knowing that such a plodding existence is antithetical to her needs, Faustine asserts that the Orient, both "historical" and "poetic," would be stimulating and generative for her both as person and artist, and for their son, who has since been born.[71]

After she earns the money herself and persists in her wish for such a trip, Mengen relents. Mengen describes her in retrospect as "[b]erauscht von den Quellen der Urgeschichte und der Urpoesie, die jenem Boden entquollen" (231). Faustine's belief is confirmed that greatness "in diesen primitiveren Zuständen, leichter zu erreichen sei, als da draußen, in der verschrobenen, abhetzenden okzidentalischen Zivilisation" (232). Availing itself of the familiar Occident/Orient opposition, the novel uses the primeval space of the Orient as the flower bed where Faustine's talents will bloom as never before.

[71] In Faustine's seemingly contradictory stance, one is reminded of Zantop's statement about "attraction and repulsion," whereby her fascination with the Orient is only insofar as it can aid her own development. See page 17 of my introductory chapter.

For Mengen, this trip is the most happiness he experiences in his marriage with Faustine. For her, it is a connection to a mythic past. It is also the antidote for the smothering nature of contemporary European civilization, and especially marriage. At one point, Faustine says that if their son were hers alone, she would raise him in the Orient to keep him from the narrowminded and one-sided education he will receive in Europe. Mengen disagrees, allying himself with the existence that is both his and his son's birthright as Europeans. Faustine drops the issue of Bonaventura's education with the remark: "Ich hab' auch nur gesagt: wenn Bonaventura mein Sohn allein wär! – jetzt bist du mein Herr und der seine" (233).

As Mengen reports after her death, the pinnacle of her artistic achievement and the last thing she ever created as an artist was "Moses", "[ein] Gedicht, welches die brennende Farbenpracht und die mystische Tiefe des Orients gleichsam abkühlt und aufklärt in den Kristallfluten ihrer Andacht, Sehnsucht und Begeisterung" (240). This unwomanly "Begeisterung" can not only comprehend the mystical depths of the Orient but can render them into art. She is both inspired by and in control of this space which is no longer peopled symbolically by anyone else in the novel but her, thus completely erasing the Oriental female slaves from view and from consideration. In addition, it is the control of this space and its meaning which mitigates for Faustine the loss of control she experiences in marriage.

By this point, the dynamic process of her development, that is, the part she sacrificed in marrying Mengen, becomes irrevocably entwined with the role

of the Orient. The narration of Faustine's life *and* the "Orientalin" has been placed in the hands of the representative of bourgeois patriarchal Germany. The critique of the male-female relationship within the boundaries of the marital institution is displaced onto the comparison with slavery. Neither the marital relationship nor the novel itself can account for the political or personal consequences of feminine "Faustian" striving. Instead, it projects such conflicts away from their origin onto the imaginary space of the "Orient."

Ultimately the novel leaves the comparison between European marriage and Oriental slavery intact. However, unlike actual female slaves, Faustine is able to escape her "enslavement": she leaves her family and joins a convent. At the very end of the novel, the curious female interlocutor calls Faustine a "Vampirnatur" and warns that her type is dangerous to men. The distance that the narrator, as well as the author, seems to take from Faustine is puzzling at first. However, I think we can read this description as designed to emphasize again how important it is that women are able to be independent creatures. If only Faustine had possessed enough "Mut," "Stärke," and "Besonnenheit" to remain independent. The importance of these qualities is addressed again in Hahn-Hahn's *Orientalische Briefe*.

I have shown that the development of the female self in the novel depends on the initial characterization of slavery or the slave as a static metaphor; it is the static, and inaccurate, conception of the latter, devoid of that very thing that makes development possible, that provides the potential for the development of the former. In other words, there is no shift in the portrayal of the situation of

female slaves which not only contrasts with the development of the heroine but enables it. By the end of the novel, any people called "Orientals" have been thrust into a position of "non-identity" and removed from the imaginary space called the "Orient" which in turn provides a space important for female development.[72] At the same time, the implication of agency which is then projected onto the female slave becomes even more relevant in the interaction with female slaves in the *Orientalische Briefe*.

Ida von Hahn-Hahn's Travels to the "real" Orient

In the two works under consideration here, the textual intersection of self and Other expresses itself in the context of travel, i.e. as a journey from imagined to actual contact with the "Other." In an introductory letter to the collection composed after her return, she cautions: "Wer das Reisen wie eine oberflächliche Zerstreuung betrachtet, der gehe nicht in den Orient. Vergnügungen bietet er nicht, nur Lehren und Offenbarungen" (16). There is so much that is remarkable in Hahn-Hahn's own trip to the Orient, a trip which, as she said, offered no pleasure, only lessons. In other words, she imagines that her completed trip has been as inspiring and generative as it was for her heroine, Faustine. As I stated earlier, Hahn-Hahn was the first woman to ever request a visa in Constantinople for travel further east. In a day and age when travel to another city in Europe was often fraught with difficulty, Hahn-Hahn's undertaking

[72] As Yeğenoğlu explains, "[d]ifference, within a signifying economy such as Orientalism, is nothing but the self's/same own excluded but necessary negative other. It is therefore always understood, to borrow a phrase from Spivak, 'as unlike (non-identical with) it yet with reference to it'" (84).

was immense. Her letters from this trip span three volumes as she corresponded with her mother, her brother, her sister and a friend from her travels from Constantinople to Syria and back again.

In addition, and as others have pointed out with travel literature, foreign lands often provided the freedom to criticize European culture and society, if only indirectly. [73] By experiencing distance and difference, one is able to establish a more critical relationship vis-à-vis one's homeland, and Hahn-Hahn availed herself of this opportunity.

However, I am more interested in the traveler's claims to self-development and the interaction of who she claims to be and what she claims to know about the various peoples she meets on her travels. As is the case with *Gräfin Faustine*, these themes are inseparable. Once Hahn-Hahn's heroine, in this case, the writer herself, makes the transition to a real experience of the Orient, her capacity for observation and detail grows in leaps and bounds, and she has the intention of being truthful about the Orient as she witnesses it. In the following, I begin by looking at some of Hahn-Hahn's observations that critique and expose hardships that women suffered in the cities she visited. These critiques, however, also serve to expose how the paradigm of the Oriental slave woman facilitates Hahn-Hahn's vision of herself as an autonomous female. In addition, it is the space of the Orient that supports her transgression of the traditional gender role allotted her, a facilitation that is not expressly acknowledged by Hahn-Hahn. Instead, the Orient is treated as an object of discovery and knowledge. The reader comes to see that "Besonnenheit," or the

[73] See, for example, Pratt 156.

ability see clearly, plays an important role in the evaluation of women and human beings.

As in *Gräfin Faustine*, Hahn-Hahn finds many parallels between a woman's situation in various "Oriental" cities that she visits and a woman's situation in Europe. Again, she exposes their sexual and economic exploitation by men, consistently pointing out how such a relationship brings both women and men closer to their "animal instinct" rather than to a more "civilized" ideal. In contrast to the construction of the Oriental female slave in the novel, however, it is the experience of meeting real people that Hahn-Hahn records in her letters, the experiences of actual women that she analyzes.

Indeed, Hahn-Hahn discusses at different points the specifically gendered hardships of divorce, child marriage and polygamy, and seems to have more empathy for the women in these difficult situations. Hahn-Hahn also comments on divorce and notices how women bear the hardship in its wake. While she herself compares the children of the poor to "Pilze" and "Fliegen," she comes to the conclusion that women in the "Orient" are merely things, not people.

> Bei den Arabern ist nichts so häufig wie Ehescheidungen. Fünf, zehn, ja zwanzig Mal schicken sie die eine Frau weg und nehmen die andere, auch wenn sie Kinder mit ihr haben. Haben sie Vermögen, so müssen sie an Frau und Kinder etwas geben; haben sie keines, so muß die Frau sich durchhelfen wie sie kann, bald zu ihren Eltern zurückgehen, wenn die sie aufnehmen wollen, bald ihren Lebensunterhalt verdienen; Kinder armer Leute werden geboren wie Pilze und sterben wie die Fliegen: auf die wird nicht viel Rücksicht genommen. Zu einer Scheidung gehört sehr wenig. […] Bei vierzig oder fünfzig Jahren versuchen die Männer häufig ihr Eheglück mit kleinen neun- und zehnjährigen Mädchen – sei es der Neuheit wegen, sei es in der Hoffnung sie geschmeidiger und fügsamer zu finden. […] Wenn man das bedenkt: die unmündige Kindheit, die Sorge für einen Haushalt, für Lebenserwerb – wozu in

> den unteren Ständen die Frau durch Arbeit beitragen muß – endlich gar Kinder, deren Geburt und Pflege: dies alles auf so schwache Schultern gewälzt, so begreift sich leicht, daß der Mann Anlaß zu vielfacher Unzufriedenheit findet. Aber weshalb geht er solche Ehe ein? – Es liegt schon sittliche Entartung darin, finde ich, sie mit einem Kinde zu schließen, und es ist unmöglich daß die Polygamie den Mann nicht entarten sollte, da sie das Weib in keinem anderen, als einem seiner animalischen Natur entsprechenden Verhältnis zu ihm bringt. Daher ist auch Scheidung und Polygamie ein Unsinn; denn zur Scheidung gehört zuvor ein freiwilliges Zusammenfinden von zwei Personen, aber nicht das Überliefern von einer willenlosen an eine andre die einen Willen hat. Zwei Willen können eins werden und dürfen es; – auch über die Scheidung. Im Orient ist die Frau nie eine Person, stets eine Sache […] (324-25).

In addition to Hahn-Hahn's insightful remarks about the situation of women, one must also notice that it is also she who has turned the Oriental woman into the "thing" here: she has made her the object of study but not given her a voice. Further, it is Hahn-Hahn who uses the term "animalisch" to describe the state in which women, or even girls, are acquired and kept as sexual objects, i.e. given into marriage.

Hahn-Hahn asserts that she intends to portray the true situation of women in the harem, as opposed to the men who have written about the harem without ever having seen it. In that vein, she notes in a letter to her mother from Constantinople that life in the harem is not something that one simply gets used to:

> Und sage man immerhin, daß die Orientalinnen an den Harem gewöhnt sind und daß Gewohnheit alles erträglich, ja leicht mache, so ist das eine von den vielen halbwahren, abgebrauchten Phrasen (39).

In another letter to her mother from Damascus, she is critical of the harem women but even more so of the harem as institution. "[D]er Harem macht stupid und roh, das ist gewiß," she writes (152).

Due to her gender, Hahn-Hahn can claim a different perspective because she describes the situation in the harem from actual experience as opposed to male authors. At the same time, the following quote reveals again Hahn-Hahn's tendency to describe the situation of the women she sees with animal metaphors.

> So eine Masse roher Weiber zu sehen, ist mir schrecklich. Lieber sehe ich eine Herde Kühe oder Schafe. Der Harem erniedrigt das Weib zum Vieh. Nimm nicht übel den starken Ausdruck, Herzensmama! Ich kann's nicht sehen, nicht denken ohne Empörung. Die Männer, die sich die Erlaubnis nehmen über Dinge zu schreiben, die sie nicht kennn, haben denn oft behauptet, die Orientalinnen fühlten sich gar nicht unglücklich im Harem (153).

As Felden has pointed out, Hahn-Hahn produces a text that clearly runs counter to the European male fantasy of harem women (296-306). Such a distinction reminds the reader of the different ways in which Faustine and Mengen viewed the Oriental female slaves. The "abgebrauchten Phrasen" to which Hahn-Hahn refers above are certainly the stereotypical images of harem women, existing only as objects of male desire. For Felden, as well as Geiger, the "truthfulness" of Hahn-Hahn's representations sets her apart from a "masculinist" representation which is clearly motivated by sexual desire, and makes her resistant to patriarchal dominance (306).

Nevertheless, the harem is an image invested with multiple layes of desires and expectations, and this can be said of Hahn-Hahn's description of it

as well. In letters to her brother, Hahn-Hahn describes the physicality of the harem women in more detail than in the letters to her mother. As opposed to Felden who reads this as subverting the masculinist ideal, I read Hahn-Hahn's personal enjoyment, imagining her brother's disappointment as she almost gleefully describes their overweight bodies, as well as the propensity towards "gluttony" and "sloth."[74] Felden fails to take into consideration the possibility that Hahn-Hahn's refutation of the sexual allure of the harem could also have its roots in Hahn-Hahn's own sexual jealousy or insecurity faced with competition from a fantasy of Oriental allure.

Even if the fact that Hahn-Hahn's experiences as a woman in a German state might indeed allow her more insight into the plight of the Oriental female, it is not the validity, or "truth value," of her assertions that is the main issue here. Rather, I point out that the subjective value for Hahn-Hahn as narrator in her position vis-à-vis the Other in the letters remains consistent with her earlier novel: Hahn-Hahn's very own development is at the forefront. As quoted earlier in this chapter, Hahn-Hahn writes to her mother, "ich kann nun einmal nicht anders als streben und immer streben, und daher geht mir der Drang zur Erkenntnis über das, was ich bereits erkannt habe. Bald nun werde ich wissen, wie der Orient sich im Auge einer Tochter des Okzidents abspiegelt" (17). This quote is typical

[74] See Hahn-Hahn 78-86. The European woman traveler's claim to a realistic portrayal had subjective value other than resistance to patriarchal domination. Yeğenoğlu points out that in the portrayal of the harem, for example, the status of non-European women becomes a category of knowledge and comparison. She states, "While providing the necessary legitimizing force for colonialism, Enlightenment thought has also supplied Western liberal feminism with a whole battery of discursive strategies to know and understand its ethnographic other, and thus to secure the integrity of its own identity *vis-à-vis* its dark and uncanny double. Such a discursive lineament was crucial in the emergence and consolidation of what we might call, 'an imperial Western feminist gesture'" (97).

for the language that Hahn-Hahn uses throughout both *Gräfin Faustine* and the *Orientalische Briefe* and reveals the momentum that drives them. As Hahn-Hahn portrays it, the goal of any journey, ultimately, is knowledge.

Over the course of the rest of this chapter, I shift the focus to Hahn-Hahn's travel letters in order to show how the particularly dynamic female self – in this case, Hahn-Hahn as traveler – is both revealed and simultaneously created in the context of the "Orient." When Ida von Hahn-Hahn declares herself "eine Tochter des Okzidents," she is claiming for herself the role of mediator and offspring of Western culture as well as humanity and by asserting an ability to "see" the Other and to reproduce faithfully as text the people that she meets, the traveler acknowledges her reason for being there, i.e. acquiring "it" as knowledge. As we saw in *Gräfin Faustine*, the people native to these sites are transformed into a kind of static metaphor, as well as the sites themselves, with "alle historischen und poetischen Erinnerungen" meant to inspire the Western traveler, not the current inhabitants. Both site and peoples are subsumed into a larger vision of the progress of humanity. And again, it is the appropriation that fuels the vision.

As other European travel writers were wont to do, Hahn-Hahn contrasts the position of the women she encounters with that of a European woman and locates the treatment of women as the distinction between East and West as she writes:

> Ach, welch eine Wonne, zu den alten sogenannten nordischen Barbaren, zu den Völkern germanischen Stammes zu gehören, bei denen bis in die graueste Vorzeit hinein das Weib den Platz eines

> Menschen einnahm. Die Polygamie ist eine Mauer, welche den Orient gegen das Christentum absperrt (153).

According to Hahn-Hahn, it is not simply the institution of polygamy per se, but the effect this institution has on the women's character. As one might infer from Hahn-Hahn's animal metaphors, this institution precludes autonomy and human development for its women. Hahn-Hahn states:

> Ja, sie treten in das Joch des Harems, und dessen Form ist ihnen zur Gewohnheit geworden; aber gegen den Inhalt sträubt sich ihr Instinkt – ich will nicht sagen ihr Bewußtsein, denn das mag bei wenigen erwachen – nur der Instinkt, der unabweisliche, allmächtige. Da keine Geistes- und Seelenbildung ihn bändigt und regelt, wie sollte es da nicht zu den heftigsten Ausbrüchen, zu den tiefsten Gemeinheiten, zu den größten Grausamkeiten kommen. Der Harem ist die wahre Anstalt um den Charakter der Frau zu verderben, und es ist wohl schade, daß er für europäische Augen mit undurchdringlichen Schleiern umgeben ist (39).[75]

The literal veil of the individual woman and the metaphorical veil that renders the harem and its women impenetrable to Western eyes does not serve in Hahn-Hahn's view to heighten the mystery surrounding these women but rather to further subjugate them. In other words, according to Hahn-Hahn, if the veil were removed, Europeans would see more clearly what the circumstances of the harem were. She also seems to be pointing out that this act would bring the women in the harem closer to their European counterparts, and hence, closer to more civilized personhood.[76] In the letter to her brother after the visit to the

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[75] As Yeğenoğlu points out, the relative posititon of women in different cultures becomes a point of comparison and as such a way of distinguishing the level of "civilization." She asserts that "[t]he question of woman gained a particular significance in the articulation of colonial and anthropological discourses. The anthropological discourse on the Muslim or Middle Eastern woman is characterized with an articulation of colonial and liberal feminist rhetoric in which woman's status is used as the proof of the backwardness of Eastern cultures" (97).

[76] See Yeğenoğlu on the veil, 53-61.

harem, Hahn-Hahn writes, “mehr noch als der Leib, wohnt hier der Geist im Käfig. Die Existenz wird zum Erschrecken materiell” (86).[77] While Hahn-Hahn purports to be critical of the harem because it is oppressive to women, her statement is more evidence of Hahn-Hahn’s eurocentric viewpoint, as it does demand that the Orient be opened to the West in order to be liberated. She can only conceive of autonomy for women in these terms.

While this part of the discussion surrounding Hahn-Hahn’s work is reminiscent of Yeğenoğlu’s discussion of Lady Mary Worthley Montagu’s collection of letters that I discussed in the introduction, I would like to reassert my position that Hahn-Hahn does not “borrow the phallus” in order to enter the space of the harem, literally or figuratively. A discussion of emancipation for women does not necessarily need to happen via a ‘masculinist’ enterprise, to which women only gain entry by borrowing masculinity. As I point out in the introduction, such an assertion falls back on essentializing gender and reduces all interaction to domination or resistance to domination. Hence, there is no appropriate way to discuss assertions of female autonomy. Instead, I assert that Hahn-Hahn’s seemingly contradictory position can be explained in part by the existence of a precolonial element which facilitates relationships of domination whereby the process in which an autonomous Western Self constitutes itself happens via the exclusion of an uncivilized Other.

Re-quoting Hahn-Hahn’s assertion that “[i]m Orient ist die Frau nie eine Person, stets eine Sache” (325), one needs to ask the following question: what

[77] With these words, one is also reminded of the situation of aristocratic women who are married to domineering men in *Gräfin Faustine*, who are “demoralized” but never quite turned into animals.

constitutes a person or a thing? And how does one render that difference into text? Or is it precisely the describability itself that connotes a thing? And how can one talk about one's own subject constitution, based in part on the authority to make these kinds of textual distinctions? Such questions are relevant to the following passage in the *Orientalische Briefe*. At one point, Hahn-Hahn writes to her mother:

> Alles läßt sich beschreiben, meine liebe Mutter, Menschen, ihr Leben, ihre Kleider, ihre Häuser, ihre Leidenschaften, ihre Zustände: nur nicht die Natur, die Physiognomie eines Landes. Geographisch und ethnographisch muß man das unternehmen: hat man das Genie dieser Wissenschaften, so wird Leben in die gewaltige formlose Masse hineinkommen und ihr die Form geben, in der sich ihre Individualität am klarsten ausprägt (111).

In this passage, which echoes a passage quoted above describing her desire to reflect what she sees, she makes explicit again the assertion that it is possible for a (European) traveler to enter this space and assess its people and its culture. However, in the course of this "describing," the understood Western subject is to act as a mirror in which everything is reflected accurately but which does not add anything to the image.

The descriptions of peoples in her letters suggest a narrative distance while landscapes and natural wonders, for instance, receive the fullness of textual ardor. Describing nature, she asserts, is the real challenge, a task that one should undertake with "ethnographic" tools.

> Hat man [das Genie] nicht, so wird die Beschreibung nur jenen öden Landkarteneindruck machen, bei dem man denkt: Also das Land mit den grünen Grenzen ist Syrien und das mit den roten Kleinasien. Ich habe es nicht; darum behüte mich der Himmel vor Beschreibungen! Aber wenn ich einen Blick auf dies reiche, sonnendurchglühte Land werfe, wenn ich das Arom seiner Pflanzen

> und seiner Luft einatme, wenn ich in seine Nächte hineinwache, die weicher und wärmer als unsre Tage sind, so denke ich dennoch: ich werd' es aber doch beschreiben, und wenn auch weiter nichts daraus wird als – das Land mit den Blumenkranzgrenzen (111-112).

Here and throughout her letters, Hahn-Hahn claims an ability to render people into text, to recognize no discrepancy between how she sees them; and who they are separates them from all of the mystery and dynamism of the landscape they inhabit while it infuses her, the European traveler, with the wonder of inspiration. In the same motion, by contrast, it renders the inhabitants of this land flat, static and lifeless. In Hahn-Hahn's view, there is no self-constitution among these people but rather only what she imbues them with: what makes her autonomous or fully individualized renders them static and lifeless. As Hahn-Hahn constitutes her role as "seer" and "objective observer," this other dynamic remains unseen.

In both *Gräfin Faustine* and the *Orientalische Briefe*, the comparison of Europe and Orient is a vehicle to explore Hahn-Hahn's vision of historical progress and she stands in awe at the site of the "birthplace of civilization" and its generative effect on her, the traveler, at the same time denying the Oriental Self a present and a future. Hahn-Hahn's own personal development parallels the progress of civilization in the course of history. While she presents herself as an autonomous, authoritative, and knowledgeable traveler, we know that the distinction from the Other has supplied in part the momentum for that development.

We can also see, however, that the space of the Orient, while serving this more general and European human development, is a basin for anxieties about

her homeland. At one point, Hahn-Hahn writes, “von dem Weltteil der ist, will ich zu dem hin, der *war*; aus der europäischen Gegenwart in die orientalische Vergangenheit,” in order to have hope that

> dasjenige was *sein wird* aus dem was *gewesen* ist herausspinnt. Hoffnungen will ich, nur Hoffnungen! …nicht für mich, nicht für andere, aber für uns alle. In Europa sieht es so hoffnungslos aus, so unruhig (88).

Hahn-Hahn asserts that the anxiety is not hers alone and she certainly could be refering to the political upheaval that was taking place in mid-nineteenth-century Germany. There is also, as has been pointed out, a shifting of class power in which the middle class is taking over political, social, and moral authority.

While Hahn-Hahn denies that she herself is in need of “hope,” there are points in her letters that unintentionally reveal anxieties and misgivings during her travels about the absence of certainty or knowledge. As Annegret Pelz points out,

> bei Hahn-Hahn ist die Ausreise aus dem “civilisirten Europa” von Metaphern der Loslösung und der Desorientierung begleitet: die Donau “windet sich so schlangenhaft, daß man nicht weiß woher man kommt, wohin man geht” (hh I, 67). Der Fluß gleicht einem Kulturstrom, der in Räume vordringt, in denen “Totenstille” und “Einsamkeit” herrschen und in deren Innern sich unsichtbar “immense Ebenen” und “weite Moraste ausdehnen, ohne daß gebahnte Straßen sie durchziehen” (hh I, 82) (206).

Pelz brings out Hahn-Hahn’s disorientation in order to support her position that Hahn-Hahn is leaving behind her proscribed European gender roles. While I agree that it is not surprising that a traveler would feel anxiety upon leaving his/her homeland for the unknown, and that Hahn-Hahn is transgressing the boundaries of what was considered typical female behavior, as stated above, I do

not read a parallel construction between White woman and Orient. Instead, as we also see in the next quote, I read the reassertion of Hahn-Hahn's authority to describe as fundamental to her relationship with the Orient. Thus, anxiety as well as knowledge is mediated by the authority to represent the Other.

In the following passage, Hahn-Hahn has just arrived in Constantinople and describes what she sees. Pelz also cites this passage as well; however, she omits the first sentence in the description while I choose to include it because it frames Hahn-Hahn's experience of uncertainty differently:

> Mehr noch als die fürchterliche Unsauberkeit fällt mir die fürchterliche Unordnung auf. Daß die Straßen sehr schmal, sehr krumm, sehr steil aufsteigend sind, ist ihr geringster Fehler; der Rinnstein in der Mitte ist bei ihrer großen Schmalheit schon viel unbequemer; aber welch ein Steinpflaster! [...] Dein Sonnenschirm bleibt alle drei Schritt zwischen diesen ernormen, roh zusammengewürfelten Steinen stecken; Dein Fuß alle zehn Schritt. Weil die Gasse nach der Mitte zu abschüssig ist, so hast Du im Grunde nie einen sicheren Tritt, denn ihrer Enge wegen beginnt der Abhang unmittelbar an den Häusern. Du gehst also beschwerlich genug (28).

In a gesture symbolic of the traveler's anxiety, Hahn-Hahn bemoans the lack of a "sure step" and the difficulty of moving from place to place on this poorly constructed or maintained road. The critical tone of the first sentence, distances Hahn-Hahn, the observer, from that which she observes and the effect that it has on her. This distance, in turn, based on the implication that Europeans would achieve better results, creates a certain amount of control over the cause of her anxiety, i.e. the lack of sure footing, as she steps into the unknown, both literally and figuratively.[78]

[78] At another point, in a letter from Damaskus to her friend, Gräfin Schönburg-Wechselburg, Hahn-Hahn states that German "Kolonisten" could help tremendously to create

The tension between the desire for knowledge and autonomy and the real limitations placed upon this desire is not resolved in Hahn-Hahn's work in part because she displaces the conflict onto another space, an Other's space. At this specific moment, she does not locate the gender inequality in Europe as the reason for her travel, or as the impetus for the gathering of knowledge. Nonetheless, as the quote from *Gräfin Faustine* again makes clear, Hahn-Hahn asserts that the development or progress of humanity has relied on its male as well as its female members. As Faustine states,

> wie soll ich Respekt haben vor irgend einer Wesenheit, wenn ich nicht bei meiner eigenen anfange? und habe ich überhaupt erst diese Achtung für menschliche Entwicklung und menschliches Streben gefaßt, wie sollt' ich nicht suchen, zuerst mich selbst durchzuarbeiten? Das ist unser Ziel, das ist unsere Seligkeit. Muß der Mensch nicht stets diesen letzten Zweck alles Seins im Auge behalten? (140).

Conversely, it is a person's participation in this development that renders him or her really human and deserving of consideration. The progress of humanity should be reflected in each individual as part of some divine plan. By developing the Self, one is participating in this movement, and in the process coming closer to the divine plan. This is a concept that is far more developed in the *Orientalische Briefe* than in the novel.

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order and bring water to the desert. According to Hahn-Hahn, they are industry personified while the inhabitants of Bekaa are too easily satiated and their government is corrupt: "Man könnte [den Leontes] herrlich zu Irrigationen benutzen und die Bekaa in den üppigsten Garten verwandeln. Allein das Volk ist so mäßig, daß seine Bedürfnisse durch geringere Mühe reichlich befriedigt werden; und die Regierung denkt nur daran, Menschen und Land auszusaugen, aber nicht im geringsten an die Vermehrung der einen, und die Verbesserung des anderen. Ach, liebes Herz, wäre das türkische Regiment ein zuverlässiges, ich meine ein solches, das Ordnung halten könnte in seinem eigenen Reich: dann ein paar tausend tüchtige, fleißige, arbeitgewohnte, brave deutsche Hände hieher zu schaffen, statt nach dem unseligen Amerika, das könnte etwas Gutes werden" (129).

While they both refer to women, the following quotes builds a stark contrast to the preceding one. She begins a letter to her brother, which goes on to describe black female slaves in a marketplace, in a teasing way:

> Mein liebster Dinand, heute gedenke ich Dir ein ganz besondres Vergnügnen zu machen, und Dich einzuladen mit mir den Sklavenmarkt zu besuchen. Wohlverstanden den *Sklavinnenmarkt*, den Blumenflor von Georgien und Zirkassien, und voll schwarzer äthiopischer Schönheiten – alle zu kaufen wie die schönste Viehherde! (49).

The teasing, based on the assumption that "Dinand," as a white European male, will have certain images in his mind about female slaves in the Orient, seems to be catering to his expectations. With the last phrase, however, comparing this "herd" of female slaves to animals she is dashing them. As we have seen, Hahn-Hahn's enthusiasm for contradicting such sexually charged images of Oriental women could also be attributed to competitive feelings that such images arouse in her.

Hahn-Hahn then moves from the description of the women to a more general description of the marketplace, its surroundings, and people gathered there. Eventually Hahn-Hahn returns to the slaves and prepares her brother for the description that is to follow:

> O Entsezen! Schauderhafter, abstoßender Anblick! Nimm Deine Einbildungskraft zusammen, stelle Dir Monstra vor, und Du bleibst noch weit hinter den Negerinnen zurück von denen sich Dein beleidigtes Auge mit Widerwillen abwendet. Aber die Georgierinnen? Die Zirkassierinnen? Die herrlichsten Weiber der Welt? Wo sind sie? – Ja, mein lieber Bruder, die *weißen* Sklavinnen werden abgesondert in Tophana gehalten, von dort in die Harems zur Schau geführt, und nur durch ganz besondere Protektion gelangst Du zu dem Ort, wo man sie aufbewahrt (50).

The next part of the quote, the description of the black, female slaves, is very disturbing to the modern reader. It is not simply an example of Hahn-Hahn's racially specific perspective, but also demonstrates her criteria for consideration as a human being. As others have pointed out, it is partly delight in shattering male illusions about the beauty and sexual allure of Oriental slaves, and the authority that comes from being a woman granted access to spaces normally off limits for the European male. However, there are also other constitutive elements at work.

In her description of female slaves at the market, divided along the lines of skin color, we see why Hahn-Hahn rejects them as human beings according to the value system she has created: because she has cross-classified them according to an inability to "know," an inability to accurately assess their own situation and revolt against it either in deed or in word in the slightest way, as Hahn-Hahn herself has done by undertaking this trip.[79] Thus, her interpretation of their miserable situation is reminiscent of her metaphoric use of slavery in *Gräfin Faustine*, although it is here decidedly more graphic: the critique leveled solely at the black female slaves removes them from the system that creates their presence to begin with. While the apathy of the female slaves seems so obviously to be self-protection against the abuse, independent of such a system,

[79] Ironically, Felden uses Hahn-Hahn's lack of "systematic education" as a way to excuse her "inability" to analyze the systemic nature of domination and to escape a "superficial judgement" of the situation. In this way, Felden seeks to downplay Hahn-Hahn's racializing stance and thereby maintain the cohesion and coherence of her argument that Hahn-Hahn can be seen as interrupting the dominant and dominating patriarchal discourse (292). In this way, she unintentionally reverses Hahn-Hahn's argument, which amounts to a "they should have known better," and changes it to a "she's not responsible because she couldn't have known any better."

it is possible for her to criticizes them as individuals for their lack of resistance: "sie lassen alles geschehen."

> Hier gibt es nur Schwarze, und mit diesem unholden Anblick mußt Du Dich begnügen. Da sitzen sie! Ein grobes grauweißes Gewand verhüllt die Gestalt; bunte Glasringe umgeben die Handgelenke, bunte Glasperlen den Hals. Das Haar tragen sie kurz abgeschnitten; die deprimierte Stirn, tief eingedrückt über den Augenbrauen wie bei den Kretins, fällt zuerst auf, dann das große rollende nichtssagende Auge, dann die Nase, die ohne Nasenbein eine unförmliche Masse zu sein scheint, dann der Mund mit der affrösen tierischen Bildung der vorspringenden Kinnladen, und mit den klaffenden *schwarzen* Lippen – (rote Mohrenlippen ist ein europäischer Schönheitsbegriff, den die Wirklichkeit nicht realisiert) – dann die langfingerigen äffischen Hände mit häßlich farblosen Nägeln, dann die spindeldürren Beine mit der heraustretenden Ferse; dann, und am meisten, das unerhört Tierische der ganzen Erscheinung, Form und Ausdruck inbegriffen. […] Sie geben kein Lebenszeichen von sich, sie starren uns an mit demselben bewußtlosen Blick mit dem sie sich untereinander anstarren. […] Sie werden […] untersucht an Händen, Hüften, Füßen, Zähnen wie ein Pferd, sobald es zum Handel kommt; sie lassen alles geschehen, ohne Scheu, ohne Zorn, ohne Schmerz. […] Ich muß ehrlich gestehen, daß mich bei der ganzen Prozedur nichts so anwiderte als ihre Häßlichkeit, und daß mir der majestätische Königsgeier zu Schönbrunn mehr Mitleid mit seiner Gefangenschaft einflößte, als die Sklaverei dieser Geschöpfe. Ich fragte mich heimlich: 'Ist es möglich, daß eine Sappho, eine Aspasia, eine Maria Stuart, diese und ähnliche Weltwunder von Geist Liebreiz und Schönheit, desselben Geschlechts sein konnten?' – und mit großer Zuversicht antwortete ich mir selbst: 'Nein! Denn ein Weib ohne Intelligenz ist kein Weib mehr, sondern nur noch – Himmel, nun habe ich kein anderes Wort, als: ein Weibchen […] ich meine: une femelle. Die Rassen! Von deren Verschiedenheit wird man durchdrungen, wenn man im Geist eine solche Schwarze neben eine Aspasia stellt; und die Kluft welche diese beiden Wesen trennt kann kein Philanthrop ableugnen. Wir sind von Staub und wir gehen zum Staube; aber für die paar Jahre die ich lebe danke ich denn doch meinem Schöpfer, daß es ihm gefallen hat mir eine weiße Staubeshülle zu geben (50-51).

Hahn-Hahn has distanced herself as an "observer," merely recreating for her brother that which she has seen, writing ostensibly to debunk the myth of the

sexually alluring slave and to reflect the truth as she “sees” it. This description encompasses several dichotomous relationships. There is the obvious distinction between the Black and White slaves which is highlighted even more by Hahn-Hahn’s own textual emphasis. She also distinguishes between humanity and animals, whereby she uses the latter to degrade the former. At the same time, her use of the words “Weib” and “Weibchen” whereby a female human being becomes a female animal, used simply to breed, blurs the line between human being and animal.

Hahn-Hahn further distinguishes between White and Black by designating herself as the white observer, which of course rests upon her European identity and their “Oriental” one. A twist of fate she acknowledges somewhat in her thanks to the “creator” but making it a matter of God’s whim rather than structural societal intentions. By doing so, she is implicitly categorizing herself with the Sapphos, the Aspasias and the Maria Stuarts. At the same time, it is ironic that the models of intellect, grace, and beauty she has chosen are elitist literary constructs and cannot be really known by her or anyone else.

In that excerpt, Hahn-Hahn has differing distinctions of race and gender which seem to intersect at the point at which a human being can be called enlightened. To say that race is the sole criteria here misses the mark. What she does leave out, however, which I find very telling, is any reference to men or the male gender outside of the existence of her brother for whom she is providing the vicarious experience of observation.

Particularly at this moment, it is apparent how much the ideas of human development, gender, race and knowledge are inextricable in Hahn-Hahn's work. Hahn-Hahn's White supremacist interaction with the Black female slaves, rather than being separable from her often more visible feminist content – starting with herself as the daring heroine of a trip to the "Orient" – provides the basis upon which she can explicate and justify her quest for development.

Female Autonomy, the Universal and the Other

Hahn-Hahn references this trip to the Orient in another work written after her conversion to Catholicism in 1850. She comments on the travels described in the *Orientalische Briefe* and the role of the Orient/al remains similar.

> Ich bin gepilgert von einer Grenze unseres Weltteils zum andern – von den Katarakten des Nils zu den Grotten von Staffa – von Cintra's Hügeln nach den Gärten von Damaskus – über Alpen und Pyrenäen und Libanon – über Meere und durch die arabische Wüste – von den Ufern des Shannon im grünen Erin zu den Ufern des heiligen Jordan; ich bin zu Hause gewesen unter dem Zelt des Beduinen und in den Palästen der haute volée von Europa; ich habe gekannt, was mir an verschiedenen Ständen und Verhältnissen, Völkern und Menschen nur irgend erreichbar war; in den größten Kontrasten hab' ich mich bewegt! […] Die Höhen- und Tiefpunkte der Zivilisation, die verschiedenen Kulturstufen der Völker, den Zusammenhang der Bildung mit Religion und Volkscharakter, mit Kunst und Sitten, die ganze Geschichte der Menschheit in lebendigen Bildern wollt' ich vor Augen sehen, von Angesicht zu Angesicht wollt' ich das Leben der Menschheit schauen. Ich wollte verstehen und erkennen - - ja, was denn so eigentlich? Den Menschen! sprach ich zu mir selbst. Wahrscheinlich wollt' ich mich selbst verstehen lernen; aber das war unmöglich, denn kein positives Gesetz stand fest genug bei mir in Kraft, daß es mir hätte zur Richtschnur und zum Maßstab werden können, um die Erscheinungen und Bewegungen in mir und außer mir sicher und unbefangen zu beurteilen (*Von Babylon nach Jerusalem* 25. Cited by Taeger in *Gräfin Faustine* 247-248).

The literary merit of her later works aside, self-discovery and the accumulation of knowledge of the traveler, i.e. herself, still occupies the privileged position. Echoes of her hierarchy of human worth can still be discerned in phrases like "Höhen- und Tiefpunkte der Zivilisation," as well as the different cultural levels of different peoples.

I refer again back to the quote that began this chapter and Hahn-Hahn's quest:

> Ich kann nun einmal nicht anders als streben und immer streben, und daher geht mir der Drang zur Erkenntnis über das, was ich bereits erkannt habe. Bald nun werde ich wissen, wie der Orient sich im Auge einer Tochter des Okzidents abspiegelt (17).

The boldness of Hahn-Hahn's actions and the audacity of her attempt to enlarge her contemporary perception of what the "universal" should encompass, in other words, to redefine the "universal" to include thinking women, succeed in these terms. At the same time, as I have shown, this desire for knowledge is also the criterion by which one is excluded from those deserving of emancipation. For my study, this is the crux of the contradiction in her work. The image of herself as citizen of the world, and as an individual in the flow of history, is only effective if the hierarchy of Self and Other remains intact. As she goes back and forth in the dynamic relationship between the individual female Self and the whole of humanity, the position of the Other is fixed in the one-dimensionality she attributes to it, while the metaphoric power she has invested in it remains unacknowledged.

Chapter Three

The Victory of Reason: Fanny Lewald and the Reformulation of Femininity and Otherness

> Wen sollte es nicht freuen, wenn alte, barbarische Vorurteile allmählich vor der gesunden Vernunft und der Gerechtigkeit weichen müssen; wenn ein Volk, das Jahrhunderte hindurch mit Füßen getreten wurde, endlich allmählich die Rechte erlangt, an die es dieselben Ansprüche hat als die andern Bürger des Staates
> Lewald, *Jenny*

> Man weinte über Onkel Tom in seiner Hütte und sagte einer Tochter, die vielleicht ein medizinisches Genie [...] war: Du strickst Strümpfe, du lernst den Haushalt führen, du bekommst Unterricht, der so weit langt, daß du einsehen kannst, was für dich wünschenswert und zu erreichen wäre, wenn man es dir möglich machte, deine Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln, aber entwickeln darfst du sie nicht – denn du bist ein Weib.
> Lewald, *Für und Wider die Frauen*

Like Ida von Hahn-Hahn, Fanny Lewald is also a female author whose work must be analyzed in the context of German precolonial discourse.[80] This discourse and the unequal power relationships it supported, provide Lewald with a dynamic through which she can define an "enlightened" agenda as she inadvertently borrows from its discursive power. The attempt to inspire both women and men to accept the notion of female autonomy and the plea for religious and racial tolerance for Jews in Lewald's work are "re-routed" through

[80] See my introduction for Susanne Zantop's theory of the precolonial moment in Germany.

the space of an Other in order to help define the new and desired parameters of their existence.[81] In the process, the emancipated Self, whether female or Jewish, comes to be validated as White and German as well as part of a newly emerging "enlightened" society.

In *Jenny* (1843), one of Lewald's early novels, the author creates parallels between Orientals and Jews in order to bring her views about religious tolerance into sharper focus. In the second novel examined here, *Diogena* (1847), Lewald resorts to Black African females and to Native Americans to champion a bourgeois ideal of White femininity. And finally, in her two collections of political letters, published in 1863 and 1870 respectively, Lewald borrows the metaphor of the system of racial slavery in the United States to describe and highlight her feminist agenda for White working class women in Germany.

In each of these examples, a specific Other is transformed into a static entity that serves to enrich the agenda of its German counterpart in both subtle and obvious ways. On the one hand, Lewald relies on the broadly shared cultural assumptions about other ethnic groups among her contemporary reading public for the effectiveness of the metaphors that she uses. On the other hand, the metaphors themselves provide a backdrop which highlights her feminist agenda effectively. I intend to show how the presence of these various Others paradoxically bolsters Lewald's interpretation of civil liberty while simultaneously denying them access to such liberties. Thus, I examine Lewald's work for the

[81] See discussion on the idea of "re-routing" in Stoler in footnote 68. Yeğenoğlu calls the process a "detour;" see footnote 17.

disparity between a universal ideal which is the basis for her arguments in favor of emancipation and the exclusive nature of the meritocracy of human worth.

In Service of Emancipation: *Jenny*, *Diogena* and *Politische Briefe*

As Lewald intended, *Jenny*, is most obviously a plea for religious tolerance and the legal emancipation of the Jews in Germany. Published during the *Vormärz*, a period of revolutionary potential, this novel was a best-seller in a time ripe for arguments for tolerance.[82] In the novel, Lewald tells the story of an intelligent, young Jewish girl who falls in love with and becomes engaged to her tutor, Gustav Reinhard, who is training to become a minister. Jenny is even ready to convert in order to marry him. However, because of her honest nature, Jenny confesses that she cannot truly embrace the divine mysteries of his religion whereupon he breaks off the engagement and she is left devastated. Following a period of mourning, Jenny resolves never to marry and instead to live an independent life. Her older brother, Eduard, a talented medical doctor, also falls in love with a Christian. Unwilling to convert because that would be a betrayal of his people, Eduard renounces his love.

In the second part of the novel which takes place eight years after her broken engagement, Jenny meets Graf Walter, a free-thinking aristocrat. After a brief hesitation, Jenny believes that she and Walter can realize an ideal romantic partnership. However, despite the best efforts of the couple and their love for one another, their relationship is doomed because of societal prejudice against

[82] For an examination of the contradictory nature of the liberal embrace of religious tolerance which includes anti-semitism, see Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion. Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996).

Jews. In the end, Walter dies fighting a duel to avenge Jenny's honor against a racial slur and Jenny then dies of a broken heart. At the end of the novel, Eduard must carry on the fight for religious and racial tolerance.

Lewald's most obvious tactic in achieving the intended goal is to debunk stereotypical assumptions about Jews in order to argue that they deserve emancipation. To argue and justify the legitimacy of Jewish emancipation, Lewald gives the Jewish characters humanity and represents them as people with whom her readers can identify, even while acknowledging the visible markers of difference that make assimilation difficult. Lewald underscores the belief that prejudice in any form, whether against Jews, women or one's social inferiors, is based on irrationality and ignorance and that such intolerance would necessarily be worn away as the democratic spirit and Enlightenment ideals gather strength. Thus, if the visible markers of Jewishness could be seen through a different lens than anti-semitism, a more rational relationship would ensue and granting equal citizenship rights would seem like the logical result of this change.

The second part of the novel's strategy is directed at the Jews themselves. Lewald makes the request that Jews give up the anachronistic characteristics which keep them separate from the mainstream German population. In other words, in the logic of the novel, they should assimilate, to be less noticeable and different, and thus ultimately more deserving of the resulting emancipation.

In order to poke holes in cultural assumptions about Jews and thereby justify their emancipation, Lewald also relies metaphorically on the outsider

status of another group of people, namely the Orientals. At first, the purpose of connecting Jews with Orientals in this way is to show that prejudice is real and effective because it attaches certain character traits to pronounced physical characteristics and imbues them with undesirable qualities. These traits create "das fremde Äußere" in both Jews and Orientals. In the course of the novel, however, Lewald severs the connection and Orientals come to represent the characteristics which Jews need to leave behind in order to become assimilated in German society. Hence, Jews can discard their "oriental" backwardness and assimilate into contemporary and superior German culture. In the process, Lewald dismantles one stereotype by strengthening another.

Lewald uses a similar strategy in *Diogena*, a satiric novel she publishes a few years later. Here as well cultural assumptions about a racial Other provide much of the momentum of the satire. *Diogena* tells the story of an aristocratic woman who is on an obsessive quest for Mr. Right, that takes her to all corners of the globe. In the process, Lewald satirizes both the person Ida von Hahn-Hahn, her travels, and her "self-absorbed" female characters, such as Faustine, in order to ridicule what is detrimental to social progress according to a bourgeois value system: female self-centered indolence, and the focus on the Self to the exclusion of all else which leaves the soul empty and the mind insane.[83] However, it is not simply the contrast of bourgeois and aristocratic femininity that

[83] There are many obvious parallels to Hahn-Hahn's character, Faustine. One such parallel is the fact that the end of the heroine's story is narrated by a male character to a curious female interlocutor after the heroine has been rendered unable to tell her own story, either because of death or insanity.

makes the vision of feminine autonomy successful.[84] The character of Diogena is criticized through the presence of oppressed black African women, by representatives of the middle class, as well as a "savage" Native American chief, who are among the people that Diogena comes into contact with in the course of the novel.

In the actions of a young priest, for example, whom Diogena tries unsuccessfully to seduce with aggressive sexuality, Lewald articulates the distinction between civilized and uncivilized nations which has come to be familiar to twentyfirst-century readers. In contrast to Diogena, the young priest has dedicated his life to an alternative quest, namely to missionary work. In the context of the novel, the missionary is the holder of knowledge ostensibly about the nature of God and man while the "uncivilized African" is the beneficiary of the same. In the process, the Black African female becomes the foil to highlight Diogena's selfishness. The description of her destitute existence is the medium through which Diogena and the priest can discuss the state of Diogena's soul.

After failing to convince the priest to forsake his vows, Diogena finds temporary solace in the arms of a bourgeois scientist, Friedrich Wahl. Although she is concerned to find her heart beating faster due to the allures of a middle-class man, she lives with him out of wedlock until his insistance that they marry

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[84] Ute Frevert discusses this more generally and states that "[t]he barriers that were deliberately erected against both the nobility and the lower orders were especially important to the political and social consciousness of the bourgeoisie, and should not be underestimated. By the same token, the new family norm was not only of ideological significance. Thus, for example, the enormous attention lavished on the education of children, and particularly on the education of sons, was primarily the result of perceived changes in the way individuals were located in society, changes that came about because the society was itself leaving behind the rules and traditions germane to the old social structure" (15). In addition, my assertion is that Lewald's re-definition of femininity resulted not only through the differentiation of class but also from a differentiation of race.

causes her to balk and flee the relationship. His incredulity at her inability to find fulfillment within bourgeois marriage seems to be the one point at which Lewald's satire pauses. Eventually, Diogena's quest takes her to the North American continent in order to find a "noble savage" who can fulfill her expectations. Instead, what she finds is a less romantic version of a Native American who all but indentures Diogena.

Diogena is a cautionary tale, one that still holds interest for the modern reader. Its eponymous anti-heroine travels to all corners of the globe in order to find the man who can permanently capture her heart. Diogena's vision of the ideal relationship is difficult to realize because in it she must be the sole focus and object of worship forever. From a very young age, Diogena justifies her behavior with her aristocratic heritage, and she will not be swayed from it in spite of the destruction this quest causes her romantic partners and eventually herself. Although she is warned that such self-absorbtion is unnatural for women and that she will meet an ill end if she continues, Diogena persists. The only constant in the novel aside from Diogena's selfish antics is the presence of *Fürst Callenberg* who accompanies her on all her travels. However, he is there neither to love nor admire her; he is simply fascinated by the carnage in her wake and takes a perverse pleasure in his role as a spectator. In the end, Diogena goes insane.

The years between the publication of these two novels and the political letters saw changes in both the socio-political reality in the German states and in Lewald's political ideals. Increasing industrialization, a population explosion and

widespread fear of social upheaval coincided with German unification in 1871.[85] By the time Lewald published *Osterbriefe für die Frauen* (1863) and *Für und Wider die Frauen* (1870), her attention had shifted away from the emancipation of the Jews to focus exclusively on women's rights. Such a shift in attention seems justified by the official emancipation of the Jews in 1871 whereby the newly unified state adopted the 1869 equal rights policy of the *Norddeutschen Bund*. While Lewald was still vocal about the need for social change, marriage and a family had impacted on her emancipatory stance: "evolution" took the place of "revolution." The tendentious author of the *Vormärz* gradually became a champion of Bismarck's *Realpolitik*.[86]

Even though the focus is exclusively on women's rights in the political letters, Lewald again employs the metaphor of a racial Other in order to further her cause. In these later works, Lewald does not use the metaphor of the Oriental in order to demonstrate something which should be discarded. Instead, racial slavery in the United States becomes the most appropriate metaphor to

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[85] See Barbara Ann Schumannfang, "Envisioning Empire: Jewishness, Blackness and Gender in German Colonial Discourse from Frieda von Bülow to the Nazi *Kolonie und Heimat*" (Diss. Duke U, 1998) 23. In fact, Schumannfang also links this particular time period in Germany with the fantasy of colonialism.

[86] Gabriele Schneider comments on Lewald's shift during this time and her embrace of practical methods: "Realpolitisches Denken, demzufolge es nicht ausreicht, ein Ziel zu haben, man muß es auch in die Tat umsetzen können, und so heiligt in Lewalds Augen der Zweck die Mittel" (115). For more on this shift in Lewald's life and work, see Gabriele Schneider *Fanny Lewald* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1996) 112-117. Additionally, although Evans does not specifically address Lewald's work, the first chapter of his study of the feminist movement in Germany lays out the change in the political landscape in general after mid-century. See Richard J. Evans "The German Feminists," *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London: Sage, 1976). His perspective is strongly class-based and less sensitive to nuances in women's writings; however, the information he presents is well-researched and informative. See also Amy Hackett, "The German Women's Movement and Suffrage, 1890-1914: A Study of National Feminism," *Modern European Social History*. Ed. Robert J. Bezucha (Lexington: D.C.Heath, 1972).

both explain her position on women's rights and to justify her platform. *Für und Wider die Frauen* is written and published after the Civil War in the United States had ended.[87] Lewald's political letters during this time reflect her view that while African-Americans had been freed from slavery, white women in Germany are still "enslaved." She wishes to confront the lack of educational opportunities for girls and societal sanctions against working women from the middle and upper classes. Such limitations make it impossible for women to prepare for life's uncertainties.

Naturally, Lewald welcomes the emancipation of the US slaves as proof of a more enlightened modernity, and she measures progress according to increased access to civil rights for many different groups. She notes the discrepancy or contradiction that most men remain in favor of the limitations still imposed upon women on the one hand while welcoming the emancipation of other oppressed groups, such as the slaves in America, on the other.

> Es lag und liegt hier in bezug [sic] auf die Behandlung der Frauen eine ganz schreiende Ungerechtigkeit vor, nämlich *die Beschränkung des freien Gebrauchs der angeborenen Fähigkeiten zu eigener Förderung*; und von all den Tausenden und Abertausenden von Männern, die aus vollster Überzeugung gegen die Unterdrückung einzelner Rassen oder bestimmter Kulte geeifert haben, von all denen, welche ihrerzeit die Emanzipation der Katholiken in Irland, die Emanzipation der Juden in Deutschland und schließlich die Emanzipation der Neger in Amerika und der Leibeigenen in Rußland als wesentliche Siege der Vernunft, als Taten einer unerläßlichen Gerechtigkeit begrüßt und gefeiert hatten, machten die allerwenigsten es sich klar, daß neben ihnen, in ihren Häusern, in ihren Familien, mitten in der Bildung, mitten in der

[87] Along with the interest in things American, the debate about slavery on the North American continent found its way into German discourse as well. This interest in the United States, both as a young republic and an emigration destination for many Germans, is demonstrated among other things by the huge success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in German in 1852-3.

> Gesittung, auf welche sie so stolz waren, mitten in der von ihnen allmählich errungenen Freiheit, innerhalb des Staates, dem sie angehörten, ihre eigenen Frauen, Töchter und Schwestern unter dem Banne der Ungerechtigkeit lebten und gelegentlich litten, deren Aufhebung für die Negersklaven sie als einen Sieg der Menschlichkeit gefeiert haben (109).

Lewald is pointing out the contradiction on the part of those men who welcomed the "triumph of reason" and of humanity when the "Negersklaven" and other oppressed groups were freed but who tolerate the injustices done to their wives, sisters and daughters who are not granted autonomy. Throughout the letters, the American "Negro" slave becomes the most appropriate metaphor for Lewald to question the inequality that women faced in her society even though they were now emancipated. In the process of serving White female emancipation, the condition of the Black slave is denied progress and is thus excluded from the very autonomy Lewald wishes to create for women.

Fanny Lewald: "The History of an Emancipation"

The dynamics of this exclusion in Lewald's work can be explained in part by a theory of the precolonial. In order to understand the part that it plays in her work and the instability it both fosters and highlights, however, it is necessary to mention briefly the important elements of Lewald's emancipatory agenda and frame them within the context of Lewald's social and political reality. Lewald's approach to the oppression of women and Jews in her society demonstrates an optimistic faith in humanity's ability to progress beyond these oppressions. Throughout the course of her writing, Lewald asserts that historical progress and the development of humanity must include members of human society that earn

and deserve the right to participate. Conversely, when writing specifically about women's rights, Lewald asserts that such progress would have a beneficient effect on society and the state, as Lewald calls it, "eine veredelnde Neugestaltung aller unserer gesellschaftlicher Zustände."[88] What follows are the important points of Lewald's agenda which help to sketch the boundaries of her meritocracy.

Subjected to limitations painful to her as a result of being both female and Jewish, Lewald develops an agenda that seeks to redefine relationships of power and authority in her society by claiming autonomous identities for those who had been refused them.[89] Lewald was naturally not alone in this endeavor. In *Women in German History*, Ute Frevert points out that women were in search of new models and metaphors in the nineteenth century in order to help them re-interpret and transform the structure and foundation of the male-female relationships that had existed in traditional society and also within the bourgeois family which was popularized by Enlightenment literature.[90]

Lewald dedicates the majority of her attention to the definition of "proper womanhood," and she approaches it in two distinct ways. First, Lewald

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[88] Fanny Lewald, *Politische Schriften für und wider die Frauen* (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer, 1998) 137

[89] Although the name Fanny Lewald is known today mainly in feminist Germanist circles, she was hugely popular, well-respected and influential in her own time. For more on this, see Ulrike Helmer, ed. *Diogena*. (Königstein/Taunus: Helmer, 1996) 323 and Möhrmann, *Die andere Frau* 2. However, her efforts on behalf of women and Jews were not always well received. For example, Karl Barthel by no means finds it desirable "daß Fanny Lewald die Sphäre der Weiblichkeit überschritt und sich ganz in die Socialistik versenkte." Karl Barthel, *Die deutsche Nationalliteratur der Neuzeit, in einer Reihe von Vorlesungen*. 6th ed. (Braunschweig: Eduard Leibrock, 1862) 566. There are many others who do not appreciate her efforts to change conditions for women. On Lewald's reception, see Brigitte van Rheinberg, *Fanny Lewald: Geschichte einer Emanzipation* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 1990).

[90] Frevert *Women in German History* 15.

examines and critiques how womanhood has been constructed by her society and the very real limitations that this construction created for women. Second, Lewald simultaneously attempts to redefine what is considered "proper" for women by seeking to expand the sphere of public participation for women, and, in the process, redefine femininity. In her essay, "Gegen die vernachlässigte Mädchenerziehung," originally published in 1843, Lewald deplores the cultural predilection that places value on "feminine" qualities such as helplessness and dependence. Lewald notices that men, like parents of middle-class families who raise their daughters to remain "childlike," desire the same quality in a mate.

> Auch Männer selbst haben mir rühmend gesagt: meine Braut, meine Frau ist noch ein völliges Kind!, und es ist mir dann immer förmlich Angst geworden über eine solche Verblendung. Welche Früchte solche Unschuld und Unkenntnis tragen, davon hat wohl jeder Beispiele genug erlebt, und es wäre wirklich an der Zeit, daß man sich dazu erhöbe, von einem Weibe beim Antritt seiner Ehe neben der Reinheit des Sinnes, die jeder Mensch, so Mann als Weib, in sich zu kultivieren hat, auch einen gesunden und gereiften Verstand und jene ernste Entwicklung zu verlangen, ohne die eine wahre Selbstverleugnung und keine nachhaltige Einwirkung auf das Wohlgedeihen der Familie möglich ist. Man hat kein Recht, große Charaktere und Vaterlandsliebe, hohe Gesinnung und Mannesmut von einem Geschlechte zu verlangen, das zum großen Teil von kindischen Frauen, von unreifen Müttern erzogen worden ist.[91]

Ever the practical advocate, Lewald points out the contradictions inherent in entrusting women with the guardianship of the bourgeois household and the nation as well as the redefinition of the family without providing the education for women which would enable her to fulfill this task to her own satisfaction.

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[91] Quoted in Möhrmann *Frauenemanzipation* 20.

In order to demonstrate the very real conseqences of such treatment of women, Lewald often uses herself as a typical example of a woman frustrated with the role alloted her.

> Wir litten alle, ich direkt und die Meinen indirekt, von der falschen, auch jetzt noch herrschenden Sitte, welche die Töchter der Mittelstände über die Jahre der Kindheit und Jugend hinaus zum nutzlosen Hinleben in den Banden der Familie verdammt, auch wenn sie denselben lange entwachsen und in jedem Betrachte für ein selbständiges Leben und Walten reif geworden sind.[92]

The "falsche Sitte" to which Lewald refers is the custom which prevented daughters and wives of middle-class families from receiving an education, from working and from earning their living. Consequently, they were dependent on a good marriage as their only career. As Lewald too well knew, it was often the case that middle-class women did not marry and lived out their lives in dependence and even poverty.[93] According to Lewald, the solution to this problem lay in preparing girls and women to support themselves in times of trouble, in other words, to become active participants in their fate. Her father's attempt to coerce her into a marriage of convenience and his refusal to allow her to earn her own living because it would have brought scandal to the family, led Lewald to articulate her emancipatory agenda which she herself called *Emanzipation zur Arbeit*. [94]

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[92] Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte II* 210. Quoted in Möhrmann 24.

[93] See "The Bourgeois Marriage" in Frevert 38-49 and Möhrmann 10.

[94] In two of her early novels, *Clementine* (1843) and *Eine Lebensfrage* (1845), she depicted the misery women suffered in marriages of convenience, a theme picked up again in the political letters. Lewald defines her emancipatory program with the following: "Es ist die Emanzipation der Frau, die ich für uns begehre; jene Emanzipation, die ich für mich selbst erstrebt und errungen habe, die Emanzipation zur Arbeit, zu ernster Arbeit. Und es ist der Arbeit außerhalb und mehr noch innerhalb der Familie überall vollauf für die Frau vorhanden, wenn man

The necessity for education pervades all of Lewald's work, and the education of women in a larger sense is also a source of personal growth: "Ein gebildeter Geist hilft sich auf auch im Unglück und legt einen tiefen Sinn in alles, was geschieht – nicht für irdisches Glück, nicht für ein besonderes Schicksal sind wir erschaffen, sondern unser Lebenszweck ist, besser und vollkommner zu werden, und so muß auch alles zu unsrer Bildung beitragen."[95] Lewald transforms her own story of hard-won education and struggle to achieve independence into a *Bildungsroman* for girls and women with the publication of her autobiography. As Helmer writes, "Fanny Lewald hat die Geschichte ihrer Kindheit und Jugend im ersten Band ihrer Autobiographie 'Meine Lebensgeschichte' festgehalten, die sie als aufklärerische Schrift konzipierte, als Aufforderung, Mädchen zu Mündigkeit und Selbstständigkeit zu erziehen."[96] It is clear that both her own struggle and the opportunity to instruct and encourage other women to achieve autonomy are a source of pride and feelings of accomplishment.

Although her agenda pits her against a tradition that extends rights to men but excludes women from political life, Lewald sees men as potential allies in her fight. In the quest for autonomy, Lewald does not consider men the enemy, rather ignorance, sexism and religious intolerance are to be combatted for the

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sie nur fähig macht, zu begreifen, worin dieselbe besteht, und zu leisten, was sie als ihre Aufgabe erkannt hat." Quoted in Möhrmann 21.

[95] Fanny Lewald, "Einige Gedanken über Mädchenerziehung" (Archiv für vaterländische Interessen oder Preußische Provinzial-Blätter, hrsg. O.W.L. Richter, Königsberg. [N.F. Jg. 1843] 380 ff.). Quoted in Möhrmann 26.

[96] Helmer, Afterword, *Jenny* (München: DTV, 1996) 324.

good of a strong German society based on bourgeois values. She worded her arguments in alignment with this theory. The *Osterbriefe* she dedicates to the husbands, brothers and fathers of working-class women, assuming that they would certainly want better educated wives and mothers for their children. *Für und Wider die Frauen* she dedicates to John Stuart Mill, whose *The Subjection of Women* was published in 1869, just one year prior to *Für und Wider die Frauen*.[97]

While Hahn-Hahn depicted marriage as a form of bondage for women, Lewald places a bourgeois ideal of marriage at the forefront of her emancipatory agenda. As opposed to a marriage of convenience, arranged for political or financial reasons, Lewald's ideal is an institution based on love and mutual respect, where women can reach their true potential. Thus, while Lewald carries on a lifelong struggle for *Emanzipation zur Arbeit*, she by no means advocates career as replacement for family. In fact, marriage and family are considered by Lewald to be a woman's natural calling.[98] As Lewald assures her reading

[97] Lewald wrote, as did John Stuart Mill, with the conviction that as humanity's progress continues, it will bring about the end of women's "subjection" to men. Hence, it is no surprise that Lewald dedicates her political letters to Mill. He writes: "But I may go farther, and maintain that the course of history, and the tendencies of progressive human society, afford not only no presumption in favour of this system of inequality of rights [between men and women], but a strong one against it; and that, so far as the whole course of human improvement up to the time, the whole stream of modern tendencies, warrants any inference on the subject, it is, that this relic of the past is discordant with the future, and must necessarily disappear." John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Dent, 1992) 233.

[98] She does not seriously question the prevaling assumption that wife and mother are a woman's natural calling. However, not all women marry, and she herself was not yet married when she published the following in 1843: "Es will mir einseitig erscheinen, die Mädchen lediglich fürs Heiraten zu erziehen. Daß es ihr naturgemäßer Beruf sei, wer könnte es leugnen? Es gibt keinen würdigern, keinen schönern, aber ist es ausgemacht, daß jedes Mädchen sich verheiraten müsse?" Fanny Lewald, "Einige Gedanken über Mädchenerziehung." Quoted in Möhrmann 25.

audience in the letters, even educated women would surely still fulfill these roles.[99]

> Es ist mir […] kein Mädchen vorgekommen, das nicht, selbst bei großer künstlerischer Begabung und nach beträchtlichen Erfolgen in seinem künstlerischen Berufe, bald bereit gewesen wäre, auf seine Unabhängigkeit zu verzichten, wenn sich ihm das Glück geboten hat, in ein sorgenfreies Haus als Gattin eines geliebten Mannes eintreten zu können (107).

Further, Lewald again uses her own biography as an example of a strong, self-sufficient woman who provides the assurance that her career had not interfered with her role as wife and stepmother. For Lewald, pride and satisfaction come from having simultaneously used her talents and abilties to contribute something towards women's progress:

> Und nun zum Schlusse, mit meinem Gruße an die mir geneigten Leser, nur noch die Versicherung, daß nichts auf der Welt diesen Briefen ferner gelegen hat als etwa ein Kämpfen oder ein Erringenwollen für mich selbst, als ein Plädoyer in eigener Sache; denn die Emanzipation, die ich den Frauen wünsche und für sie erhoffe, habe ich für meinen Teil, soweit sie mir für mich irgend begehrenswert erschien, vollständig erreicht. Ich bin seit siebenundzwanzig Jahren mit meinem Leben und Lebensunterhalte einzig auf mich selbst gestellt gewesen, ich bin rechtlich frei, kann über meinen Erwerb und Besitz verfügen nach Belieben, und ich besitze einen Wirkungskreis, wie er meinen Fähigkeiten entspricht, meinen Neigungen gemäß ist. Ich habe die Wirksamkeit und Tätigkeit in unserem Hause und in unserer Familie wie jede andere Hausfrau und jede andere Familienmutter, ich

[99] Recent feminist critics of Lewald locate the main contradiction in Lewald's work at this juncture of "Anpassung und Aufbruch." This was a chapter title in Lewald's autobiography which indicates that she noticed the contradiction herself. As both Lewald and her biographers have pointed out, it was Lewald's rigidly patriarchal father who was responsible for both instilling in her an absolute obedience and the beginnings of logical thought and argument that later surfaced in her writings. Schneider discusses the contradictory stance of Lewald's emancipatory ideal from another, though related, standpoint. She states by way of introduction: "Stets fiel es schwer, Kategorien zu finden für die Autorin und ihr umfangreiches Werk. Die den heutigen Leser frappierenden Widersprüche ihres Denkens und Handelns, ihr Schwanken zwischen Anlehnung und Auflehnung ließen sich nicht immer nachvollziehen und in einem harmonischen Bild vereinigen" (8). See also Schneider 19. In addition, see Helmer, ed., *Politische Schriften für und wider die Frauen* 13.

> habe Einfluß in einem großen Freundeskreise und besitze in der Presse das Mittel, meiner Überzeugung – dichtend oder rein didaktisch – Ausdruck zu geben, um derselben womöglich Geltung zu verschaffen (203-204).

As stated above, it is Lewald's Jewish heritage in addition to her middle-class roots which informs her perceptions of class and gender-based inequities in her society as well as racial and religious intolerance. Naturally this background is also relevant to any discussion of her work in connection with the racialization of another ethnic group. Most of her contemporaries mention her heritage, as do more recent feminist critics, as part of the analysis of her life and her work.[100]

Fanny Lewald was born in Königsberg in 1811 into an educated, "enlightened," bourgeois Jewish family. Although the Marcus – later Lewald – family were not observant Jews, she recognized at a very young age that just being Jewish relegated her to an outsider position in German society, one that

[100] For example, in a quote marked by anti-Semitism, Barthel writes the following: "[S]ie wirkte nun [...] gefährlicher als viele ihrer Sinnesgenossinnen, indem sie in allen ihren Romanen die geselligen Conflicte unserer Tage mit so scharfer und kalter Dialektik und von so parteilichem Standpuncte aus behandelte, daß sie nothwendig das Blut der Massen im Stillen aufregen mußten. Welche Absichtlichkeit und Unwahrheit kommt nicht in ihrem Romane 'Jenny' wo sie die Frage der Judenemancipation und des Uebertritts zum Gegenstande genommen hat, zu Tage; wie fällt hier nicht alles Licht auf die jüdische Heldin, die zuletzt – auch das ist unnatürlich – vor Schmerz stirbt, während die Geistlichkeit vor allem als durchweg mittelalterlich finster geschildert wird!" (566-567). Published during the post-1848 period, Barthel's literary history is ill-disposed to the activist literature of the *Vormärz* era. However, his criticism of Lewald's work is primarily based on her gender and religious affiliation. In contrast, Schneider writes about the positive aspects that Lewald's Jewish heritage brought to her writing: "Unbewußt übernimmt sie jedoch aus der Grundstimmung in ihrem wenngleich assimilierten Elternhaus prägende kulturelle und soziale Werte des Judentums. Der starke familiäre Zusammenhalt, die patriarchalische Stellung des Vaters, die respektvolle Verehrung der Mutter und der Bildungswille verwiesen ebenso auf diese Tradition wie die besondere Bedeutung traditionell jüdischer Tätigkeiten für die Figuren ihrer Romane, so die des Arztes (des zunächst einzigen den Juden zugänglichen akademischen Berufs) und des Kaufmanns, wie sie von Vater und Bruder ausgeübt wurde. Auch wenn Fanny später für soziale Hilfstätigkeit, für Wohlfahrts- und Selbsthilfeeinrichtungen wie Krankenfürsorge und Handwerkervereine eintritt, so hat dies eine Wurzel im jüdischen Gemeindeleben, in dem es bereits seit dem 18. Jahrhundert derartige Institutionen gibt und das in Königsberg sehr rege ist" (18).

was exposed to potential danger.[101] Although her hometown of Königsberg remained relatively unscathed, Lewald was old enough to absorb the so-called *Hep-Hep* disturbances in 1819, that is, the string of violent outbreaks against Jews, precipitated by the assassination of August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) and the preceding economic crisis of 1817-18. Lewald did not experience these directly, but she did encounter ostracism from non-Jewish playmates and much worse. She writes in her autobiography:

> Daß wir Juden wären, und daß es schlimm sei, ein Jude zu sein, darüber war ich aber mit fünf, sechs Jahren, noch ehe ich in die Schule gebracht wurde, vollkommen im Klaren. So hübsch wir in unseren seidenen Pelzchen auch angezogen waren, so erlebten wir es doch manchmal, daß ganz zerlumpte, schmutzige Kinder uns im Tone des Schimpfes: "Jud!" nachriefen.[102]

There is a clear thread in her writing that is traceable to the experience of being Jewish as well as in response to the restrictions against women.[103] Moreover, Lewald does not stay within the boundaries of her own experience but rather seeks to generalize and create a political platform based on her interpretation of social structures. In the process, the assertion is made that the experience of oppression sensitizes a person to the oppression of another. Graf Walter tells Jenny with conviction: "Je freier ein edler Mensch sich selbst

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[101] For a variety of reasons, Lewald was baptized in 1830 but later recognized this as the "only lie" of her life.

[102] Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte* I 48. Quoted in Schneider 18.

[103] As Helmer points out, Lewald's emancipatory agenda does not emerge merely out of a male/female relational framework but rather from the multiplicity of her experience as a middle-class female Jew in nineteenth-century Germany: "Alle zentralen Themen ihres Werkes erwuchsen Fanny Lewald aus der Reflexion ihrer eigenen Erfahrungen: die bürgerliche Emanzipation der Frauen, die der Juden und eine soziale Emanzipation im umfassenden Sinn" (324). In *Jenny*, especially, the wide range of her engagement comes to the fore, and particularly here, "läßt Fanny Lewald drei brisante Themenkreise ineinandergreifen: Die hierarchischen Beziehungen zwischen Juden und Christen, zwischen arm und reich und zwischen Frauen und Männern" (327).

empfindet, je weiter wird sein Herz, je lebhafter empört er sich gegen Fesseln, die man den andern anlegt, gegen Unterdrückung und Unrecht" (313).

In the end, despite her critique and her experience of oppression, throughout all of Lewald's texts there is an underlying reaffirmation of education and Enlightenment, as well as the inherent goodness of a civilized society and a belief in the progress of humanity toward this goal. She viewed the struggle for rights as part and parcel of a greater development of humanity. In her letters, there is a reverence for the political aims of the "enlightened" previous decades and a call to continue the progress. She measures the progress of humanity with the greater access to education and participation in civil society by increasing numbers of people:

> Was früher der gemeine Gedanke, der verschwiegen gehaltene Besitz der Auserwählten war, ist bis zu einem gewissen Grade Gemeingut geworden. Die Zahl derjenigen, *welche sich berechtigt fühlen, über sich selbst und über die Welt, in der sie leben, nachzudenken, so weit die Kraft ihres Verstandes trägt, und die Stufe der Bildung zu erreichen*, auf welcher sie befähigt sind, je nach ihrer Kraft, mit zu raten und zu taten über ihr und ihrer Mitmenschen Wohl und Wehe, ist so mächtig angewachsen, daß jetzt *unter Verständigen* kaum noch die Rede davon sein kann, dem Einzelnen mit seinem Bildungsstreben in der Gesellschaft eine Schranke stellen oder gar einzelne Volksklassen von der freien Mitbeteiligung an dem Gesamtleben, wie es sich in der staatlichen Gemeinschaft entwickelt hat, ausschließen zu wollen (22).

While Lewald certainly is arguing for a democratic, enlightened civil society, I am suggesting that her method of arguing for these rights is enhanced by what is not mentioned here, namely the racialization of an Other. Hence, the contradiction in Lewald's work between the drive for female autonomy and an inability to break free from the patriarchal structures of both family and society

that other critics see in her work, has ramifications beyond the male/female dichotomy. As Lewald discusses the progressive changes she notes in her society and argues that those who were previously excluded can no longer be excluded rationally, it will become clear in the following that the ranks of those who would declare themselves worthy of participation are, in fact, limited to members of an educated White, German bourgeoisie. This is not a masculine enterprise, as some might argue, but rather the repercussions of changing cultural assumptions and desires vis-à-vis a racialized Other in a precolonial environment. In what follows, I examine the ways in which Lewald's specific agenda intertwines with racializing the Other.

Integrating Jews into German Society: *Jenny*

As stated above, part of Lewald's tactic in eliminating prejudice is the rational explication of racial characteristics. Lewald purports to be delivering a true picture of the nation's Jews. She attempts to counteract the unsavory images typically associated with Jews in order to remove the negative feeling evoked by the appearance of a "typical" Jewish person.[104] Lewald is working with

[104] To give an example how "Jewishness" might be typically portrayed and what Lewald is trying to combat in her own work, one only need look at another immensely popular novel published in 1855, namely *Soll und Haben* by Gustav Freytag. Freytag and Lewald have in common the intention to validate a rising middle class in contrast to a decaying aristocracy. In addition, they both write from a nationalist's perspective on the creation of a German state. Freytag, however, advocates the conquering of territory in the east, and of fighting internal enemies – e.g. the Jews – to achieve this end. In the novel, not a single Jewish character is portrayed in a positive light. Veitel Itzig, the anti-hero in opposition to Anton, Freytag's bourgeois German hero, appears as if out of nowhere, evil incarnate. He works behind the scenes like a dark shadow and is responsible for the financial ruin of the novel's main aristocrat, Freiherr von Rothsattel. "[Er] ist unter den Händen von einem, der heimlich wandelt wie ein Engel des Verderbens. Er geht und legt seinen Strick um den Hals der Menschen, die er bezeichnet hat, ohne daß ihn einer sieht' " (196). He also has "das Gesicht eines Teufels" (239). The creation of this character demonstrates what Schumannfang calls the "(in)visibility anxiety," or rather the

the issue of visibility, wanting to change how Jews are seen and judged.[105] Thus, the novel *Jenny* becomes a forum where Lewald attempts to de-mythicize or de-exoticize the dark-haired Jew.

The first part of her strategy involves connecting the ethnic "Jewish" look with nobility of character. For example, when the reader is first introduced to Edward Meier, Jenny's brother, he is both "Jewish looking" and a "man of character":

> [E]in junger, hübscher Mann, kaum dreißig Jahre alt, trat in das Zimmer. Er war nur mittlerer Größe, aber kräftig und wohlgebaut, hatte krauses, schwarzes Haar, eine gebogene Nase, ein paar durchdringend kluge, schwarze Augen und vor allem eine hohe, gewölbte Stirn, die beim ersten Anblick den Mann von Geist und Charakter verriet. Seine Bewegungen waren rasch wie sein Blick. Er hatte eine gelbliche, aber gesunde Farbe und war modern, doch ganz einfach gekleidet (10).

As the plot progresses, Edward, a dedicated doctor, is portrayed as so appealing that the daughter of a Christian home falls in love with him in spite of the fact that he is a Jew. Jenny's cousin, Joseph Meier, shares the role with Jenny's father of the wise, moral, all-knowing figure, modeled on the Jewish biblical patriarch and also serves to debunk a negative image of Jews. This attempt to allay the fears

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focus on "assumed visible markers of difference" (10). As Schumannfang points out, invisible danger is often associated with Jewishness in the German literary tradition. See following note.

[105] Schumannfang seeks to show "how, in the German context, colonial discourse and anti-Semitic discourse converge to 'make visible' those who are collectively deemed outsiders. Anti-Semitism and racism in Germany are not coincidentally related, but rather are constitutively conceived and articulated" (15). That a call for Jews to assimilate or to "mimic" Germans, "demonstrated the constructedness of Germanness at a time when the German nation-state status was very new, and when the concept 'German' was especially fragile" (20). "[A]nti-Semitism in the German context is fundamentally about the inability to discern members of a racial group reliably through visible markers of difference. Germany's long history of anti-Semitism […] consistently demonstrates anxiety of (in)visibility as its primary impetus" (29). Schumannfang does "not wish to imply that in the German context every colonial image, or every image of Blackness, always directly involves an antisemitic image or purpose. Rather, I want to suggest that racism and anti-Semitism in the German context are fundamentally about (what is constructed as) the visually concrete and the visually abstract" (30).

of her readers is done by ascribing normally “Christian” characteristics and values to her Jewish characters. The entire Meier family, while “Jewish” looking, are intelligent and attractive figures, capable of love, noble actions and engagement for a greater social good.

Since the reality of Jews is different from the prejudicial view, according to Lewald, then prejudice against them is simply irrational and outdated thinking. In the opening scene, on the very first page, in a conversation meant to introduce us to many of the story’s male characters and their prejudices, the main topic is an actress whom they have just seen on stage. The artist of the group, Erlau, can only praise her: “Ich sage euch, sie ist der Typus einer italienischen Schönheit.” To which the bigoted Horn replies, “[w]enn sie nur nicht so verdammt jüdisch aussähe.” He has no liking for this actress, “die mir wirklich mit all ihrer gepriesenen italienischen – oder sagten Sie orientalischen? – Schönheit im höchsten Grade mißfallen hat” (7). Lewald cleverly puts the young man’s “old-fashioned,” that is, not rational, prejudices which she knows much of her reading audience shares, immediately on display making him seem more ridiculous because of it. There are many nationalities that share the physical characteristics of Jews so, as Lewald intimates, the stereotype is therefore meaningless. In a tribute to the deserving nature of the Meier family, in the end their goodness wins over the prejudice of the Horn family.

Continuing in this vein, Reinhard, a theology student and Jenny’s first love, chides Horn for his point of view as a visit to the Meier household would prove that Horn “mit seinen Gesinnungen in mancher Beziehung noch tief im

Mittelalter steckt" (9-10). In the world of this story, the Jewish/Christian dichotomy is turned upside down: Christianity and hence the values of good Christians are associated with impenetrable, mystical knowledge that relies on the unseen whereas educated Jewish people are straightforward and not mysterious and therefore not to be feared. According to Lewald, Jews have been subjected to discrimination based on an inaccurate as well as age-old misconception of Jewishness. Steinheim, a Jewish character in the novel, exults,

> Wen sollte es nicht freuen, wenn alte, barbarische Vorurteile allmählich vor der gesunden Vernunft und der Gerechtigkeit weichen müssen; wenn ein Volk, das Jahrhunderte hindurch mit Füßen getreten wurde, endlich allmählich die Rechte erlangt, an die es dieselben Ansprüche hat als die andern Bürger des Staates (22).

It is clear in this novel that change needs to happen not only in they way that non-Jews "see" Jews but also in the result that such a change will have in concrete political terms, i.e. in the law. And these changes will then have a beneficial influence on the Jewish community. Eduard champions the cause of equal rights for "his people" politically. He has "unverwandt das Wohl und den Fortschritt seines Volkes im Auge, dessen freie Entwicklung aber nur dann möglich war, wenn überhaupt eine freie, zeitgemäße Verfassung in seinem Vaterlande Raum fand" (258). By the end of the novel, Lewald has succeeded in constructing a world that makes the reader care about its Jewish characters, and in which the idealism of the last lines seems justified.

> "Wir leben", sagte [Eduard] mit der Begeisterung eines Sehers, "um eine Zeit zu erblicken, in der keine solchen Opfer auf dem Altare der Vorurteile bluten! Wir wollen leben, um eine freie Zukunft, um die Emanzipation unseres Volkes zu sehen!" (322).

The victims he mentions are Jenny and Graf Walter, and are denied a happy life together because of the violence that prejudice makes possible.

In a seemingly contradictory move, however, Lewald combines all the exhortations for tolerance and political change which pervade this novel with a parallel current. As mentioned above, Lewald encourages Jews to become more assimilated, that is, to conform to societal norms established by the non-Jewish majority. In other words, the cultural standards of this majority are re-legitimized as is the enlightened ideal.

Examples of the characteristics which Jews need to discard are demonstrated by Steinheim's mother in an encounter with the young Clara Horn: "Man stand auf, die alte Frau Steinheim zu bewillkommen. Sie wollte aber durchaus nicht leiden, daß man sich ihretwegen derangiere und bat mit schnarrender Stimme und jüdischem Jargon, gar keine Notiz von ihr zu nehmen, da sie nur auf wenig Augenblicke gekommen sei" (93). In a further description, we see how difficult it is indeed to "take no notice of her":

> Es war gut, daß der kleinen starken Frau der Atem zu versagen anfing, denn Clara hatte mit kaum verhehltem Erstaunen die Neuhinzugekommene betrachtet, deren Kleidung, aus allem zusammengesetzt, was es Neues und Kostbares gab, auf ihrem runden, festgeschnürten Körper und zu dem sehr scharf geschnittenen, alternden Gesichte ebenso sonderbar erschien als ihre Sprechlust und ihr unaufhörliches Gestikulieren. […] Der ganze kleine Kreis fühlte sich offenbar erleichtert, als die beiden [Frau Steinheim und ihr Sohn] fortgegangen waren. Jenny schämte sich des unschönen Betragens, das Gäste ihres Hauses vor Clara an den Tag gelegt hatten (94-95).

The cause of their difference, however, is not rooted in evil or a wish to do harm but rather in the lack of assimilation. In the following quote, Eduard explains the origin of some of the irritating habits of Mrs. Steinheims's son:

> Steinheims üble Angewohnheit ist halbwegs national. Es walten in den Juden noch die alten orientalischen Elemente vor; und noch heute hat z.B. der ungebildete Jude seine Lust an kleinen Erzählungen, wie der Orientale. Er liebt es, sich in Bildern und Gleichnissen auszudrücken, und mag gern das, was er zu sagen hat, mit einer jener Anekdoten begleiten, die oft schlagend genug sind und deren seine alten Bücher zu Tausenden enthalten. Solche alte Gleichnisse wird nun Steinheim nicht leicht zu benutzen wagen, aber von der Gewohnheit derselben kann er auch nicht loskommen, und die Zitate aus neuen und alten Werken müssen ihm als Aushilfe dienen (98).

Both Frau Steinheim and her son have mannerisms that are jarring to polite society. In Eduard's explanation, such habits are old-fashioned and "oriental," not modern and enlightened. Jews just like telling their little stories. Like the prejudice that unfairly targets them, these habits are outdated but not yet gone. Again, here is another attempt by Lewald to connect the Jew with the Oriental in order to deflate the stereotype. In this case, it is not physical appearance but rather cultural habit that is being targeted.

According to the logic of the novel the "superficial" cultural differences between Jews and non-Jews would fall away if the former were assimilated into the larger society. The end result would be a loss of these differences, with Jews becoming "more German" if given the chance. Segregation is the reason why they are not able to leave their "alten orientalischen Elemente" behind. On the contrary, according to Eduard, Jews would be more than happy to shake off these mannerisms that make them different and become assimilated into a larger

society if only given a chance. These are people, "denen, man nicht einmal die Möglichkeit läßt, aus ihrem engen Kreise herauszutreten, so gern sie es möchten" (99). It is a vicious circle in which Jews cannot lose their separateness nor the characteristics thereof because they are not allowed to live among their non-Jewish counterparts.

Although anti-semitism had been legally sanctioned by the state, Lewald brings the root cause of their segregation back to the issue of their visible difference in appearance as well as their lack of fine manners.[106] Thus Eduard continues:

> Ein Teil der gebildeten Juden kann sich dreist mit jedem andern Gebildeten messen, er würde, wie in Frankreich, sich längst der Masse der Nation angeschlossen haben, er würde auch in Deutschland längst nationalisiert sein, wenn ihn sein Äußeres, seine dunklere Farbe und das schwarze Haar nicht auf den ersten Blick von den Deutschen unterschieden zeigten. Dies fremde Äußere erinnert unaufhörlich an eine verschiedene Abkunft und gibt, vom Pöbel ausgehend, dem Judenhasse immer neue Nahrung, von dem wohl die wenigsten so frei sind, daß sie den Juden nicht den Mangel an gesellschaftlicher Bildung zum ächtenden Vorwurf machten. Und man brauchte sie doch nur zu emanzipieren, um die Unebenheiten von ihrer Außenseite abzuschleifen. Freilich ist es gar bequem zu sagen: Die Juden haben einen häßlichen Dialekt, häßliche Manieren. – Woher das aber kommt, fragt niemand! – Daß es so ist, reicht ja hin, den Juden auszuschließen von der Gesellschaft, und mehr braucht es nicht, mehr will man nicht (99-100).

This explains, then, the novel's approach to emancipation which combines a plea for tolerance addressed to Germans who might learn to associate other

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[106] This focus on the visible difference of Jews may have precluded a deeper understanding of the irrational attachment to anti-Semitism in Germany. According to Schneider, toward the end of her life in the 1880s, Lewald considered moving permanently to Rome in order to escape a hostile climate in Germany, "dem aufkommenden Antisemitismus, den sie jedoch nicht recht wahrhaben möchte und herunterspielt als *hässliche […] Ungezogenheit der Judenfeindschaft, denn mehr ist es nicht*" (quoted from a letter to Berthold Auerbach, 7.4.1881, Quelle 2, A: Auerbach, Z 3604/15) Schneider 123.

characteristics with the “visibly Jewish” characteristics of Jews such as nobility of spirit and an educated mind, and a suggestion to Jews to assimilate and let go of the mannerisms that are jarring to the more genteel, middle-class German cultural consciousness.

As previously mentioned, the emancipation of the Jews is the issue at the forefront of this novel. Lewald compares the physical appearance and cultural predilections of the Oriental with that of the Jew. The metaphor of the African slave is not yet present as a way to advance this cause. On the contrary, it appears infrequently and in a completely different context.

Erlau, an artist who belongs to the Meier circle of friends, is committed to frivolous, superficial pleasures and refuses to take anything seriously or take part in political happenings. Never at a loss for a witty remark, he pokes fun at such serious types who identify with the practical, contemporary era of liberalism. The emancipation of the African slave is just another cause among many that bore him and intrude upon his enjoyment of life. In the following, he lumps two very different causes together:

> Ich strebe täglich, diese heitern Vorbilder einer fröhlichen Vorzeit zu erreichen, aber kommt man dazu? Kaum hat man sich verliebt und schwelgt in Wonne, so erzählen sie von Aktien zu einer Eisenbahn oder von Entwürfen zu Kleinkinderschulen, in denen lauter Prüde und Pedanten erzogen werden sollen. Denkt man daran, sein Herz frei zu machen, um es bald wieder gefangen zu geben, so soll man einer Korporation zur Befreiung der Negersklaven oder zur Erleichterung der Hunde beitreten; und kein Mensch denkt dabei, daß mich zum Beispiel dies viel mehr ennuiert als es irgendeinen Neger langweilt, Zuckerrohr zu tragen oder einen Hund, seinen Karren zu ziehen (52-53).

In this example, Erlau is clearly concerned about his own freedom and bondage, i.e. of the heart – and thus metaphorical, whereas real slavery of Blacks or cruelty to animals leave him bored. The shocking juxtaposition of the plantation slave and the working dog used to convey something as mundane as the speaker's boredom is not only a critique of narcissistic decadence but also a measure of Jenny's development from a spoiled wealthy teenaged girl who laughs at this joke to a responsible young woman who engages in social issues and embraces her Jewish heritage.[107] While this certainly is a very small example, examined in concert with use of the Oriental in *Jenny* and as we will see in Lewald's later prose works and political letters, the dynamic between her emancipatory agenda and the particular groups she chooses to help define and improve that agenda continues and is strengthened.

Diogena: the Aristocratic Anti-Heroine

In contrast to *Jenny*, Lewald's novel, *Diogena*, has nothing to do with the emancipation of the Jews but rather is a parody of the novel of quest. In this satire, Lewald gives the reader a negative portrayal of an aristocratic woman whose commitment to selfishness, sexual freedom, and superficiality drive her on a quest for the right man. The man she is looking for, however, cannot possibly

[107] As Uwe Moeller asserts, the "topic of 'blackness' in German literature must take into account not only the historical context of German-African contact but also the overall history of racism" (4). Shumannfang also intimately associates Jewishness and Blackness in German colonial discourse, as does Reinhold Grimm, "Germans, Blacks, and Jews; or Is There a German Blackness of Its Own?" *Blacks and German Culture*, eds. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1986: 150-184)

exist.[108] Unlike the heroine of *Jenny*, Lewald's anti-heroine possesses next to no self-awareness and thus cannot develop or mature into a productive member of society. She is unable to look at anything for its "real" value but instead relies on superficial assumptions about people and places to find what she is searching for.

The personal reasons that motivate Lewald to write *Diogena* are clear to anyone who reads her biography. Using the *nom de plume* Iduna Gräfin H.H., Lewald was attacking her rival, Ida von Hahn-Hahn, whose "aristocratic" disdain for marriage and a stubborn refusal to subordinate herself are humorously and mercilessly satirized in the novel. Lewald was unhappily in love for seven years with her cousin, Friedrich Simon, who felt only friendship for Lewald. Instead, he pursued Ida von Hahn-Hahn romantically, who, although she returned his feelings, would not overcome her aversion to marriage to be with him.[109] Diogena responds to Friedrich Wahl's proposal of marriage as follows: "Ich war wie anéantiert. Von Ehe, von Heirat zu sprechen mir, der Gräfin Diogena, mir der Nichte Faustinens, das war doch wirklich zu bürgerlich" (106).

Lewald effectively ridicules the superficiality of the hierarchical position through which Diogena relates to other people and the world itself. In the end, Lewald's picture of "true bourgeois womanhood" is strengthened because Diogena's demise is a direct result of her incapacity to learn and develop and be

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[108] She exclaims: "Ich verlange eine göttliche Anbetung in täglich neuer Form […]. Ich weiß, ich bin eine Titanennatur, ein weiblicher Faust, was kann ich dafür, daß ihr nur Männer, nur Menschen seid. Schaffe mir einen Halbgott, ich will ihn lieben und treu sein – wenn ich es kann" (115).

[109] See Helmer 157.

part of something constructive. She rejects all forms of bonding, or bondage, as she interprets it. In contrast, the ideal bourgeois woman acts in concert with her male counterpart to create a strong family. Diogena has no interest in this feminine role and maintains a lasting relationship only with the *Fürst* who accompanies her on her travels.[110] Diogena ends up insane and institutionalized because she stubbornly and ignorantly holds onto outdated, aristocratic, feminine values that contradict the new bourgeois ideal of a less self-absorbed version of femininity.[111]

In fact, Diogena is told several times throughout the story that she will not meet a good end unless she changes. The priest tells her, "Sie wollen nichts lieben als sich selbst, und das ist Sünde, das ist Tod" (81). She hears the same type of advice later on after she has spent two years living with Wahl, the bourgeois representative. She has become bored with that life and wants to leave, to which he responds, "Diogena! Ein Weib, das sich einem Manne zu

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[110] Diogena is unaware of his true motives. As already mentioned, the *Fürst*'s behavior is only explained by a perverse curiosity to see Diogena's antics and to see how far she will go in her quest. Love, as it existed between the characters in *Jenny*, is not possible here because of Diogena's character.

[111] Lewald's criticism of whom she understood as selfish, conceited women appeared not only in *Diogena* but throughout her political writings as well. She sharply upbraids wealthy women who think that the standard of "woman" is universal to all social classes and thereby refuse to see the very real problems that face women who do not possess wealth. As stated earlier in this chapter, Lewald's paradigm of progress measures itself on the capability of more and more of a given society's citizens to participate in its functioning, that is, on increased civil rights and the citizens' ability to participate on those terms. She calls for practical solutions to the social problems which interfere with the exercise of meaningful citizenship, from educational programs for girls of all social classes to state-sponsored assistance for women in trouble, such as shelters and soup kitchens. She feels strongly allied to other socially conscious citizens in finding a solution. She writes in the political letters: "Wir brauchen für die Töchter der Armen: Lehre und Fortbildung, Speisehäuser und Herbergen, Kranken- und Altersversorgungskassen, Vereine zur Unterhaltung für die Sonntage, die von gesitteten Personen geleitet und überwacht werden" (95). Furthermore, she places the bourgeois housewife and the educated, privileged woman at the forefront of these causes. It is this woman's role, "innerhalb ihres Hauses für die Gesamtheit bildend, erziehend, zivilisierend zu wirken" (29).

eigen gibt ohne den Vorsatz wandelloser Treue, ist elend" (114). However, Diogena remains impervious to criticism and to anyone's wishes but her own. Thus, in the end, their predictions come true. After having lost everything, her youth, beauty, and her sanity, Diogena is still compelled to search.

> "Oh", sagte der Doctor, ein geistreicher junger Mann, "dies ist die einst durch ihre Schönheit in den Sälen der Gesellschaft bewunderte Gräfin Diogena. Ihr Wahnsinn ist das Produkt einer Geistesrichtung unter den müßigen Frauen der vornehmen Welt, die kaum ein anderes Resultat zuläßt. Unkluge Nachbeter der geistreichen George Sand haben in glänzendem Mißverstehen dessen, was diese große Frau meinte und bezweckte, eine Theorie der weiblichen Selbstsucht geschaffen, deren Höhepunkte in der deutschen Frauenliteratur jetzt erreicht sind. Die Frauen bilden sich ein, Ausnahmewesen zu sein und unfähig, etwas anderes zu lieben als sich selbst. Sich für den Mittelpunkt der Welt haltend, fordern sie einerseits, wie die verderbten römischen Kaiser, göttliche Anbetung und klagen andererseits, daß sie keinen Mann fänden, den sie zu lieben vermöchten. Sie verstehen ihren Egoismus nicht und behaupten, nicht verstanden zu werden; sie sind unfähig zu lieben und jammern, daß niemand die Leere ihres Herzens und ihrer Seele fülle" (143-44).

At the end of the novel, the doctor at the institution explains to the traveler that there is no chance of a cure for Diogena because "Wahnsinn aus Hochmut und Egoismus pflegte immer unheilbar zu sein" (145).

In order to better highlight Diogena's selfishness, Lewald sets this satire in an international context: Diogena is a woman who travels the globe for her own selfish and therefore futile purposes. As this is a satire narrated in first person by Diogena, the points of view expressed by her with regard to other classes and/or racial groups cannot be confused with Lewald's own. Hence, one cannot mistake Diogena's obvious racism for Lewald's. Perhaps this is a tension that cannot be resolved; however, the fact remains that the following examples are part of the

context that Lewald has chosen to display Diogena's unwillingness to be part of any type of family structure. Diogena is presented with several types of subordinate feminine roles and she rejects all of them. While we cannot be certain, one can assume that Lewald does consider marriage to an upstanding bourgeois man as the most preferable option.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Diogena consults with a priest who has just returned from missionary work in Africa so that he might give her some insight into the failure of her quest. The selflessness of his calling is contrasted to Diogena's relentless self-absorbtion through a comparison to African natives. We are introduced to the priest through Diogena's appreciative eyes:

> Zehn Jahre lang Missionar in dem Innern von Afrika, war von der Sonne des Südens sein edles Antlitz gebräunt. Seine Züge waren scharf geschnitten wie die des Nero oder August; sein Blick ruhig und sicher, sein Mund fest geschlossen. Schwarzes, glattes Haar legte sich weich um seine Schläfe, und er trug sein einfaches Priestergewand mit der Eleganz, mit der Distinktion eines Fürsten (78).

Their brief relationship is then negotiated by reference to the people he has encountered in Africa. His discussion with Diogena about her sins acquires enhanced meaning through a comparison to African women whereby the fundamentally hierarchical nature of the relationship between a White, Western Self and non-White, non-Western Other is reinforced. After Diogena has narrated her history with men, which includes one divorce and two dead lovers, he responds with such a comparison to African women. From his point of view, Diogena is even worse than the most destitute among those women:

> Sie haben sich angebetet in fürchterlichem Egoismus und dem Götzen Ihrer Eitelkeit die Herzen und das Leben von Männern

> geopfert. Nicht in der Natur des elendsten Kaffernweibes fand ich die Grausamkeit spielender Selbstsucht, die sich in Ihren koketten Worten verrät (80-81).

Diogena is too self-involved to even notice the criticism in these words. Instead, she wants to seduce the priest. At the same time, she engages in the conversation with her own detour through images of African women. However, in this case, she employs much more negative and racist vocabulary, showing that Diogena cannot even comprehend the priest's mission:

> Wie der Mond sich spiegelt im ruhenden Meere, so schwebt dein heilig ernstes Antlitz auf dem Spiegel meines Innern. Verlaß mich nicht, mein Vater! Halte mich nicht unwert deines Gebetes, du, der hinabstieg zu dem Stumpfsinn miserabler Wilden, häßlicher Negerinnen, niedrigen Pöbels (81).

Regardless of the activity, both Diogena and the priest use these "Kaffernweiber" as a reference point for uncivilized behavior.[112] Rather than religious metaphor that one might expect from a man of the cloth, these African women are the terminology through which the priest and Diogena attempt to negotiate their relationship. The priest refers to them in order to highlight Diogena's character flaws, and Diogena does in order to claim his attention regardless of these flaws.

Diogena then has a dream in which the comparison and the imagery are continued. One is briefly reminded of the passage in Hahn-Hahn's travelogue quoted in the last chapter where she uses similarly vicious language and animal metaphors to describe enslaved Black women. Here, the priest in Diogena's

[112] On the awareness of distinctions in African tribes and color gradations, see Andreas Mielke, "Hottentots."

dream uses the blackness of the African women's skin and their subjugation to harsh African men to emphasize the blackness of Diogena's unfeminine soul.

> Ich sprang empor und schloß ihn in meine Arme, ein flammender Kuß Benoits [the priest] brannte auf meiner Stirn, dann riß er sich los und verschwand. Ich sank auf die Erde zurück, ich träumte von den langen, unabsehbaren Wüsten Afrikas, verschmachtend lag ich da im öden Sonnenbrand, ich hörte den Tritt von Kamelen, lange Karawanen zogen an mir vorüber, niemand beachtete mich, niemand hörte den leisen Ruf, den meine erschöpften Kräfte mir gestatteten. Da kroch ich mühsam weiter und fand das Lager eines Negerstammes. Schwarze, garstige Weiber, affenartige Kinder wälzten sich unter den Zelten umher, die elend aus Fellen und Tüchern bereitet waren. Ein schöner Mann stand inmitten des Lagers und teilte Worte der Liebe und Gnade den geistig Dürstenden aus, während ich ihn vergebens um einen Tropfen Wasser flehte, meine glühenden Lippen zu kühlen, um ein Wort des Trostes, meine Seele zu erfrischen. Ich sah ihn ungerührt an mir vorüberschreiten, er sagte sich abwendend: "Sieh, Diogena, diese elenden, schwarzen Weiber sind glänzende Engel des Lichtes gegen dich, denn sie lieben den Mann, dess' harte Hand sie schlägt, und du liebst nichts" (81-82).

From Diogena's aristocratic and completely self-involved perspective, these Black women are "garstig" and have "affenartige Kinder." They are depicted in a completely powerless position, spiritually deprived, in poor living conditions, and altogether dependent on men who beat them. According to the priest in Diogena's dream, even these miserable Black women are superior to and more feminine than Diogena because they can love their men and belong to some kind of family and/or social order. Diogena continues to passionately desire something outside of this structure – in this case, water and the priest.

Her inability to learn and develop as the ideal woman should, that is, to subsume her wants, talents and desires into a relationship or family, continues to drive Diogena. As mentioned above, she rejects Frederick Wahl's proposal of

marriage and continues to search. Ultimately after she exhausts Europe's resources of men, her quest takes her beyond the boundaries of that continent. Everything Diogena sees and encounters is related in terms of her quest, even female oppression: "Wir gingen nach Rußland und England; aber Länder, in denen die Männer aus Zärtlichkeit ihre Frauen züchtigen und aus Überdruß mit einem Stricke um den Hals verkaufen, hatten keine Reize für mich, boten mir keine Hoffnung auf Succès" (120).

The sarcasm with which the self-centeredness of Diogena's quest is handled is heightened as Diogena continues her travels. She undertakes the same trip that Hahn-Hahn herself did. It becomes even clearer that Lewald is satirizing the self-absorbed "seeing" that this character is perpetrating.

> Wir gingen durch die Türkei und Griechenland nach dem Orient. Oh, welche Sympathie flößte er mir ein. Nie, niemals hatte ich zwischen Himmel und Erde etwas gefunden, das mir mit meiner Seele zu korrespondieren geschienen hatte, nie ein Emblem für meine Seele entdeckt. Jetzt lag es vor mir da. Ja, die Wüste war das Bild meiner Seele! Immens, leer, von glühendem Sonnenbrande verdorrt […]. Oh, die unabsehbare Wüste war das Bild meiner immens leeren Seele! (120).

This passage echoes with the elements in her dream of Africa: the "unabsehbare Wüste" and the "Sonnenbrand" – except this time, the space is populated by Nomads who remind Diogena of her own wandering nature, perpetually in search of something. The image resonates with her because it reflects her own sense of herself and her "immense soul." Again, her soul is empty because she is unable to make a connection or bond with anyone; however, Diogena sees this as a positive reflection of her aristocratic essence. Everyone and everything is a reflection of this inability to connect.

> Die Nomaden, die heute hier und morgen dort das luftige Lager etablieren, wie homogen waren sie meinen eignen Allüren, wie ähnlich ihr Leben dem zigeunerhaften Umherziehen der großen Welt, das so sehr *bon genre* ist. Der Orient entzückte, inspirierte mich, die wunderbaren urtypischen Männernaturen imponierten mir. Indes hier konnte ich nicht einmal zu suchen wagen, weil bei der mohammedanischen Unkultur der Geister auf jene Blüte des Seelenlebens gar nicht zu rechnen war, die ich als Resultat erstrebte (120-121).

Although she is inspired by the Orient and inpressed by these "urtypischen Männernaturen," they just have not reached a level of culture that is high enough for her. Diogena then travels to North America because she believes she will find the right man among the Native Americans. Based on the stereotypes about "Indians" and the myth of the "noble savage" current in Germany at that time, Diogena concludes that they must have the right "Männernaturen." [113]

> Ich nahm die ganze Energie des Geistes zusammen und fragte mich, was bleibt mir jetzt zu tun? Die christlich europäische Zivilisation, die orientalische Polygamie sind es nicht, welche den Gottmenschen der Liebe hervorbringen den ich finden muß. […] Es lag in meinem Charakter neben aller Eleganz der Weltfrau ein gewisses sauvages *je ne sais quoi*, das mir immer die Cooperschen wohlgewachsenen, durch die Liebe dressierten, noblen Wilden interessant machte. Ich glaubte nicht daran, daß sie ausgestorben seien; ich hoffte noch einen Deszendenten dieser edlen Rasse zu entdecken, ich ahnte, in ihm könne ich den Rechten finden (122).

She reads up on the subject in texts by James Fennimore Cooper, Charles Sealsfield and others. Lewald describes with hilarious sarcasm the stages Diogena goes through in order to prepare herself to meet her "noble savage," assuming that she will find what she has been searching for

[113] Dabak discusses the shift from the savage to the noble savage in literature in conjunction with travel literature. See Shubhangi Dabak, "Images of the Orient in the Travel Writings of Ida Pfeiffer and Ida Hahn-Hahn" (Diss. Michigan State U, 1999) 20-25.

among the "uncivilized." Diogena describes her preparation for cultural differences:

> Ich ließ mir und dem Fürsten passende Kostüme machen, und dann schifften wir uns auf dem 'Great-Western' ein. Während der ganzen Reise verhielt ich mich absolut passiv, wie ein königlicher Tiger der ruhig daliegt, bis die Zeit gekommen ist, in der er sein Opfer zu erreichen hoffen darf. Ich las alle Cooperschen und Sealsfieldschen Romane, um die Sitten der Wilden kennenzulernen, studierte die Sprache der Delawaren und lernte alle Reden auswendig, welche Parthenia in Halms mirakulösem 'Sohn der Wildnis', dem Tektosagen-Häuptling Ingomar, hält (125-26).[114]

She prepares her physical appearance as well: "Ich sah vollkommen wie eine indianische Squaw aus, ins Deutsch-Aristokratische übersetzt" (126).

What attracts Diogena to this "uncivilized" society is the assumption that she will be able to create anything she wants from this blank slate. In contrast to her attempt with the bourgeois scientist, Friedrich Wahl, she imagines the soul of a Delaware Indian to be pure and empty, just waiting for her arrival.

> Wohl war ich Friedrichs erste Liebe gewesen, wohl hatte er mir die frische Glut seines Herzens geweiht, aber nur sein Herz war mein. Sein Geist gehörte nicht mir allein, es lebte noch etwas in ihm außer mir, er hatte Erinnerungen, Intensionen, Pläne die nicht mit mir zusammenhingen. Das war ein Malheur. Dieses Delawaren Seele war rein, ein leeres Blatt, ein großer Tempel, auf dessen Altar nur die Gottheit fehlte – er war es wert, in seiner frischen Naturwüchsigkeit, das Bild Diogenens allein in sich aufzunehmen (131).

After she meets Chief *Coeur de Lion*, however, it becomes clear in their first conversation that he absolutely does not correspond to all of the clichés she had read about the "noble savage," nor will she be able to civilize him. Instead he intends to treat her as a servant: she will bring water, work in the field, cook

[114] In a footnote, Helmer explains the poem that Diogena mentions, "Der Sohn der Wildnis" (1841), in which the main theme is that morality and love can tame the untamed. See Helmer 170.

his meals, and carry his children until she is no longer pretty at which time he will replace her with a younger woman. At no time will she be allowed to leave of her own free will. Diogena's stubborn self-absorption has become dangerous to her own well-being, and she is unprepared for life among the "savages." Naturally, it holds no appeal for her.

> Mir schauderte vor dieser unbezwingbaren Rohheit. Oh, wo blieben meine Hoffnungen! Was fand ich in dieser horriblen Realität von den Idealen Coopers? Wo fand ich die Perfektibilität des jungen Tektonenhäuptlings? Ich begriff die geschmacklose Unwahrheit jenes Gedichts, ich fluchte ihr, denn sie hatte zu meiner Exkursion beigetragen. Ich verzweifelte daran, diesen Barbaren in so viel Monaten zu zivilisieren, als Parthenia Sekunden gebraucht hatte. Ich sollte Waffen und Kinder tragen, Sklavin sein! Und der Tektosage trug für Parthenia ein Körbchen Erdbeeren und zerbrach seine Waffen, ihr ein Feuer daraus zu machen! (135-136).

To save herself, Diogena recognizes that she needs to do everything that *Coeur de Lion* tells her to do. She does what is necessary, but unlike Lewald's bourgeois Jewish heroine, Jenny, Diogena neither learns nor develops. She describes her last meeting with Chief *Coeur de Lion*, thus:

> Wie ein strenger Richter, wie ein junger Kriegsgott im Stolze seiner vollkräftigen Männlichkeit stand er vor mir. Ich mußte, so sehr ich ihn fürchtete, mir in diesem Momente gestehen, daß er von admirabler Schönheit und sein Maintien, soweit es bei einem Wilden möglich, vollkommen das eines Gentlemans sei. Weinend warf ich mich ihm zu Füßen – oh, das war ein schwerer Moment! Ich, die göttliche Gräfin Diogena, vor der die Elite der zivilisierten Nationen gekniet, kniend zu den Füßen eines hochmütigen, unbezähmbaren Sohnes der Wildnis. Der ganze prächtige Stolz des aristokratischen Weibes revoltierte sich dagegen, und doch mußte ich knien (138-139).

Diogena's faith in the aristocratic value system, according to Lewald, remains intact as is Diogena's inner compulsion to continue searching. Finally allowed to leave the Chief, she gets the idea to travel to China. With her loyal

traveling companion, she makes a plan to undertake this trip and at this moment Diogena's narrative ends. We find out the rest of her story from a conversation between the doctor at the institution where she is to live out her final days in insanity and a curious visitor who sees Diogena walking around with a lantern in the midday sun, still searching.

As previously stated, *Diogena* is a cautionary tale that is meant to explain the dangers of such a self-centered, aristocratic femininity which is incapable of understanding itself and of developing a purpose outside of itself. From Lewald's point of view, Diogena's shortcomings exist because she does not recognize the potential of bourgeois liberalism and that there is a natural role for women. In the bourgeois liberal context, women have an opportunity and a responsibility to grow, study, better themselves because it leads to better relationships and they become in that way better role models. Diogena's limitation is that she cannot commit to anything in any social situation, in any nation. Thus, she is a failure because she paints everything with the same brush stroke: real subjugation, i.e. that of the Indian Squaw and the Black African Woman, and the valued role of a bourgeois wife and mother. While it is difficult to separate Lewald's stance from Diogena's with regard to these other racial groups, in the end, one can also assume that Lewald does differentiate as well and does not consider becoming an "Indian Squaw" or a "destitute African woman" as good a solution as becoming Friederich's wife.

The Redefinition of Femininity in the *Politische Briefe*

As stated above, Lewald's re-valuation of femininity first seeks to denaturalize such qualities as weakness, dependence and intellectual inferiority. In contrast to prevailing views, she says, she considers such qualities as a product of upbringing and lack of education. She writes in the letters:

> Da, wie ich bemerkte, in dieser Angelegenheit der Widerstand [against women working] nicht ausschließlich, aber doch zu großem Teile auf Vorurteilen beruht, so können diejenigen, welche von diesen Vorurteilen zu leiden haben, sich leider nicht allein aus ihrer eigenen, innern Machtvollkommenheit helfen, besonders da sie, zur Abhängigkeit erzogen, es nicht verstehen, eine Initiative zu ergreifen. Es ist also nötig, daß man unterscheidet, von welchen Seiten sich wiklich Bedenken gegen die Gewerbtätigkeit der Frauen erheben lassen und von welchen Seiten der Widerstand gegen dieselbe auf bloßem Verkennen der Verhältnisse, auf unbegründeten altherkömmlichen Voreingenommenheiten beruht. Das wollen wir versuchen uns gleichfalls klar zu machen (128-129).

As stated above, Lewald wishes to replace such an outdated prejudice against women working with the argument that educating women will lead to "eine Zunahme von Ehen und eine Vermehrung und solidere Begründung des Familienlebens" (127). Women will still be women, according to Lewald, they will just be better at it. In addition to the practical aspect of training girls to support themselves in times of need, an educated mind also helps in unhappy situations because it prepares women to make sense of their lives. Lewald raises the problem to a national or societal one because more stable families lead to a more stable nation-state.[115]

[115] In *Jenny*, a bourgeois woman's purity upholds the national character. In the *Politische Schriften*, Lewald emphasizes the dynamic nature of the relationship in which women must earn the trust they want to have: "Wenn Ihr würdig werden und genießen wollt der gehobenen Stellung, welche der neue Staat Euch einräumt, wenn Ihr den Beruf erfüllen wollt, nicht nur Gebärerinnen, sondern Erzieherinnen Eurer Kinder, und Mitwirkerinnen an dem Gemeinwohl zu

As we have seen from *Jenny* and *Diogena*, emancipation in Lewald's terms is contingent upon endeavoring to deserve it. This preserves the position of authority which the educated have over the uneducated. At one point, Lewald remarks "[j]eder unerzogene Mensch ist ein Tier und ist ein Kind!" (58). The absolute faith in the value of education is a strong thread throughout her writings: hence her conviction that most people will grasp the opportunity for self-improvement if given the chance. It is naturally the responsibility of those who have already been educated and have self-awareness to lead the way:

> Den Mädchen der arbeitenden oder dienenden Klasse fehlt aber nicht nur ein Standes-Bewußtsein oder ein Bewußtsein von irgendeiner Zusammengehörigkeit mit einem großen Ganzen, sondern *jeder* Gedanke über sich selbst. Und da man ein Haus nicht mit dem Gipfel zu bauen anfängt, so meine ich, es sei außerordentlich viel damit gewonnen, wenn wir damit beginnen, einer gewissen Anzahl von Mädchen und Frauen durch ganz Deutschland nur erst den Gedanken beizubringen, daß die Frauen aus dem Volke mitwirkende Kräfte des Staates sind, daß sie auch geistig etwas zu leisten haben, daß sie berechtigt und verpflichtet sind, besser as bisher für sich zu sorgen, und daß die wohlhabenden und unterrichteten Frauen ihnen beistehen wollen, die besseren Verhältnisse zu erreichen (74).

There is an assumption that education will create solid citizens of a strong nation with a desire to help those less fortunate and less aware.

While Lewald expresses much sympathy and solidarity with working-class women, she criticizes harshly those who would refuse to embody the new, feminine ideal but rather cling, as Diogena did, to a useless aristocratic model. In this way, Lewald accomplishes in essayistic form what her satire also attempts to show, namely that in this new definition of womanhood, women are deserving of

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werden," they must use this position of privilege to do good works for the progress of the community (46).

more responsibility and the opportunity to unfold as human beings. As Helmer states:

> [Lewald's] Solidarität gilt vor allem dem neuen bürgerlichen Ideal der tatkräftigen, realistischen und zielstrebigen Frau. Verkörperungen der überkommenen, am adeligen Ideal müßiggängerischer Sensivität und zerbrechlicher Schönheit orientierten Weiblichkeit provozieren dementsprechend Fanny Lewalds ätzende Kritik (7-8).

An example of Lewald's harsh critique is in the following quote dealing with upper-class women. Here, Lewald exposes the hypocrisy of women "of that class" who stand in the way of progress as she defines it. These were women who claim to be dedicated mothers but instead are more interested in vanity and trivial pursuits.

> Es hat mir oft das Herz empört, wenn ich eben die Frauen jener Stände das Lob des häuslichen Herdes singen hörte, an dem sie nie in ihrem ganzen Leben gestanden hatten; wenn ich sie, die sich aus Eitelkeit und Zerstreuungssucht nur zu häufig fast allen ihren häuslichen Pflichten zu entziehen wissen, von dem *Beruf* der Gattin und der Mutter salbungs- und gefühlvoll predigen hörte, während eine bezahlte Haushälterin ihr Haus versah […] (169, emphasis mine).

Lewald's contempt is particularly noticeable in her sarcastic use of the word "Beruf." She clearly values the maternal role and denounces those who would not treat it as a worthy calling.

As in *Diogena* and *Jenny*, Lewald relies on knowledge of African and racial metaphors among her readership to make her point. For example, Lewald criticizes the quest for luxury of a selfish, lazy femininity in the following manner:

> Sie sehen in den zahlreichsten Familien den Sinn der Hausfrauen und ihrer Töchter bis ins Kindische auf Äußerlichkeiten gestellt, bis zum Frevelhaften putzsüchtig. Der Kleiderluxus der Frauen ist bei uns in den letzten Dezennien unverantwortlich gestiegen. Man

> darbt im stillen, man geizt gegen die Untergebenen, man drückt den Handwerker, man geht bis an die äußerste Grenze des Möglichen, ja in tausend Familien weit über diese hinaus, um auf der Straße lange, weite, seidene Kleider, die nicht die Frauen selbst, sondern der Schweiß, die Sorgen, die Arbeit des Mannes erwarben, in Staub und Schmutz hinter sich her zu schleppen [...] Man sieht mit Neid, daß eine andere Dame es möglich gemacht, noch vier Pakete Perlen und Schmelzen, noch sechs Stück Litzen und sechs Dutzend Knöpfe mehr an ihre Kleider zu befestigen. Man wünscht, man setzt seinen Ehrgeiz in Glasperlen, Blumen, Plunder – als ob man *ein Hottentotte* oder *ein Kaffer* wäre (42-43, emphasis mine). [116]

As Andreas Mielke has pointed out for another purpose, this terminology was familiar to Germans by the nineteenth century through trade with Africa.[117] These designations, i.e. *Hottentot* and *Kaffer*, are used without context or real reference precisely because Lewald could count on the cultural knowledge of her educated readership. Thus, they already form a frame of reference which Lewald can access to highlight those qualities in women which are antithetical to female emancipation. Hence, she acquires relevancy outside of the strictly male-female or Jewish-Christian dichotomy in which she is normally placed.

We have seen in the preceding that Lewald's approach to emancipation is two-fold; first, the stereotype must be detached from some kind of visible difference and to encourage the emancipated to give up their cultural differences. If one's emancipation is somehow contingent upon assimilation or becoming less visible as an Other, Lewald's use of the slavery metaphor, or "Onkel Tom," as I

[116] The term *Kaffer* is an "Angehöriger eines Bantustammes in Südafrika." According to Wahrig, the term is also an insult meaning "dummer, blöder Kerl." See following note.

[117] Andreas Mielke "Hottentots" 138.

discuss below, becomes very problematic as a fixed racial metaphor. [118] In a system that defined "race" as non-white in the case of an "octaroon," there was an assumption of visibility even when it was not apparent.[119]

While she certainly welcomes the end of slavery on the North American continent, symbolically she uses African-American slaves and/or freed slaves somewhat interchangeably, and in the process cannot do justice to the material and legal reality of their situation while attempting to bolster her own cause. In the process, it becomes clear that Lewald's emancipatory agenda both needs the metaphor but excludes slaves from Lewald's definition of progress and enlightenment because they cannot participate on those terms. Similarly, she has made them even more visible as "slaves." As mentioned above, the situation of the "slave" should remain stable in contrast to the struggling White woman and her situation.

Her use of the African-American slaves, however, is much more prevalent than the almost throwaway references to "real" Africans, because they possess more metaphorical potency. Lewald's relationship to the slaves is naturally secondary in *Osterbriefe* and *Für und Wider die Frauen*. But from the very beginning she expresses a woman's plight in these metaphorical terms which

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[118] Schumannfang interacts with Sander Gilman's work on the connection between blackness and Jewishness in European art. "At the center of his explorations has been the idea of the visibility of 'the Jew' and the tensions and anxieties underlying non-Jews' attempt to make Jewishness visibly identifiable. Part of his thesis involves the important step of relating how Europeans saw Jews to how they saw Blacks, particularly in the 19th century. His argument is that Jewishness and Blackness were seen as interchangeable which illuminates not only their interconnectedness, but also the centrality of vision and visibility for European's ordering of race hierachies" (5).

[119] See Leroy Woodson on how precisely the Germans clung to gradations of color even more tenaciously than the American writers that interacted with slavery in their fiction ("American Negro Slavery in the Works of Friedrich Strubberg, Friederich Gerstäcker and Otto Ruppius" [Diss. The Catholic U of America 1949]).

appropriate the African-American slave. She writes in one of the earlier "Osterbriefe":

> [U]nd gar viele der Frauen, welche über Onkel Tom und das harte Los der Sklaven ihre gerührtesten Tränen in die spitzenbesetzten Taschentücher weinen, können sehr ärgerlich darüber werden und es sehr phantastisch finden, wenn man sie darauf aufmerksam macht, daß unsere arbeitenden Frauen der Emanzipation, der Erhebung und der Befreiung durch Erhebung, nicht viel weniger bedürftig sind als Onkel Tom und seinesgleichen (45).

According to Lewald, working women in Germany are no less needy of emacipation than the slaves in North America. The reference to Uncle Tom as a symbolic representative of all North American slaves ("seinesgleichen") provides us with insight into Lewald's perspective. "He" comes to stand for the unjust nature of what is being denied women, White women, in Germany.

In the following quote, the figure of Uncle Tom highlights the wasted potential and talents of White women in Germany. In this way, there is a constant blurring of the boundaries in Lewald's work between the ideal of autonomy on the one hand and slavery and oppression on the other, since White women are in fact, not enslaved.

> Man fand es furchtbar, daß ein Pflanzer einem Neger, der etwa mit schönen Anlagen für die Mechanik, mit einem ungewöhnlichen Scharfblick für die Erkenntnis von Krankheiten, mit einer großen Gewandtheit für kaufmännische Verhandlungen geboren war, sagen konnte: Du baust Zucker, du baust Baumwolle, du putzest in meinem Hause das Silberzeug, du machst meine Kleider, du fährst mich im Wagen! Man weinte über Onkel Tom in seiner Hütte und sagte einer Tochter, die vielleicht ein medizinisches Genie oder ein großes kaufmännisches Talent war: Du strickst Strümpfe, du lernst den Haushalt führen, du bekommst Unterricht, der so weit langt, daß du einsehen kannst, was für dich wünschenswert und zu erreichen wäre, wenn man es dir möglich machte, deine Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln, aber entwickeln darfst du sie nicht – denn du bist ein Weib (109-110).

It certainly does not seem to the modern reader to be an unreasonable request that women be allowed to develop their talents and abilities and also to protest the restrictions on educational and employment opportunities. However, the representation of the horrors of slavery as limited to "Onkel Tom in seiner Hütte" lessens Lewald's claim to autonomy as a basic human right. Rather it is a basic human right to White women, thus exposing the irreconcilable contradiction in her work.

In addition, Lewald's choice of the metaphor of Uncle Tom is also indicative of a conflict in Lewald's enlightened position. As Leroy Hopkins has pointed out, the German reading public was much more receptive to such a fictive figure than one such as Frederick Douglass who personified strength and indominable autonomy and whose autobiography was published in Germany in 1860.[120] According to Hopkins, "this discrepancy in the respective receptions accorded to fictional and historical personages presages expectations about the African character (docility versus self-assuredness, object of pity versus autonomous individual, et cetera)."[121] Hence, Lewald is suggesting inadvertently

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[120] Frederick Douglass both as a symbol and a man who influenced a German author, namely Ottilie Assing, is much more relevant in the context of the next chapter and will be discussed in great detail there.

[121] Leroy Hopkins, "'Fred' vs. 'Uncle Tom': Frederick Douglass and the Image of the African American in 19th Century Germany." *Etudes Germano-Africaines* 9 (1991): 67-78. In this article, Hopkins compares the tremendous success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Germany, appearing as *Sklavenleben in Nordamerika oder Onkel Tom's Hütte* (Vienna: Wenedikt, 1853) and *Sclaverei in dem Lande der Freiheit oder das Leben der Neger in den Sclavenstaaten Nordamerika's* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1852) and others, with Frederick Douglass' autobiography in German which was practically ignored. Hopkins asserts that the unwillingness to see African-Americans as people rather than a subjugated race explains the discrepancy: "Such a display of maturity and intellectual vigor on the part of an African American [i.e. Douglass] was apparently less interesting than the depiction of how improvident primitives were victimized in a country supposedly founded on individual freedom" (76).

that the universal rights she is championing are more deserved by women who are attempting to be autonomous individuals rather than the slaves who are incapable of championing their own cause, much less be part of an enlightened society.

Another interesting example of omission or silence in Lewald's work is the position of the Black female slave. While there are allusions to Black African women in *Diogena* and the praise of their complete dependence on abusive Black men, the issue of Black women under slavery is completely subsumed by the phrase "Uncle Tom und seinesgleichen." In connection to working-class women, Fanny Lewald does not shy away from the topic of sexual exploitation in her letters. The lack of education and of preparation for the professions open to them made the daughters of the working class more vulnerable to poverty and/or sexual exploitation. She explains:

> [E]s macht zufällige Bekanntschaften mit andern Mädchen und mit Männern, es hat keine Menschenkenntnis, keine Erfahrung, es gerät in Liebeshändel. – Sie, meine Damen, haben von dem allen eine unbestimme Vorstellung. [...] Sie wissen, daß Mädchen, nicht nur die Arbeiterinnen, leichtsinnig sind. Es ist Ihnen oft genug begegnet, daß die Hausarbeiterinnen Liebschaften gehabt haben. Ihre Töchter haben deren beiläufig mitunter auch, daß die Mädchen verführt worden sind, Ihre Töchter sind allerdings von Jugend auf mit Grundsätzen der Sittlichkeit zu einem starken Ehrgefühl erzogen, und vor allen Dingen glücklicherwise unter besserer Aufsicht als die einsamen auf sich gestellten Dienstmädchen. Und wenn diese Dienstmädchen erst einmal verführt sind, wenn sie ein Kind haben, wenn der Verführer sie nicht heiratet, dann bleibt ihnen freilich nichts übrig, als sich auf welche Weise sie immer können, den Unterhalt für sich und ihr Kind zu suchen (44-45).[122]

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[122] As Helmer points out, the role of sexuality is fundamental to any discussion of women's emancipation. She states, "[f]ür die Frauen multiplizierten sich die bürgerlichen Vorstellungen des versittlichenden Wertes von Bildung mit der Betonung der Sexualmoral. Auch die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung selbst bejahte die Sexualmoral weiterhin als einen zentralen

Even though she was very vocal about the problems of White women in a position of dependence, Lewald's arguments seems to be willfully blind to the situation of African-American female slaves. In comparing slavery in the United States to the minimal rights of White women in Germany, she asserts that "the negro male" is better off because he can be sold to another master upon the death of the first provider:

> [Die Männer] wollten es nicht sehen, daß wirklich, soweit es seinen Lebensunterhalt betraf, der Neger, den man bei dem Tode seines Herrn zu fernerer Arbeit gegen fernere Ernährung verkaufte, in gewissem Sinne besser daran war, als das weiße Frauenzimmer in den zivilisierten Staaten, das seinen Ernährer verlor, keine Arbeit ordentlich verstand, und eben deshalb, da es von den Erben nicht verkauft werden konnte, nur zu oft dahin geriet, sich je nach ihrem Stande, ein für allemal an den Ersten Besten oder sich alltäglich zu verkaufen und in diesem letzteren Falle meist ein Ende zu nehmen, von welchem die Phantasie es aus keuscher Selbstsucht in der Regel sehr geraten findet, das Auge abzuwenden (110)

In this sanitized version of slavery, one's "Lebensunterhalt" is of primary importance. The master or "Herr" is mentioned in an almost passive role, causing hardship only in his death. Because of their dependent situation, i.e. inability to work to support themselves, White women in Germany suffer much more upon the death of their "master." They cannot be sold and thus must sell themselves; depending on their class, they are forced into trading on their sexuality to survive. Here, she is harkening back to the marriage of convenience and, even worse, prostitution. She uses this view to support her arguments for the emancipation of women in Germany.

Wert des weiblichen Lebens – wohl nicht zuletzt, wie Margit Twellmann betont, weil die Sexualmoral jeder Frau eine Chance gab, sich zu bewähren, geachtet und akzeptiert zu werden; und worin sonst wurde ihr eine Chance geboten?" (12).

In the comparison, however, Lewald is again confusing the metaphor of slavery with the actual institution of slavery in the United States and thus is entering into an exploitive relationship with the slave. The horror of the slavery system is transferred away from its real source and borrowed to advance Lewald's emancipatory agenda. At the same time, there is no mention of the female counterpart to this "Neger." While Lewald was very vocal about the sexual exploitation of working class women in Germany there is no mention of the sexual abuse of African-American female slaves in the United States, which owing to the number of mixed race children, was no secret. Given the straightforward manner in which Lewald's texts handle most practical subjects, it seems strange that the sexual exploitation of slaves is thus overlooked.

Ultimately, one must conclude that the metaphor of slavery and the "idea" of the slave itself is critical to Lewald's re-imagining of femininity in nineteenth-century Germany. According to her, progress calls for a redefinition of a woman's role in society. In this paradigm, it is also true that a woman should be a contributing member of society, whereby her contribution is measured by the yardstick of bourgeois values. Lewald again calls upon the slave, this time a "Negersklavin," to better capture the situation of White, bourgeois women.

> So tief war noch vor achtundzwanzig Jahren das Vorurteil auch in den aufgeklärtesten Männern der gebildeten und sogenannten höheren Stände eingewurzelt, daß der Müßiggang und die Abhängigkeit ihrer Töchter eine Ehrensache für sie sei. Sie hielten eine Pflicht, die ihnen oft sehr schwer zu erfüllen war, für ein Ehrenrecht und opferten diesem falschen Ehrbegriff in unzähligen Fällen das Lebensglück ihrer Töchter. Sie schienen gar nicht zu sehen, was in solcher Lage Hunderte von Mädchen empfunden haben und heute noch empfinden, daß die Negersklavin, die für ihren Herrn *Wert* hat, wenn er sie nebenbei nur gut behandelte, ein

> weit befriedigteres Ehrgefühl und Gewissen haben konnte als wir, die wir das Bewußsein mit uns herumtragen, daß wir denen, welche wir auf der Welt am meisten liebten, daß wir unsern Vätern, unsern Brüdern eine drückende Sorge, eine schwere Last waren, und die wir, wenn wir mit Rosen im Haare durch die Ballsäle geflogen waren, umschwärmt und umschmeichelt von jungen Männern, uns, wenn wir abends die Blumen aus dem Haare nahmen, doch fragen mußten: Aber was wird aus uns, wenn keiner von diesen Männern uns zur Frau nimmt und versorgt? (112).

Her deep empathy for working class White women and her pleas for autonomy for and solidarity with them, in addition to her own biography of struggle for these rights are based on an Enlightenment ideal of universal rights. However, the question of "Wert" or value is at the center of her unstable position. A female slave holds a monetary value for her master and, in Lewald's argument, thus must experience herself as valuable. In a curious twist of logic, the very thing that would grant a White woman more satisfaction and a feeling of being valued, that is, autonomy and the ability to freely give of herself, is ipso facto denied the Black female slave while the two are being equated.

Lewald's definition of autonomy is ultimately unstable because of this rupture: she attempts to argue both from a universal rights position while at the same time re-aligning what is termed universal according to a hierarchy of merit. While her texts are firmly grounded in a practical and rational assessment of the limitations that women during her time faced, she leverages her arguments with an authority that does not belong to her according to her own enlightened ideals.

Chapter Four

An Enlightened View of 'Blackness': The Restructuring of Whiteness in Ottilie Assing's "Reports from America"

> Niemals konnte ich deßhalb auch den zuversichtlichen Muth begreifen, mit dem so viele bereit sind, das Verdammungsurtheil über andere auszusprechen. Wer muthig genug ist, gegen sich und die Welt ehrlich zu seyn, muß zugeben, daß, wenn wir alles das abrechnen, was Erziehung, Wissen und gute Einflüsse aus uns gemacht haben, blutwenig übrig bleibt und niemand dafür einstehen kann, ob er unter den entgegengesetzten Einflüssen um ein Haar besser wäre als der Schlimmste unter denen, welche er so bereit ist zu verurtheilen.
> Assing, *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*, 1853

Recalling the discussion of precolonial discourse and the position held by women authors in connection with this discourse, it can be suggested that while modern theorists assign them specific niches within the discourse, none of these theories precisely pinpoint either the manner in which these women authors contribute to the discourse, or the contributions themselves. Although critics have attempted to define and position these women authors according to an arrangement which, by its very nature involves comparing and contrasting them with male authors of the time, the place alloted to them in either the lexicon of precolonial or emancipatory discourse has been limited. It is possible however, to see these women authors from a broader perspective, one which expands

upon the definition of precolonial discourse and which allows for a better understanding of their work and its ramifications.

Ottilie Assing and Her Journalism

Like the work of Ida von Hahn-Hahn and Fanny Lewald, Ottilie Assing's writings are yet another example of the intersection of precolonial and emancipatory ideas. Assing made forays into both arenas, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unwittingly, sometimes even contradicting her initial impulse with her "logic." In her articles published in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* between 1851-1865, Assing puts forth some complex, yet contradictory arguments in favor of the emancipation of African-American slaves in the United States, her adopted country.

Though Assing emigrates to the U.S. in 1853, time and again in her articles, she seeks to validate European cultural values over all others. Her value system and the contradiction that arises between her belief in the universal truth of progressive values and the fact that she excludes others based on this same belief system, make for an unusual perspective that I propose to examine here.

While Hahn-Hahn, Lewald, and Assing are all in favor of increasing autonomy and education for women, Ottilie Assing does not see societal injustice in terms of either a male/female or a Christian/Jewish dynamic. Rather, she focuses on the oppression endured by Black slaves and freed Blacks in the U.S. almost to the exclusion of all other social injustices. Assing comes to ardently

support the abolitionist movement in the United States, primarily because of her close personal and professional relationship with Frederick Douglass, and her admiration for him as a Black man who could rise to so-called "white achievements." In the following quote from an article she intended for publication in 1855, she states:

> I do not know to what extent the Caucasian race is intellectually superior to the African, but should, in the course of time, a happy turn of events sooner or later bring about the opportunity for developing their natural endowments, which – not unlike their hot homeland – still remain unexplored and unexploited, they will undoubtedly outstrip the expectations which people here and in Europe generally have of them.[123]

Assing has a particular fascination with the construction of a social conscience, in the sense that she sees an inherent conflict between racial oppression and the democractic system in the U.S. Assing attempts to envision a new type of relationship between oppressor and oppressed in this regard, to reimagine master and slave as equals in keeping with Enlightenment ideals. However, while attempting to dismantle arguments of White supremacy vis-à-vis the Black man, Assing inadvertently replaces them with another equally racializing hierarchy. She goes so far as to discuss in detail the physical features which separate, and to her mind, diminish Native Americans and Chinese Americans as a group compared to a White, European cultural majority. In Assing's texts, their traits become synonomous with "unenlightened," therefore unworthy, qualities.

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[123] Ottilie Assing, *Radical Passion: Ottilie Assing's Reports from America and Letters to Frederick Douglass*, ed. & trans. Christoph Lohmann (New York: Peter Lang, 1999) 35. This quote is from an article by Assing about Frederick Douglass that she intended to publish. It never appeared, however, because the editor of the *Morgenblatt* deemed its abolitionist content too inflamatory. See Lohmann 33.

Thus, while “expectations” of African Americans will have to be adjusted, it will still be “white,” or civilized society that possesses the power to establish the standards by which all are judged. She deflects charges of “racial inferiority” for the U.S. slaves and free African-Americans onto other ethnic groups such as Native Americans and Chinese-Americans who do not have an esteemed representative such as Frederick Douglass to affirm the value of their non-European traditions.

Assing and Enlightenment

It is precisely because of Assing’s adherence to “enlightened” principles that Meyda Yeğenoğlu’s discussion on “Enlightenment’s other” is pertinent in this regard. The Enlightenment discourse to which Yeğenoğlu refers includes the subjugation of Others: they are “slaves and monsters.” Assing asserts that an “educated European” would naturally support a society of equality and freedom, but she turns a blind eye to those darker European values, which included the colonization of African lands, based on racial prejudice rooted in issues of skin color, a lack of education, and the absence of Western values.

Yeğenoğlu argues that by defining the Other, the West generates its own power and position of authority over those who are non-Western, non-White. In order to create this type of Western identity, one necessarily ignores the validity of other cultures.

> The signifiers of the project of Enlightenment and humanism such as progress, modernization, and universalism have also functioned as legitimizing categories in the civilizing mission of colonial power. As Sartre notes, this relationship was more than a mere historical

> or conjunctural coincidence: the formation of universal humanism's ideal is predicated upon a racist gesture, for, in order to be able to proclaim its humanity, the West needed to create its others as slaves and monsters. [...] [T]o set up its boundaries as human, civilized, and universal, the Western subject inscribed the history of its others as backward and traditional, and thereby placed cultures of different kinds in a teleological and chronological ordering of history. It is this ordering which enabled the West to construe and affirm its difference from its others as temporal distance. This temporalizing gesture, therefore, has enabled the West not only to invent itself as the universal subject of history, but also to assert its cultural domination and superiority by assuming one true story of human history. What lies at the core of this 'worlding of the world' is the West's stabilization of its project of global domination by defining a universally applicable norm of development and progress (95-96).[124]

Yeğenoğlu's analysis of the "West's stabilization project" necessarily yields a masculine subject which a woman can only "borrow" in order to become an authority and thus participate in the "project." As I have suggested, Yeğenoğlu's position cannot fully account for the emancipatory writing of female authors. The shift away from a theoretical framework of "masculinist appropriation" within precolonialist discourse can be seen as the start of a different approach to the relationship between autonomy and domination in women's texts.[125]

In addition, because of Assing's interesting position as a White woman advocating the abolition of slavery and for the rights of enslaved and freed African-Americans in the U.S., one also needs to problematize Yeğenoğlu's assertion that "the formation of universal humanism's ideal is predicated upon a racist gesture." While I agree with her overall line of reasoning in terms of power

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[124] Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies. Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge UP, 1998).

[125] See my introductory chapter for critical interaction with Yeğenoğlu's theory of colonial fantasy (21-25).

dynamics, I think that Yeğenoğlu is too quick to collapse these two ideologies into one single maneuver, and that Assing's work requires a more nuanced analysis than the term "racist" provides.

As Joan Scott also points out in her history of feminism in France, the formation of "universal humanism's ideal" relied on the concept of the individual (or the Western Self) in relationship to the (non-Western) Other. Scott asserts that

> one of the useful, even necessary, contradictions in the concept of the abstract individual: articulated as the foundation of a system of universal inclusion (against the hierarchies and privileges of monarchical and aristocratic regimes), it could also be used as a standard of exclusion by defining as nonindividuals, or less than individuals, those who were different from the singular figure of the human. [...] The abstract individual, a singular type with specified characteristics, did not allow either for the existence of varieties of individuals or for the role of an other in securing any individual's existence. Yet the notion of individuality also carried with it a sense of distinction and differentiation (7).

However, Scott's focus is also on feminist demands for equality, thus shifting the focus to the "positive" or progressive side of the equation. Nevertheless, while her notion of the contradictory nature of the abstract individual is provocative in relation to Assing's "elite European subject," the relatively narrow focus of Scott's work requires that I look beyond her theoretical approach in order to analyze the particular contradictions at work in Assing's prose. Scott's primary objective, to account for the contradictory nature of specifically feminist political writings in

France, privileges gender over all other considerations. For her, feminists are the "other," and race receives only cursory mention. [126]

Perhaps even more so than with the work of Hahn-Hahn and Lewald, one needs to find an approach that combines both the feminist and the precolonial approaches in order to analyze these aspects of Assing's work. By emigrating to the U.S. but continuing to publish in Germany, Assing creates a unique space, and claims a hyphenated identity of sorts. She does not purposefully validate the boundaries of a specific nation or class, but rather a particular ideal. Critical of anything that does not live up to this ideal, she provides her educated readership with a unique perspective on politics and culture in the U.S., one that, in turn, reflects a great deal of herself and her background in all its facets. As she becomes better acquainted with her adopted country, with all its assets and flaws, Assing establishes even more emphatically the boundaries of this in-between space according to a humanistic ideal. One could assert that this allows her to find the voice to advocate self-determination for an African-American Self. At the same time, while there is change and growth in her perspective and opinions, it is also a reshuffling of her rigid European value system, expanded but still clearly recognizable.

Assing and the Women's Movement

Assing calls upon her European background, in order to establish herself as an authority, but also, ipso facto, takes refuge in the fact that she is a woman

[126] Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996) 7, 11. See footnotes 1 and 8 in my introductory chapter for a brief discussion of Scott's important work.

writing about social issues including equal rights. This idea, however, does not extend beyond the personal for her as she does not advocate women's rights per se. She bases her assessment of the movement on the intelligence of its representatives, finding most emancipated women lacking in education and intelligence, when compared to the traditional, European ideal. Therefore, she disqualifies them as potential leaders in a movement which was intended to usher in progress and change.

Assing did, however, see women's rights as the eventual byproduct of a civilized and progressive society. Her attitude towards equality is noticeable in an article published in 1858 about the goals of the women's movement in the United States, where Assing had emigrated in 1853. According to Assing, and in keeping with her European standard, a man who was educated, rational and therefore impartial should have nothing against an educated, gainfully employed woman.

> Ueberhaupt handelt es sich darum, den Frauen eine weitere Sphäre des Wissens und somit auch der Beschäftigung zu eröffnen. Alles dieß ist so einleuchtend und so unbestreitbar, daß es sich in einer geistig gebildeten und civilisirten Gesellschaft eigentlich von selbst verstehen sollte, und in der That ist mir hier auch noch kein wirklich gebildeter vorurtheilsfreier Mann vorgekommen, der diesen Bestrebungen nicht in so weit günstig gewesen wäre, während der heftige, wüthende Widerstand, an dem es auch nicht fehlt, ohne Ausnahme von Männern herrührt, deren ganzes Uebergewicht über die Frauen freilich nur in ihrer gegenwärtigen bevorzugten Stellung besteht, und mit derselben rettungslos über den Haufen fallen müßte.[127]

[127] Ottilie Assing, *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* (16 [1858]: 382). From this point forward, all articles published by Assing in *Morgenblatt* will be listed with year of publication, volume and page numbers. This paper appeared daily until the end of 1851 after which time it was published on a weekly basis. A brief glance at the bibliography reveals both the eclectic focus as well as continuities in her journalism.

She recognizes, however, that such a change in the status quo for women would require a shift in the power relationships between men and women, and would therefore evoke a strong, negative reaction in men who rely on those privileges for authority in the relationship. The implication here is that educated men are more likely to understand a more equal relationship between the sexes, and the repetition of the word "gebildet" specifically targets her audience, the readership of *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*, which would be comprised of both men and women.

Although Assing is not a feminist in the strictest sense of the word, one can say that she clearly advocates educational and employment opportunities for women. This belief that women had certain inalienable rights as well is reflected in both her writing and her own life. Despite adversity, Assing does not embrace the typical female's role, nor did she allow gender limitations to restrict her. As Britta Behmer shows, Assing's professional role as journalist is at first a means to achieve autonomy in order both to support herself as an unmarried woman, and finally, in order for her to be a voice for change.[128]

Assing's Background: Education as Liberator

While gender certainly plays a role in Assing's assessment of social circumstances and injustices, it is by no means the pivotal element. Instead, the dissonance in her work can be seen in the idealization of the "educated

[128] Britta Behmer, "Von deutscher Kulturkritik zum Abolitionismus: Literarische und journalistische Betrachtungen der Emigrantin Ottilie Assing" (Diss. U München, 1996) 46.

European." Perhaps one could say that she is meeting the expectations of her readership, the educated bourgeoisie, and fulfilling the demands of her employer. Terry Pickett calls it her "elitist prejudice," rooted in her intellectual background and national heritage.[129]

It becomes clear, however, that this "educated European" is also an entity to which she often refers in her articles and from which she cannot free herself. It becomes, for her, both the platform from which she advocates equal rights for African Americans, and the ultimate standard by which all peoples should be judged. Included in her definition of educated is also someone who can appreciate literature and art, hence she uses a great deal of the space in her columns to describe the cultural and artistic aspects of life in Europe and then in America and consistently emphasizes their importance. To Assing, the "educated European" can draw upon an extensive humanistic background, in order to maintain the highest standards of civilization. Seen in a positive light, a person thus educated would then be prepared to take his or her rightful place as an informed and active member of society to champion basic human rights, especially, as far as Assing is concerned, for those who are most worthy, namely Blacks. Assing's articles published in the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* from 1851 to 1865 highlight these perspectives.[130]

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[129] Terry H. Pickett, "The Friendship of Frederick Douglass with the German, Ottilie Assing" (*The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73.1 [1989]: 96). It is thanks to Pickett that recent scholars even know of the relationship between Assing and Frederick Douglass.

[130] Assing started writing for the *Cotta'sche Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* in 1851 while she was still in Hamburg and continued to do so after emigration. She was initially recommended to its editor by Amalie Schoppe, a good friend of Assing's mother. Once in the U.S., Assing was a part of a larger group of educated German immigrants who wrote about life, culture, and politics in that country.

A look at her early life offers insight into her intellectual standpoint and the later contradictions that surface in her work. As the child of a Christian-Jewish mixed marriage, Assing was well acquainted with the outsider position in her native country. However, her parents, David Assing and Rosa Maria Assing (née Varnhagen) also raised her within prominent intellectual circles, where she found a certain camaraderie and felt a kinship. Maria Diedrich, Assing's biographer, notes that members of the "Jewish and German intelligentsia" were regular guests at the Assing home.[131] Unusually well educated women of their time, both Assing and her sister, Ludmilla, enjoyed an education which included classical and contemporary literature and foreign languages. Both Terry Pickett and Leroy Hopkins highlight the broad intellectual circles with which Assing came in contact, first through her parents and then later, as an adult, through her uncle, Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, and her sister Ludmilla Assing.[132] All of these influences fostered her belief that education is paramount for the progression of society towards its highest promise.

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[131] The dramatist Friedrich Hebbel, the novelist Amalie Schoppe, the poet Heinrich Zeise, Gabriel Riesser, a pioneer of Jewish emancipation, and members of the Young German movement such as Karl Gutzkow were all members of the inner circle at the Assing home. See Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines: Ottilie Assing & Frederick Douglass* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999) 35-37. While the emphasis is on the person of Ottilie Assing, a large portion of Diedrich's work is, in fact, a biography of the relationship between Assing and Douglass.

[132] Leroy Hopkins provides the following details: "Through her sister Ludmilla Assing and her uncle, Ottilie most certainly had contact with such noted German intellectuals as Ludwig Wienbarg, Karl Gutzkow, Theodor Mundt, Alexander von Humboldt, Ferdinand LaSalle as well as some of the leading European liberals of the day. [... I]n addition Ludmilla also was in contact with Gottfried Keller and Georg Herwegh." See "'Fred' vs. 'Uncle Tom': Frederick Douglass and the Image of the African American in 19th Century Germany" (*Etudes Germano-Africaines* 9 [1991]: 72).

Assing's standpoint is also made clear by whom she praises in her articles and whom she criticizes. Assing does not take the different educational opportunities for women into account when assessing the value of a person's contribution. Instead, she holds women to a standard that shows that she expects all women in the public arena to have been provided with the same educational opportunities as she. While there are women whom Assing admires, it is almost always because they display the same qualities which she admires in male leaders, "Klarheit, Logik und Schlagfertigkeit."[133] Normally, however, she finds them lacking in such qualities.

The following quote is more typical of Assing's opinion of female speakers. Here, she is criticizing women whom she has heard deliver lectures in favor of the "Maine liquor law" which outlawed the making and selling of alcoholic beverages within that state. As Richard J. Evans has pointed out, agitators in the feminist movement often linked the cause of women's rights to some other kind of moral crusade, such as temperance, in order to imply that an increase in autonomy for women would bring about positive social change.[134] While Evans was focusing on the women's movement in Germany, a similar line of argument connecting women leaders with the moral betterment of society was to be found in the United States. With issues unrelated to abolition, Assing rejected such moralistic stances in general, and the temperance movement specifically.

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[133] *Morgenblatt* 2 (1857) 47.

[134] Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London: Sage, 1976) 2-3.

> Dagegen litt ihr [Mrs. Fowler's] Vortrag, obgleich fließend – was freilich kein Wunder ist, wenn man bedenkt daß sie seit einem vollen Monat jeden Abend an einem anderen Ort dieselben Reden gehalten hatte – im höchsten Grade an Monotonie und Langweiligkeit, und auch der Inhalt erhob sich nicht über die Gemeinplätze, welche man schon bis zu Ueberdruß von hundert Alltagsmoralisten gehört hat. Kein Funken von Witz erhellte die eintönige Färbung, obgleich einige vergebliche Anläufe dazu versucht wurden, und außerdem trug das Ganze das Gepräge einer prüden Kirchlichkeit, welche, da es sich doch um einen Gegenstand von allgemein meschlichem Interesse und nicht um eine Glaubensfrage handelte, durchaus nicht am Platze war.[135]

In marked contrast to the above description, Assing describes the speeches she hears during the "Vorlesungssaison in Newyork." The men who deliver these lectures are, according to Assing, both responsible for, and a reflection of, the intellectual life and progressive development of the nation:

> Geschichte, Literatur, Persönlichkeiten, Kunst, politische und sociale Fragen werden in Anregung gebracht und von fähigen Männern oft mit so viel Geist und Beredtsamkeit behandelt, daß man ohne Uebertreibung sagen kann, in diesen Vorträgen finde das geistige Leben und die fortschreitende Entwicklung der Nation in den verschiedenartigsten Nüancen ihren Ausdruck.[136]

The idealization of education as a universal liberator of all peoples, runs throughout Assing's journalism, and it is in keeping with a German middle-class belief system. As Behmer explains, "Bildungsbestrebungen waren […] in ihren Augen die gesellschaftliche Fahrkarte zu einem selbständigen, selbstbewußten

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[135] *Morgenblatt* 19 (1854) 446.

[136] *Morgenblatt* 14 (1859) 333. Over time, Assing's position vis-a-vis the women's movement undergoes a shift from dismissive to more accepting, largely due to her relationship with Frederick Douglass, who himself was a dedicated supporter of women's rights. Behmer goes into more detail about Assing's relationship to the women's movement in the U.S., highlighting among other things Frederick Douglass' influence (77-94). The final break with the movement came after the latent racism in the women's movement in the U.S. emerged after the Civil War when it became apparent that the freed African-Americans were going to receive the right to vote while White women were not.

Leben voller Verantwortung und Mündigkeit" (80). On an individual level, Assing sees educated persons, in contrast to uneducated ones, as having more emotional and intellectual resources in reserve which will stand them in good stead during times of crisis. An educated person, she feels, can survive hard times without resorting to less than honorable or immoral solutions to the challenges of poverty. By way of example, she tells the story of a young female seamstress in New York who did not fare well during the economic crisis of 1855, which she explains, in part, as a result of her poor education:

> Allein wer hat unter solchen Umständen noch den Muth, die armen Geschöpfe zu verurtheilen, welche, ohne den Muth und Heroismus im Entbehren zu besitzen, der mit wenigen Ausnahmen ein Ergebnis der Bildung ist, ohne höhere Fähigkeiten, mit der Aussicht, eine solche, Körper, Geist und Jugend zerrüttende Lebensweise ein ganzes oder halbes Daseyn lang fortzusetzen, auf Abwege gerathen und dem Verderben verfallen![137]

While she allows for exceptions, Assing is intent on establishing "Bildung" as the mediator and prerequisite of positive social values, movements and change.

In Assing's view, education is not simply important for the individual, but for society as a whole; the individual contributes to the fabric of the social conscience, which she was so intrigued by. Only via independent and responsible thought, itself the result of education, is there a means for establishing a social conscience in citizens, she believes. As Behmer has pointed out, Assing, disappointed by the failure of the 1848-49 revolution in Germany, thinks that the better education of its citizens would be the source of a "new" Germany, one that would reject an "uncivilized" system of government in favor of a Republican form of goverment with all its accompanying freedoms (29).

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[137] *Morgenblatt* 45 (1855) 1070.

Further, it was to be the educated elite who would be called upon for leadership roles and would be responsible to further social progress.

Meeting of the Minds: Assing and Frederick Douglass

Assing finds a fellow intellectual compatriot, thinker, and kindred spirit in Frederick Douglass. As an excerpt from his autobiography shows, it is not surprising that Frederick Douglass' ideas dovetail with Assing's. They hold similar views on the importance of education in terms of the individual and his or her relationship to society. They come to share a similar belief on the ability of education to combat racial prejudice. In combating both slavery and racial prejudice, Douglass espouses a two-pronged approach: not only does slavery need to be legally abolished, but the freed Blacks need to endeavor to fulfill the demands of full citizenship by educating and improving themselves.

> I told [my abolitionist friends] that perhaps the greatest hinderance to the adoption of abolition principles by the people of the United States, was the low estimate, everywhere in the country, placed upon the negro, as a man; that because of his assumed natural inferiority, people reconciled themselves to his enslavement and opression, as things inevitable, if not desirable. The grand thing to be done, therefore, was to change the estimation in which the colored people of the United States were held; to remove the prejudice which depreciated and depressed them; to prove them worthy of a higher consideration; to disprove their alleged inferiority, and demonstrate their capacity for a more exalted civilization than slavery and prejudice had assigned to them. I further stated, that, in my judgement, a tolerably well conducted press, in the hands of persons of the despised race, by calling out the mental energies of the race itself; by making them acquainted with their own latent powers; by enkindling among them the hope that for them there is a future; by developing their moral power; by combining and reflecting their talents – would prove a most powerful means of removing prejudice, and of awakening an interest in them.[138]

[138] Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Dover, 1969) 389.

Assing's personal, professional and intellectual relationship with Douglass is a testament to her belief in racial equality during a time in which an intimate relationship between a White woman and a Black man in the United States was unthinkable. However, Assing's writing about the nature of race and equality bears further scrutiny. In her long and enthusiastic introduction to her 1860 translation of his autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, which appeared in 1855, she tries in earnest to expose the unjust and untenable nature of the racial conflict in the U.S. Diedrich asserts that, "[Assing's] years in America had taught her that static constructions of cultural superiority were used as apologies for excluding and even enslaving those defined as outsiders" (138). For example, in her introduction to his autobiography, she states:

> Wäre Frederick Douglaß zufällig ein Weißer, so hätte er, wenn auch im niedrigen Stande geboren, bei seinem Talent, seiner Ausdauer und Energie sicher eine glänzende Laufbahn zurückgelegt und irgend eine hervorragende Stellung erreicht. Als Mulatte ist er dagegen, obgleich ein berühmter Mann, den sprechen zu hören man sich drängt, dessen Bedeutung und Einfluß Niemand in Abrede stellen kann, obgleich *der wahren Elite der Gesellschaft* angehörig, trotz Geist, persönlicher Liebenswürdigkeit und des reinsten Charakters nicht nur von jeder öffentlichen Stellung, sondern auch von Dem augeschlossen, was sich vorzugsweise *die gute Gesellschaft* nennt (emphases mine).[139]

[139] Ottilie Assing, *Sclaverei und Freiheit. Autobiographie von Frederick Douglass. Aus dem Englischen übertragen von Ottilie Assing* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1860) xiii-xiv. The subject of Douglass' exclusion from "good society" because of his race is something that arises in Assing's articles more than once. For example, she states that, "[e]s erweckt schmerzliche Betrachtungen, wenn man erwägt, welch glänzende Stellung ein solcher Mann einnehmen müßte, wenn seine Hautfarbe um einige Nuancen heller wäre, während er jetzt, obgleich der Besten einer, der wahren Aristokratie des Geistes angehörig, trotz seines Geistes und Talents, seiner Thatkraft, seltener persönlicher Liebenswürdigkeit und des fleckenlosesten Charakters, trotz der Berühmtheit, deren er im ganzen Lande genießt, von der sogenannten Gesellschaft als ein 'Nigger' ausgeschlossen ist," *Morgenblatt* 30 (1857) 718.

Assing distinguishes between what she calls a “true elite” and a false one. The false elite is comprised of those who claim to be part of good society, but who are lacking in what she sees as the necessary qualifications for it, namely the ability to recognize human worth. In her eyes, Douglass is a member of the true elite, in spite of the fact that the so-called good society excludes him on the basis of race, despite his achievements and moral character. However, at no point does Assing ever challenge the “enlightened” ideal which leads her to expose the contradiction between the so-called “good society” and the “true elite.” Instead, she just “expands” it to include someone as worthy as Frederick Douglass.

In a curious twist of logic, the category of race is thus still very much a part of Assing’s view of Douglass. As Diedrich points out, Assing also falls “in with the nineteenth-century tradition of representing blacks by first inspecting their bodies” (138). Douglass, “a mulatto,” combines the best features of both Black and White races. The following is towards the end of her long introduction to her translation of his autobiography:

> Douglaß ist ein ziemlich heller Mulatte von ungewöhnlich großer, schlanker und kräftiger Gestalt. Seine Züge sind markirt, und eine stark gewölbte Stirn mit einem eigenthümlich tiefen Einschnitt an der Nasenwurzel, gebogene Nase und schmale, schön geschnittene Lippen verrathen mehr von der weißen, als von der schwarzen Abstammung. Das dichte, schon hie und da mit Grau gemischte Haar ist kraus und aufstehend, doch nicht wollig. In seiner ganzen Erscheinung, welche von vergangenen Stürmen und Kämpfen erzählt, liegt der Ausdruck großer Energie und Willenskraft, die vor keinem Hinderniß zurückbebt, und vermöge deren allein es ihm in der That auch möglich war, den Verhältnissen zum Trotz, sich zu seiner jetzigen Stellung emporzuarbeiten, und man begreift es sehr wohl, wenn man in seinem Leben liest, daß er, fast noch ein Knabe, als sein Herr ihn mißhandeln wollte, sich

> gegen ihn zur Wehr setzte und die weißen Arbeiter ihn nicht unter sich dulden wollten, seinen heftigsten Gegner ergriff und ins Wasser warf. – Sein ganzes Leben trägt das Gepräge einer reichen, ursprünglichen, trotz allen Druckes glücklich entwickelten Natur. Alles in ihm ist frisch, ächt, wahr und gut. Es besitzt ein ungewöhnliches Conversationstalent, versteht es, den Andern anzuregen und emporzuheben, und zeigt sich in der Unterhaltung heiter, belebt, geistreich und auf der Höhe der Bildung stehend. Von Leidenschaft für die Sache durchglüht, der er sein Leben gewidmet, ist er zu vielseitig begabt, um darum nicht auch jeden andern Gegenstand, der es verdient, mit Lebhaftigkeit zu ergreifen. Die verschiedenartigsten Dinge, große und kleine, allgemeine und persönliche wurden im Lauf der Unterhaltung berührt, und über alle traf ich Verständnis und Sympathie. – Douglaß' Frau ist ganz schwarz, und seine fünf Kinder tragen deshalb weit mehr vom Negertypus an sich als er selbst. [140]

I share Diedrich's view that Assing "mobilized a powerfully eroticizing language whenever she referred to Douglass," that, as we see, includes racially identifying his features.[141] Made even more noticeable by its brevity after the long introduction of Douglass, is the cursory mention of Douglass' wife and children at the end of her introduction. In one dry, compound sentence, she concentrates on their physical appearance exclusively. She distinguishes them from him in terms of their predominantly "negro" features and darker skin color,

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[140] Ottilie Assing, *Sclaverei und Freiheit* xii-xiii.

[141] See Diedrich xxi. Diedrich calls Assing to the carpet for this: "The images of 'hybrid vigor' she evoked were directed toward a future of promise, innovation, reinvigoration; they extended the racialized definition of 'normal' beyond the traditional 'black' and 'white.' Yet what she was depicting was a beauty and nobility that was recognizable as such because it had lost its African assets. Her rhetoric of equality invited identification by affirming hierarchy, by enforcing difference. [...] Hers was a description that deracinated Douglass, that deprived him of his blackness; it appropriated his body, claimed him as one of 'us' by imposing on him a rhetoric of the white familiar. The uncritical consistency with which she used these metaphors of sameness and whiteness undermined the egalitarianism that was Assing's political creed" (139). On this same point, Behmer interprets the emphasis of Assing's introduction differently: "Eher unbewußt betonte Assing die 'weißen' Charakteristika von Frederick Douglass. Sicherlich diente diese Pointierung nicht zu ihrer eigenen Besänftigung und wohl ebenfalls nicht als unterschwellige Argumentation oder fast vorsichtige Entschuldigung, sich für einen Afro-Amerikaner einzusetzen. Vielmehr verwies Assing hier bereits auf ein der deutschen Leserschaft kaum bewußtes Phänomen, daß viele der in der Sklaverei geborenen Kinder einen Sklavenhalter als Vater besaßen" (99). However, works such as Leroy Woodson's study contradict Behmer's assertion.

and with the causal “deshalb” she effectively holds Mrs. Douglass responsible for the less desirable, “negro” appearance of *their* children.

It is important to mention that Anna Murray Douglass, as his wife, represents more than just a rival for Douglass’ affections: she is also illiterate. In Assing’s opinion, this failing is inexcusable, especially in contrast to the self-taught Frederick Douglass, a natural genius, who is an educated man, and half-white. Thus, the specificity of Mrs. Douglass’ skin color is bound up with her exclusion from the true elite to which Douglass himself belongs, according to Assing.[142] With no education to sustain her claim to membership in an educated, progressive elite, Anna Murray Douglass and their children who take after her are relegated to an inferior status.[143]

It is fair to say, that although Assing takes a stand for racial equality, she decides who will belong to this newly created elite and what the criteria are. The result of a commitment to an enlightened ideal is an “enlightened” culture which accepts racial difference, but only partially. This difference is accepted only because Frederick Douglass has proven he can belong. In precisely this process, the tool of her liberation, education, becomes the weapon with which she denies access.

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[142] Terry Pickett comments on Assing’s antagonism towards Mrs. Douglass: “It was not so much that Douglass’ wife was of the servant class – and black or white it was a class to which a middle-class European could only relate in a very limited and circumscribed fashion – but more importantly that she in no way possessed a scrap of the literate culture by which a human being was measured in post-Romanticist Germany” (97).

[143] Anna Murray Douglass, or “Border State” as Frederick Douglass and Assing referred to her in their correspondence, is more often the subject of her disdain in letters to friends and family. See Diedrich 189.

This exclusionary impulse in Assing's journalism is not limited to a rivalary for Douglass' affections. Her arguments for freedom and tolerance necessitate an exclusion of other groups who cannot claim Douglass' educational pedigree. With a tendency to ridicule what emphasizes their racial characteristics, Assing, as I will subsequently elaborate, asserts the validity of this particular "worlding of the world" by emphasizing the uncivilized nature of the Native Americans and Chinese-Americans. As mentioned above, these two movements may seem on the surface to be contradictory elements, but they do emerge in a dynamic interplay that is racially motivated despite Assing's protestations of racial equality between Black and White.

Back to the Beginning: Assing's Initial Perceptions of Race in the U.S.

Assing's position on the racial question in the United States, however, is not fully formed from the beginning. It is only later, with her engagement in the abolitionist movement and her increasingly critical stance towards a system based on racial hierarchy, that the fundamental dissonance in her position becomes evident. As she rails against the uncivilized and contradictory nature of the slavery system in the United States, she is attempting to reconfigure power relationships based on her more progressive values. However, the shift in Assing's writings from "cultural critic to abolitionist," to borrow Behmer's phrase, is accompanied by the racist depictions of cultural Others. Thus, it is necessary to sketch her development as an abolitionist because it is in the process of opening the door for one group that she closes the door for another.

Assing begins her journalistic career with the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* while still in Hamburg; however, from the start she establishes a paradigm for the terms "civilized" and "progressive." She criticizes certain aspects of society by calling them vestiges of an uncivilized past and thus evaluates progress in a linear manner: the "uncivilized" in society is part of the past, while civilized society, containing progress and technology, moves forward. For example, in the following quote, Assing is referring to a method of punishing bankrupt businessmen which she considers outdated. The paradigm of her critique is what is important, not the issue.

> Wenn man dieser Procedur zusieht, wird einem ganz barbarisch mittelalterlich zu Sinne, und irre an Zeit und Zuständen möchte man sich fragen, ob man denn wirklich im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, in einer civilisirt genannten Stadt lebe. Dazu darf man nicht glauben, daß dieses Gesetz, der Ueberrest einer alten Zeit, allmählig der fortschreitenden Civilisation weichen müsse; im Gegentheil, eben in den letzten Jahren trat ein solcher Zuwachs an würdigen Namen ein.[144]

It is fair to say that Assing's journalism expands in scope, as she not only changes venue, but gains a greater understanding of social justice. At the same time, Assing continues to define progress in very specific terms within this paradigm: "Geist des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts" or a "Geist des Fortschritts"[145] is the standard by which she measures all social movements and progress. Anything that does not meet this standard is relegated to barbarism.

The tone and content of her journalism shifts when she emigrates to the United States, and a tension develops between her sense of old-world and new-

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[144] *Morgenblatt* 20 (1852) 479.

[145] *Morgenblatt* 50 (1863) 1195.

world values. She has many opportunities to compare and to contrast one set against the other. Hartmut Keil is one of the recent scholars responsible for rescuing from obscurity both Assing specifically and the German influence on race relations in the United States in the nineteenth century. According to Keil, upon embarking on a new life in the U.S., Assing brings with her an idealistic view of the American Constitution. As he observes,

> the American Constitution had transformed [the German liberals'] own as yet unattained ideals of personal and political rights into a practical reality. The United States, therefore, became the symbol of political freedom. Thus a general and basically uncritical enthusiasm for America's 'great democracy' prevailed among radical democrats as well as among liberals during the revolution of 1848/49.[146]

While Assing does, in fact, harbor an authentic enthusiasm for America's great democracy, it does not remain uncritical. Her deepening understanding of the political, social and economic systems in the U.S. lead to an increased engagement in social justice. However, her interpretation of civilized society and progress is fractured by a flawed acceptance of equality; both her articles and her mental transformation reflect this. She comes to embrace the cause and the spirit of abolitionism, without ever letting go of her European elitist views.

Behmer notices that increased emotional attachments to Germany as a "Kulturnation" are common during this era because Germany has not yet achieved nation-state status: "So mancher Achtundvierziger prägte den in Deutschland mangels staatlicher Einheit geformten Begriff der 'Kulturnation' und leitete aus diesem nicht nur seine ethnische Identität, sondern auch eine

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[146] Hartmut Keil, "Race and Ethnicity: Slavery and the German Radical Tradition." Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies and the Center for the History of Print Culture. Madison, WI. 3 Feb. 1999. <http://mki.wisc.edu/Resources/Online_Papers/keil.html>

kulturelle Vorherrschaft ab" (65). Such an analysis provides perhaps a starting point from which to understand Assing's perspective. She uses her cultural pedigree as a means of bolstering her position, often invoking the "educated European" or the "European elite" in order to support her point of view. It also suggests that there is a directly compensatory aspect to the creation of such a category.

Prior to her meeting Douglass, Assing has already formed ideas about race. Given her penchant for progress, belief in education, and her experience as an outsider in her native country which led her to feel more compassionate toward American slaves, it is not surprising that she becomes interested in the abolitionist cause. [147] Her texts eventually come to wholeheartedly support this movement because racial slavery offends her ideas of what a civilized Western nation should countenance, which is only underscored by her relationship with Frederick Douglass as both his mistress and supporter. With his help, Assing gains a unique perspective on the movement itself and on the experiences of a former slave. [148] As Hartmut Keil points out, Assing is able to

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[147] Diedrich comments on how Assing's own position as an outsider in German society may have sensitized her to plight of other outsiders: "Ottilie Assing was taught by her Christian mother and her Jewish father, a convert, that the difference between Christians and Jews was exclusively cultural. Consequently these parents insisted that for her, a child of this relationship, identity was a matter of choice, and she became an enthusiastic advocate of intermarriage. Yet German society ostracized the 'half-Jew.' And even Ottilie Assing and her parents, despite their rhetoric of culture and their egalitarian and universalist creed, were not immune to essentialist and racialized assessments of 'the Jew,' 'the German,' 'the Negro.' We simply have to acknowledge that Germans of the day, and that includes the Assing family as victims of German anti-Semitism, saw and treated Jews as a people apart, which made Ottilie's subjective experience of being a 'half-Jew' very like a 'racial' experience. Only emigration to the United States transformed Ottilie Assing into a German, and it was America that eventually redefined her as white" (xxii).

[148] Behmer argues that Germans in general did not have an accurate understanding of racism in the U.S. and its relationship to slavery, and tended to consider slavery a "natural" state

> admirably convey[...] her thorough grasp of the structural characteristics of the 'slavocracy': Its effects upon the national judicial system which was biased against blacks; the resulting lack of respect of whites for the rights of blacks; and the abomination of the fugitive slave law. She accused the Southern states of using terror against antislavery advocates in their midst and of curtailing free speech by preventing published antislavery tracts from entering the South through the federal mail.[149]

This is an accurate statement about Assing's journalism. However, it must also be said that hers is not the stable position that Keil suggests it is. Her understanding of and position on abolitionism forms over time as her involvement with it, and with Douglass, increases. If one traces the development of her abolitionist stance, there is certainly a shift from an early attitude of self-righteous observation to one of earnest engagement. However, even in the most earnest desire to propagate freedoms with her writing, there is always the exclusionary aspect which accompanies it.

While cognizant of the existence of slavery and certainly not a supporter of it, the first time she reports on the race issue in the U.S., she is still a curious observer. Assing does become convinced that slavery is wrong first and foremost because it represents a contradiction between the democratic values of the U.S. and its legal practices, something which is anathema to her educated,

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(114-115). "Sie interessierten sich eher unbekümmert für gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse, die zum einen in Deutschland nicht vorhanden waren, zum anderen auf Grund der Entfernung zu theoretischen Hirngespinsten werden mußten. Die Idee des Rassismus konnte in Deutschland nur schwer aufkommen, hatte sich doch in der literarischen Welt ein Bild des Sklaven als das eines ursprünglichen, natürlichen Wesens manifestiert. Die deutschen Amerikainteressierten versuchten, sich die Sklaverei mit anderen Gründen zu erklären, sie teilweise zu bagatellisieren oder zu entschuldigen." However, as this dissertation tries to show, lack of experience did not prevent writers from writing about slavery. Even in the case of Assing, whose experience and knowledge far surpass those of most of her contemporaries, German or otherwise, such knowledge and experience did not make her immune to the pull of a racializing discourse.

[149] Hartmut Keil "Race and Ethnicity."

European mind. However, in the beginning, the oppression of African Americans is on the periphery while she as the narrator occupies a central role in each anecdote. The following quotes highlight this change in Assing's perspective. [150]

In this early article, Assing merely reports an anecdote, a train trip out of New York, in terms of how her behavior may or may not be interpreted by Whites who have presumably witnessed the scene and any Blacks who may be approached by her. At this point, she is a newcomer in the U.S. and is noting, rather than criticizing, the existence of racial prejudice. Her language and her attitude retain something of the uninitiated tourist:

> Die Wagen waren größtenteils gefüllt, und da ich darauf verzichten mußte, eine Bank für mich allein zu haben, setzte ich mich ohne Umstände neben eine alte Negerin, was mir – falls ich das Glück oder Unglück hätte, eine wichtige Person zu seyn – jedenfalls als abolitionistische Demonstration ausgelegt worden wäre, so aber höchstens für die Unerfahrenheit eines "Grünen" angesehen wurde. Gleichviel! die Farbigen nehmen jede Annäherung von Seiten der Weißen mit Freundlichkeit und Zuvorkommenheit auf. Bei dem allgemeinen Vorurtheil ist es auffallend, daß die Schwarzen und Farbigen nicht so gut auf den Eisenbahnen als im Theater und an andern solchen Orten von den Weißen getrennt und in besondere Wagen gesperrt werden.[151]

What this early quote demonstrates is that while Assing was certainly cognizant of the existence of racial prejudice and segregation, she as the narrator of the story occupies the central role within it, playing the gracious, intrepid, impartial White person, and noticing how her actions are perceived by the Black woman whom she chooses to sit beside. Her interpretation of the "Freundlichkeit und

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[150] As both Behmer and Diedrich have pointed out, Assing's reports distinguish her in multitudinous ways from other Germans who wrote on America. Assing herself noticed this and strove for a balanced view of America, not one that was tainted by "Amerikahass." As she explains, there were subjective reasons for such hatred, such as disappointment and failure, that had no place in "impartial" journalism *Morgenblatt* 28 (1859) 672.

[151] *Morgenblatt* 51 (1853) 1221.

Zuvorkommenheit" present in the response of African-Americans to approaches by Whites is superficial and the depth of her moral outrage is not yet present.

In another example of her early writing on the subject of race relations in the United States – the capture of a runaway slave, Assing's report of the incident again remains somewhat superficial, in that the importance of the event is not to highlight the injustices of slavery. In this instance, Assing's definition of "civilized" harkens back to her European roots, and this is where the point of the anecdote lies:

> Auch eines Vorganges in letzter Zeit muß ich bei dieser Gelegenheit erwähnen, der ebenfalls als ein Zeichen des Einflusses des besseren europäischen Elements anzusehen ist. In Milwaukee lebte schon seit mehreren Jahren ein Neger, der, obgleich man wußte, daß er aus dem Süden entflohen war, dort ungehindert sein Gewerbe trieb, als auf einmal ein Sklavenbesitzer aus dem Süden erschien, den Neger als sein Eigenthum erkannte und seine sofortige Auslieferung verlangte. Da dem Gesetz der Vereinigten Staaten gemäß ein Farbiger, welcher auf den Verdacht, ein entlaufener Sklave zu seyn, von Gerichts wegen verhaftet wird, nicht des Rechtes eines öffentlichen Verhörs genießt, noch dem Urtheilspruch einer Jury unterworfen ist, so blieb den Behörden bei dem besten Willen keine Wahl. Der arme Teufel wurde eingesteckt und hätte sicher ausgeliefert werden müssen, allein das Volk empörte sich und ubte [sic] eine umgekehrte Lynchjustiz. In höchster Ordnung, ohne alle Excesse wurde das Gefängniß gestürmt, der Gefangene befreit und dem Eigenthümer das Nachsehen gelassen, der freilich eine Klage auf Schadenersatz anhängig machte, deren Erfolg sich indessen leicht absehen läßt.[152]

The runaway slave is a "poor devil" to be sure, but not a cause. The main point of the anecdote is not to comment on the judicial system of the United States which she will one day rail against. Nor does she dwell on the injustice of the situation, rather the emphasis is on the "better European element," in other words

[152] *Morgenblatt* 29 (1854) 692.

a German community in Milwaukee, whose members not only recognized the right thing to do but who also could “storm” a prison “without excess.” In comparison with her later work, her casual mention of the slave himself is startling.

In a similar manner, Assing’s early reports about the abolitionist speakers and speeches reflect her admiration for their abilities, but without the moral outrage of an abolitionist. She has not yet found the contradictions between principle and practice that will become the center of her later articles and arguments. The first mention of the anti-slavery movement takes place not long after her arrival in New York.

> Der Mai ist der Monat, in welchem alle öffentlichen Vereine und Gesellschaften ihre jährlichen Zusammenkünfte in Newyork halten. [...] Unter allen ist aber wohl die Antisklavereigesellschaft diejenige, welche das größte und allgemeinste Interesse in Anspruch nimmt, ein Interesse, welches erst in der jüngsten Zeit einen frischen Anstoß durch die berüchtigte Bill des Senator Douglas erhalten hat, welcher im Congreß den Antrag stellte, in dem demnächst in den Staatbund aufzunehmenden Territorium Nebraska die Sklaverei zu gestatten, obgleich dasselbe nördlich vom 36 Grad nördl. Breite, der gesetzmäßigen Grenze für die Sklaverei, liegt. Ein Aufschrei der Empörung erschallte durch das Land, und während auf der einen Seite Adressen gegen die Nebraskabill beim Congreß einlaufen, setzen die Verfechter der Sklaverei ebenfalls alle Segel bei, um dieselbe durchzubringen, und ganz kürzlich wurde der Aufruhr und die Erbitterung der Freiheitsfreunde noch durch den Brief des Irländers Mitchel vermehrt, in welchem derselbe, während er für seine unterdrückten Landsleute die Sympathie der Amerikaner in Anspruch nimmt, sich ebenfalls offen für die Sklaverei ausspricht, so daß die Sklavenfrage unter den innern Angelegenheiten in diesem Augenblick alle Parteien am meisten beschäftigt. In früheren Zeiten ging es in den Antisklaverei-zusammenkünften oft stürmisch her, weil die Gegner sich einfanden, um Händel anzufangen, welche oft so weit gingen, daß man sich gegenseitig mit Stöcken anfiel, Stühle flogen und ängstliche Leute sich fürchteten die Versammlungen zu besuchen; doch seitdem die Emancipationsfrage in den letzten Jahren bedeutend an Boden

> gewonnen hat, ja im Norden gewissermaßen fashionabel geworden ist, sind solche Auftritte nicht mehr zu befürchten.[153]

There are two if not three opportunities for her to point out the contradictions between principles and actions: the admission of Nebraska as a slave state, the representative of an "oppressed" people supporting slavery, and the anti-abolitionist agitators using violence to preserve a "peaceful" system, not to mention the fact that abolitionism has become "fashionable" in the North.

The focus of Assing's writings starts to shift, and her articles develop a serious interaction with the issue of slavery and racial prejudice in the United States once she has read Frederick Douglass' autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, in 1855.[154] Assing makes the decision to translate Douglass' autobiography into German and to use her literary connections in Germany to have it published, in order to acquaint the German reading public, via the example of Douglass, with a living contradiction to the prevailing views of White racial superiority and the idea of the inherent inferiority of Blacks.[155] As Diedrich states, Assings's "Frederick Douglass was an agent of progress and change, neither object of history nor helpless victim. [...] He was a self-liberator and thus

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[153] *Morgenblatt* 32 (1854) 761.

[154] As Diedrich points out, by the time of her death in 1884, Assing willed that all of her correspondence with Douglass, twice weekly letters over almost 30 years, be burned. By that time the relationship had ended, and Douglass had married his secretary. However, as Diedrich explains, the destruction of their correspondence is only part of the reason why the existence of their relationship had escaped common knowledge. See Diedrich xvii-xxix.

[155] According to Diedrich, Assing finished the translation during the winter of 1857-58 and sent it to her sister and uncle in July of 1858. The German version of Douglass' autobiography came out in 1860.

also an ideal personification of that beloved nineteenth-century American stereotype, the self-made man" (140).

In her introduction to her 1860 translation, from which I quoted above, Assing means to distinguish Douglass from fictional characters in novels about slavery, such as Uncle Tom of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This image of the slave was well-known to her German readership due the spate of similar novels following the tremendous success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* all over the world.[156] While it did not have the effect that Assing and Douglass intended, Douglass' example and account of his own life as a slave, underscores the idea that slavery is a tyrannical system at odds with the constitutional principles of the United States, and that "die Parias der amerikanischen Gesellschaft" (ix) are subjected to things that no civilized country should tolerate.[157]

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[156] After its phenomenal success in the English speaking world, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was translated into many different languages, including German, which appeared in multiple editions. Leroy Hopkins argues that the reason for the "unfriendly reception" of *Sklaverei und Freiheit* had its roots in the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The "ethnocentrism" inherent in the popularity of this work, is antithetical to an appreciation of Frederick Douglass' life. According to Hopkins, "especially the forceful manner in which he relates how he – without outside tutelage but merely through observation and reflection – decides that freedom was the natural state of man and slavery was a cruel and inhumane system perpetrated for economic gain, contradict the image of the slave/African American as improvident child" (75-76) which *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had propagated. In addition, see my previous chapter on Fanny Lewald and her use of the "Uncle Tom" metaphor.

[157] As Douglass himself wrote in a letter of introduction that accompanied the translation to Germany, "[u]pon suggesting the fact that the German people, emigrating to this country [the US], must have an important influence upon the Institutions of this Country and especially upon the vital question of Slavery – we mutually wished that the Book could be circulated in Germany" (letter dated July 14, 1858, quoted in Pickett 90-91). As previously mentioned, it is to Pickett and his research on Karl August Varnhagen von Ense that we owe the discovery of the link between Assing and Douglass. Hopkins also mentions that the publication of Douglass' autobiography in German was intended to sway potential German emigrants to the U.S. to the cause of abolition, and, towards this end, Douglass and Assing wanted to reach the liberal reading public in Germany. According to Hopkins, Julius Campe, the publisher who agreed to issue Douglass' autobiography, had an impressive record of promoting liberal or critical work. However, "despite the prestige of this publishing house, Douglass' autobiography was apparently ignored" (74).

Time and again in her articles, Assing asserts that the racial prejudice so rampant in antebellum American society was caused by slavery. She disagrees with the theory of racial superiority, the idea that Blacks were inherently inferior and therefore rightfully enslaved, and asserts that slavery, ipso facto, perpetuated the myth of inferiority.

> Daß die Sklaverei, wie sie die einzige Ursache des Kriegs, auch die des Farbenvorurtheils, des Negerhasses ist, will man nicht einräumen, will nicht begreifen, daß dergleichen niemals hätte Wurzeln fassen können, wenn die Neger ursprünglich nicht als Sklaven eingeführt worden, sondern gleich den Deutschen, Irländern und andern Nationen als freie, freiwillige Einwanderer auf diesen Continent gekommen wären.[158]

Assing's belief in the power of education – and the pen – and of one's own ability to shape one's fate, finds resonance in Douglass' writings. The contradiction between the relatively moral and civilized ideal of a Republic, and the harsh reality of slavery, for both Whites and Blacks, which in Douglass' view corrupted virtually all levels of society, comes to be the main theme in Assing's writing in the later years of publication.

Once she becomes acquainted with Frederick Douglass, she has many opportunities to interact personally with free African-Americans in the North. This experience finds its way into her articles. Assing now attempts to correct misperceptions her White audience may have of African-Americans as uncivilized by nature. By way of example, she reports on a social event that she attended where the gathering was almost entirely comprised of African-Americans. This experience, along with her interaction with Douglass, buoys her assertion that it

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[158] *Morgenblatt* 47 (1862) 1127.

would be difficult to find a people who were “naturally” more civilized than they are. She writes:

> Die Farbigen, nach den bisher erwähnten Nationen am zahlreichsten vertreten, habe ich schon mehrfach besprochen, und ich kann nur hinzufügen, daß der günstige Eindruck, den sie mir von Anfang an gemacht, sich bei näherer Bekanntschaft befestigt und erhöht hat. Schwerlich wird man ein anderes Volk finden, welches dermaßen unterdrückt, mißhandelt und mit Füßen getreten, ausgeschlossen von bildenden Einflüssen und gewaltsam in Unwissenheit erhalten, dennoch so viel natürlichen Takt, Anstand und würdige Höflichkeit besäße.[159]

At this point in the text, it is instructive to refer back to the passage from the 1853 article where she describes a train trip. She again talks about how courteous and friendly the African-Americans are, but the novelty of the encounter has disappeared. In its place, she locates their situation in a historical context: as a people, African-Americans are oppressed, enslaved, and denied education. What impresses her is the amount of “natural” civility they possess despite oppressive circumstances.

At the same time, Assing still has not freed herself from the patronizing good will that characterized the 1853 article. She still portrays herself as the intrepid White reporter who shuns the company of other Whites to mix among the “Darkies.” Assing continues:

> Vor Kurzem hatte ich wieder Gelegenheit, die Schwarzen unter sich bei einer Soirée zu sehen, die dem schon früher von mir erwähnten Dr. Pennington im Erdgeschoß seiner Kirche gegeben wurde. [...] Waschfrauen, Köchinnen, Nähterinnen, Aufwärter, Anstreicher, Barbiere, Friseure, also im eigentlichen Sinne Dienstboten bildeten eine Reunion von gewiß über hundert Personen [...]. Kein lautes Wort, kein unziemlicher Scherz verrieth, daß man sich nicht wirklich in der ausgesuchtesten, gebildetesten Gesellschaft befand, und die

[159] *Morgenblatt* 18 (1856) 431.

> freundliche, natürliche Höflichkeit, mit der die Leute sich gegenseitig behandelten, wäre des fashionabelsten Salons würdig gewesen. [...] Außer den Berichterstattern der Blätter, die hier niemals fehlen, wo es etwas zu hören und zu sehen gibt, waren zwei englische Familien die einzigen Weißen, und zu diesen wurde ich anfänglich gesetzt. Ich machte mich indessen bald frei, um mich unter die Darkies zu mischen und Bekanntschaft mit ihnen anzuknüpfen. Sie schienen wohl darüber etwas verlegen, doch bald schwand alle Schüchternheit und wir schwatzten ganz zutraulich mit einander.[160]

Assing's interpretation of the feelings of the "Darkies" (embarrassment, shyness, friendliness) as well as of her own motives is problematic. While her intentions are to correct misperceptions, in actuality, she is making a proprietary gesture, claiming the right of representation and the power to define. As Yeğenoğlu has shown, this does not work to correct misperceptions. It does not render the observer *a priori* resistant to the racializing discourses at work, in this case in the United States. In fact, while Assing is trying to resist the racist descriptions of African-Americans, what her text shares with them is a claim to the right to describe and define.[161] The relative truth value of her descriptions is

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[160] *Morgenblatt* 18 (1856) 431-432. Before meeting Frederick Douglass, Assing had hoped to find a champion of the Black race in Dr. Pennington. For reasons not completely clear, this did not materialize. However, Assing had the opportunity to socialize with him and his church, as she describes in this passage. See Diedrich 122.

[161] Hopkins has similar objections in regards to the "image of the African or slave in eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany." He remains, however, in the realm of the "image" when he notes a common thread between previous studies and his own in a perception of "ethnocentrism which informed even the positive reactions to Africans and African Americans. German commentators who were either pro-slavery or anti-slavery were convinced that Africans were innately inferior to the European and little more than primitives who occasionally showed sparks of intelligence and creativity because of contact with superior European culture" (75). See Woodson and Harris-Schenz. While Hopkins positively assesses Assing's relationship with Douglass and her corrective attempt to portray Douglass as a great man, he attributes to her "a fabrication about the source of his education," that is, a claim to be his teacher, and that this "fabrication" is "indicative of a need to explicate the apparent inexplicable innate ability in a subjugated and therefore degenerate race" (78).

not the pivotal issue. In this case, her assertion of the authority of knowledge and experience is dependent upon this access.

It is interesting to note that, in addition to serving as a symbol of what is possible for the Black race, Douglass also serves in her writings as a resource and a source of information, supporting her claims to knowledge about the inner workings of the movement and the major political events that revolve around the slavery debates in the U.S. Douglass is the standard by which all others, Black and White, are judged but also serves to show how impenetrable the barriers of racial prejudice in American society are.[162] Via her association with Douglass, Assing is able to depict herself as beyond the "American" prejudice against black skin color. As such, she also has the freedom to move in an in-between space and gain access into the private sphere, behind the "Chinese wall," a curiously out-of-place metaphor for racial difference and prejudice in the United States:

> Unter denjenigen, welche während der Sommermonate dem Staub der Straßen von Newyork entflohen, befand sich auch Ihr Correspondent, welcher eine ländliche Abgeschiedenheit aufgesucht hatte, in welche außerdem noch kein Berichterstatter eines deutschen Journals und überhaupt noch kein Angehöriger der deutschen Literatur eingedrungen ist. Dieß ist das Haus Fredericks Douglas [sic], des berühmten farbigen Redners, welcher mit seiner Familie dicht bei Rochester auf dem Lande lebt, und amerikanisches Farbenvorurtheil ist der Dämon, welcher dieses Haus wie mit einer chinesischen Mauer umgibt, innerhalb deren sich nur die Geweihten, das heißt die entschiedensten und eifrigsten Abolitionisten wagen, obgleich der Besitzer selbst als Redner überall gekannt und gefeiert ist.[163]

In what seems like a marketing strategy, Assing claims exclusive rights to his "story" in Germany as no other reporter has been able to penetrate the wall of

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[162] *Morgenblatt* 52 (1863) 1242.

[163] *Morgenblatt* 51 (1859) 1223-1224.

prejudice. In addition to her role as reporter, she also enters his home as the representative of German literature, i.e. culture and education. This would have resonated with her readers as well.

Assing's Simultaneous Assertion of the Power to Exclude

As discussed, Assing's background provides the basis for a serious and meaningful association with the abolitionist movement and the desire to dismantle the rigid separation of the principles of the United States constitution and the reality of racial slavery. However, her position also inadvertently defends the exclusion of other "racial" groups such as Native Americans and Chinese-Americans from her vision of an enlightened society. This assertion of the power to define, or to redefine the parameters of what is considered "civilized," in this case for the freed African-Americans she encounters in the North, has repercussion outside of this particular sphere.

In regards to the Chinese, such a civilizing process is not possible for their culture because it lacks validation from a Western perspective, i.e. Assing's. During the same year that the article about the "naturally civilized" African-Americans appears, Assing writes another in which she quotes an acquaintance who is describing Chinese music. Although not explicitly stated, the reader would have a difficult time finding a people more naturally uncivilized than the Chinese. Assing's acquaintance relates the event, referring to the Chinese,

> um uns zu zeigen, wie durchaus abweichend ihr Geschmack, ihre Gefühle und Neigungen von den unsern seyen, kurz, daß ein für allemal keine Sympathie zwischen uns stattfinden könne. "Wenn es nur ein wilder Lärm wäre," sagte er, "so würde dieß höchstens

> einen Zustand der Barbarei verrathen; aber nein, es ist eine gewisse Ordnung darin, Takt und Melodie, aber so durchaus unsern musikalischen Gesetzen entgegenlaufend, steigen, wo wir fallen lassen, und umgekehrt, daß das wildeste Durcheinander unser musikalisches Gefühl weniger widrig berühren würde." Diese Chinesen wohnten im Shakespeare-Hotel, einem bekannten, vorzüglich von Deutschen bewohnten Gasthof, wo sie im Anfang, der Neuheit wegen, großes Interesse, bald aber ihres Schmutzes, ihrer Unordnung und ihrer Verachtung europäischen Anstands halber allgemeinen Widerwillen erregten, und als man sie bei heißem Wetter gar den ganzen Tag bei offenen Thüren in unverhülltem Naturzustand erblicken konnte, erscholl ein Schrei der Empörung durchs ganze Haus.[164]

In this narrative, both the Chinese and the Germans are guests in a inn. However, she presents the story as if the Germans possess the authority to set the standards. Assing writes with the assumption that her readers will understand as well as share her and her interlocutor's revulsion at the Chinese "barbarity," that in turn also provides a framework within which to understand her notions of civilization. The wild noise, i.e. music, which according to her interlocutor defies any classification because it is incomprehensible to the Western ear, is paralleled by the inability of the Chinese artists to recognize and grasp moral and conduct codes of another, ostensibly more civilized society. Thus, their artistic output is made equally repulsive by this juxtaposition.

It is interesting to note that before Assing emigrates to the United States, she uses China as synonomous with backwardness. She writes,

> Schon öfter hatte ich Veranlassung, Hamburg wegen seiner vielen veralteten Gebräuche und Herkommen ein kleines China zu nennen, und die Bezeichnung ist wirklich nicht übertrieben; denn kaum hat man sich von dem Erstaunen über ein Stück Mittelalter

[164] *Morgenblatt* 19 (1856) 454.

> erholt, so stellt sich auch schon ein anderes dar, welches einen gleich noch um ein Jahrhundert weiter zurück versetzt.[165]

While Assing develops certain topics and gains a deeper understanding of many things in the American political landscape, the fact that China and the Chinese stand for backwardnes and the absence of civilization does not change.

When she discussses Native American culture, Assing is similarly disapproving. In the following example, she depicts a young Native American woman who, according to Assing, is trading on her "noble savage" heritage, but which Assing finds contrived and opportunistic. In other words, her naturalness is not even natural.

> Diese absonderliche Erscheinung, Mary getauft, indianisch aber Jochplesileila, das heißt "Licht" genannt, schien eine Vorliebe für mich gefasst zu haben und erzählte mir viel von dem Leben, den Sitten und Begriffen der Indianer, wobei sie so viel natürliche Beredtsamkeit entwickelte, so fremdartig eigenthümliche Bilder brauchte, daß ihre Darstellung sich mitunter bis zur Poesie erhob, mitunter aber auch für unsere Begriffe sehr schiefe Bilder enthielt. Ehe wir uns trennten, bat ich sie, mir einige Zeilen zu schreiben, mit denen ich einen Handschriftensammler erfreuen wollte; sie war dazu auch gleich bereit, allein wie erstaunte ich, als sich die beredte Wildenprinzessin, trotz des Unterrichts in der englischen Schule, des Schreibens unkundiger zeigte als ein Kind von acht Jahren, und dazu Anstalten und Vorbereitungen machte, wie ein deutscher Bauer, der seinen Namen zu unterschreiben hat. [...] Ueberhaupt gehört sie so gut als so manche unserer europäischen Berühmtheiten in die Categorie der bewußten Originale; ihre indianische Aeußerlichkeit, ihre Ausdrucksweise und ihr Festhalten an den alten Ueberlieferungen sind ihr wohl natürlich, allein sie hängt doch nicht mit der Naivität des wirklichen Naturkindes daran, sondern mit dem Bewußtseyn, eben durch diese Absonderlichkeiten Aufsehen zu erregen.[166]

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[165] *Morgenblatt* 33 (1852) 792.

[166] *Morgenblatt* 19 (1856) 456.

While the distance between “us” and “them” in this case is not as large as in the case of the Chinese artists, the application of aesthetic European standards serves first and foremost to indicate the civilized nature of Assing’s point of view as opposed to this young woman’s poetic but “schiefe Bilder.” In addition, although she apparently received a lot of information about authentic Native American life, Assing is skeptical of the difference and it does not correspond to her understanding of “different sameness” as in the case of Frederick Douglass; there is no point of connection.

The tone of this passage, while seemingly objective, is scathing. Assing begins with the assertion that this young woman has taken a liking to her. It is not possible to assess the truth of that statement; however, by making it, Assing is also showing that this young woman is not intelligent enough to know when she is being politely ridiculed. Assing also describes how she wanted to render this girl into a collectible item by requesting a handwriting sample for a friend’s collection. Again, the young woman, according to Assing, was not intelligent enough to refuse this request, as she could not in fact write. In the end, although this girl had been educated in an “English school,” she did not learn enough to even write a simple sentence. The conclusion we must draw according to the logic of Assing’s texts, then, is that these people, unlike the African-Americans cannot be transformed into acceptable and contributing members of society.

Initially, Assing seems to be sympathetic to the plight of the Native Americans who are living in North America. She describes a painting in which the fallen angel reminds her of Native Americans who live in New York City.

There is, however, there is none of what Diedrich called “hybrid vigor” to be found among these people. Instead, as she describes it, they accept their oppression with shame and resignation.

> In diesem gutmüthig schmerzlichen Gesicht sucht man vergebens nach dem himmelstürmenden Haß des gefallenen Engels, und ich wurde lebhaft an die armen Indianer erinnert, welche im untern Theil der Stadt scheu und verschämt ihre Mocassins ausbietend, sich augenscheinlich zurück in ihre Wälder, hinaus aus einer Civilisation sehnen, welche ihnen als die höchste Barbarei erscheinen muß, da sie durch deren Repräsentanten von ihrem heimischen Boden vertrieben sind und mit der Zeit ihrem gänzlichen Untergang entgegen gehen.[167]

While one could perhaps read these last lines as somewhat sympathetic, I read the reversal of civilization and barbarity which she uses as ironic. She highlights the fact that her civilization must seem like barbarity to the Native Americans. However, with the final verb “gehen,” Assing has them moving on their own steam into oblivion.

Given the historical treatment of the Native Americans and that she is aware of it, one might wonder that Assing does not comment at the injustice of their situation. Instead, other articles by Assing show frustration with the Native Americans who either live in what she views as a natural world or who seek to exploit their heritage as “noble savages.” Neither sits quite right with Assing as she is a devotée of progress and technology and views the “natural” life of the Native Americans with skepticism. The empathy she brings to the situation of African-Americans is absent when she relates her personal experiences among the Native Americans. In the following, she describes a visit to a “halbblutiger

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[167] *Morgenblatt* 39 (1855) 927.

Indianer" in upstate New York whose wife is an "authentic" Indian squaw and medicine woman.

> Es versteht sich von selbst, daß bei einem Volke, das keine Kenntniß der übrigen Welt und ihrer Erzeugnisse besitzt, nur die heimischen Pflanzen angewendet werden, und bei dem unmittelbaren ununterbrochenen Verkehr, in dem sie mit der Natur leben, auf Beobachtung und Erfahrung gestützt, ist es nicht zu verwundern aber zu bezweifeln, daß sie manche Krankheiten mit den einfachsten Mitteln zu heilen verstehen.[168]

Assing's belief in progress precludes an appreciation for a medicine woman's approach to knowledge; it also precludes their inclusion in her definition of a progressive society. While Assing does distinguish between "authentic Indians" and those who pretend to practice "Indian medicine," neither fares well in her assessment. The following is a description of another "hybrid" family; however, her description of the members of the family including their racial features leave no doubt as to her opinion of them, and her tone of distance displays no attempt at understanding their situation.

> Doch die wirklichen Indianer sind bessere Gesellschaft, und wir kehren lieber wieder in Mr. Coopers gastfreies Haus zurück, wo man übrigens schon ganz die amerikanische Lebensweise angenommen hat, wie auch die Familie unter sich fast nur englisch spricht. Nur die Mutter der Frau, eine seltsame braune Sibylle, scheint sich bloß äußerlich den fremden Gebräuchen angeschlossen zu haben und in der heimischen Sprache an den Wigwam im Westen und den großen Geist, den alten Manitou zurück zu denken, den die Familie längst für die Dreieinigkeit der Weißen abgeschworen hat; wenigstens bewegt sie sich still und geräuschlos, gleich dem Schatten eines Abwesenden, ab und zu, ohne irgend welchen Antheil an ihrer Umgebung zu verrathen. Zwei Kinder, ein Mädchen von eilf Jahren, Falathea, und ein etwas jüngerer Knabe, Ociolo genannt, unterscheiden sich in der Farbe kaum von den Weißen, um so mehr aber im Schnitt des Gesichts, wo alle Eigenthümlichkeiten der indianischen Race, und bei dem

[168] *Morgenblatt* 19 (1856) 455.

> Mädchen gerade nicht zum Vortheil der Schönheit, auf's Entschiedenste hervortreten.[169]

At this point, Assing has traveled the country and has come into contact with the many different cultures and facets that make up life in the United States. However, here she is disseminating mere clichéd cultural codes, such as the Wigwam and Manitou. At the same time, she is a journalist who purports to be an objective and knowledgable professional. It is disturbing to see that Assing's derisive depiction of Native Americans operates on a very superficial level and then ends in an unflattering and physical description of the children which highlights their racially distinct features.

Strange Parallels: Assing's Increasing Engagement in the U.S. Racial Question/Conflict

While Assing's definition of what she considers "civilized" will continue to exclude both of these groups, at this same time, starting in 1856, there is a marked change in her reporting of issues relating to slavery in the U.S. Assing's reports begin to reflect more of the increased conflict over the slavery question in the U.S., and to offer her own moral standpoint simply by showing more sides of a multi-faceted issue. It is also noticeable that Assing focuses more on the issues involved in the slavery debate, and less on the relative "worthiness" of individual African-Americans, with the notable exception of Frederick Douglass, who becomes the symbol of the injustice of slavery. For example, teasing out different perspectives and providing a balanced, though naturally pro-abolitionist

[169] *Morgenblatt* 19 (1856) 455.

view, Assing notes that the issue of slavery is the lightening rod for voters in the presidential race of 1856:

> Einen glänzend schönen Vortrag hielt vor kurzem Senator Wilson vor dem Newyorker Handwerkerverein, und Banks, der Sprecher des Repräsentantenhauses im letzten Congreß, sprach unter ungeheurem Zulauf von der Treppe der Kaufmannsbörse für Fremont. [...] Mit unwiderleglichen Gründen und Zahlen bewies er, daß das Interesse des Handels mit der Ausbreitung der Sklaverei im schreiendsten Widerspruch stehe, und das materielle Wohl des ganzen Nordens ihre Beschränkung aufs dringendste fordere. Auf den leidenschaftlichen Abolitionisten und Negerfreund mußte freilich die Erklärung, daß er gegen jede Intervention gegen die Sklaverei sey, wo sie von Alters her existire, und er nur ihrer weiteren Ausbreitung ein Ziel gesetzt wissen wolle, abkühlend genug wirken; indessen erhält eine solche Aeußerung einen andern Sinn, wenn man erwägt, daß ein Publikum, welches größtentheils aus Handelsleuten besteht, das letzte ist, dem sich mit philanthropischen Gründen beikommen läßt, daß die erklärten leidenschaftlichen Abolitionisten bei der Masse als unpraktische Köpfe verschrieen sind, und Tausende, welche mit den Republikanern stimmen, so lang es sich nur um Beschränkung der Sklaverei handelt, sofort zu den Demokraten übergehen würden, sobald sie ein radikal abolitionistisches Princip vermutheten; und ich hege die feste Ueberzeugung, daß Fremont, Banks, Chase, der Gouverneur von Ohio, und noch so manche andere fähige Streiter der Republikaner im Herzen bessere Abolitionisten sind, als sie der Masse, von der sie abhängen, auf einmal zeigen dürfen. Ueberhaupt hieße es sich mit Illusionen schmeicheln, wenn man glauben wollte, daß diese sich zum größten Theil durch irgend etwas anderes als durch den materiellen Vortheil bestimmen ließe. Der freie Arbeiter ist gegen die Zulassung neuer Sklavenstaaten, weil er selbst dadurch verkürzt wird, und das Mitgefühl für eine unterdrückte Race kommt dabei nur als ein untergeordnetes, beiläufiges Element in's Spiel, wenn überall davon die Rede ist, und mancher, der heute auf Tod und Leben für die Republikaner kämpft, würde höchst aufgebracht seinen Platz verlassen, sollte sich etwa ein Neger einfallen lassen, sich an einer Table d'hôte oder im Theater neben ihn zu setzen. Einstweilen muß man sich in Erwartung besserer Zeiten an dem Guten genügen lassen, das trotzdem gewirkt wird, ohne zu ängstlich nach den Motiven zu fragen.[170]

[170] *Morgenblatt* 50 (1856) 1174.

The pragmatic tone of this article parallels the sober analysis of the differing material motivations for people's advocacy choices. She also notes quite practically that a vote for the Republican party does not signify a change in "racial" behavior or prejudice on the part of voters.

This pragmatic approach to the problem precedes the development of her own "philanthropic" or enthusiastically moral approach to abolition. It is precisely this development which gains in strength and through which she develops a real niche for herself as a journalist. From this moral position, she convincingly exposes the nature of the contradiction she sees, and the problem with equating an entire race of people with beasts and property. Assing's ultimate position is that the coexistence of freedom and slavery in a republic is untenable.

> Thatsächlich hat man vermittelst dieser Wahl die constitutionsmäßige Einschränkung der Sklaverei umgestoßen und damit entschieden, daß Sklaverei und Freiheit gleichberechtigt seyen und gleichmäßig mit dem Geist der Republik übereinstimmen. Durch die That hat man entschieden, daß es ein Verbrechen sey, die Erniedrigung einer ganzen Race zum Viehstand oder zur Waare als ein Unrecht zu betrachten, und die Früchte werden nicht lange auf sich warten lassen.[171]

At this point, Assing makes a definite shift in her writings, covering the same issues she was previously interested in with a new fire, seriousness, and passion. She begins to make the conflict between freedom and slavery the central focus in her writings. To her, the American landscape, once the province of possibilities for equality, now seems to increasingly be a republic that is contradictory to the very principles of democracy. She has a much more realistic

[171] *Morgenblatt* 1 (1857) 22. In this article, Assing is reporting on Buchanan's victory after the presidental race of 1856 and predicts no good will come of it because it will intensify the conflict between freedom and slavery. Despite the vote to make Kansas a free state, she predicts that Kansas will be accepted as a slave state, hence unconstitutionally, into the Union.

approach and perception of how race relations really are and what they might harbor.

The "Educated" and "Civilized" European

With renewed vigor, Assing begins to reassert the validity of the educated or enlightened European as the arbiter of civilization in contrast to the American, this time in order to support her argument that race slavery is morally wrong. She gets to define herself and European culture as enlightened precisely because she designates these Others as barbarians.

As an example of the kind of "barbarism" that she imagines enlightened Europeans to have put behind, once the Civil War has broken out, Assing discusses the inequity in pay standards for Black and White soldiers in addition to the impossibility of Black soldiers becoming officers, even for a man of Douglass' stature. In describing the unequal situation of Black and White soldiers in the Union army, she writes "[a]lles dieß, obgleich buchstäblich wahr, erscheint dem aufgeklärten Europäer im höchsten Grade barbarisch, fast fabelhaft."[172]

For her, "old" Europe with old-fashioned values that has not yet been brought into the nineteenth century with all of its technological progress, is still more progressive than the U.S. when it comes to humanist values. Until the end of her association with the *Morgenblatt*, Assing continues to make use of this contrast of old and new world, in order to describe how uncivilized and contradictory slavery is in relationship to real progress. For example,

[172] *Morgenblatt* 52 (1863) 1242.

> [i]n Europa, und selbst in Deutschland, gibt es noch einzelne abgelegene, verwahrloste Bezirke, in welche trotz Eisenbahnen und Zeitungen das Licht der Bildung und Aufklärung nur langsam und unvollkommen dringt, in denen die Macht alter Vorurtheile und Mißbräuche den nothwendigsten und heilsamsten Neuerungen eine schwer zu überschreitende Schranke entgegen stellt, und in der civilisirten Welt werden diese alten Eulennester, in welchen Unwissenheit und Beschränktheit sich verschanzt haben, als die Bewahrer der Ueberreste des Mittelalters, als Curiositäten und Ueberbleibsel einer glücklicherweise vergangenen Zeit betrachtet, deren poetischere und malerischere Illustration die Ruinen der alten Schlösser und Raubnester sammt den Sagen bilden, die sich an sie knüpfen und die selbst dem unersprießlichsten, barbarischsten Zeitraum noch einen poetischen Nimbus verleihen. Sollte es jedoch noch Verehrer des Mittelalters geben, wie es wirklich war, des rohen, nackten, barbarischen Mittelalters, so ist es nicht etwa im alten, aristokratischen Europa mit seinen dunkeln Ueberresten, sondern im neuen demokratischen Amerika, im Lande des Fortschritts mit Dampf.[173]

Assing is trying to dissolve the contradiction by appealing to the "civilized European" to support her cause, and appreciates "civilized old European" values in knowing morally right from wrong. Because Assing is now so invested in the European education system which she believes teaches people to make moral judgements, she holds in particular contempt those Germans who do not oppose slavery because they should know better.[174]

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[173] *Morgenblatt* 31 (1858) 738.

[174] She writes with pride about Germans who contribute their intellectual background to the cause of abolition, and she is especially pleased with those who are instrumental in striking a blow for the cause. See *Morgenblatt* 31 (1858) 739. As Behmer has noted, Assing had contacts with both groups of German immigrants, roughly divided into two categories, the "Grauen" and the "Grünen." It is interesting to note that Douglass became acquainted with these groups and their position with regards to abolition through Assing. Hopkins states that, "[i]n his article Douglass differentiates between two groups of German Americans. The older group which had arrived before the War of Independence was conservative and not favorable to abolition; the younger group, on the other hand, was composed of recent immigrants who had escaped persecution following the abortive revolutions in Europe. This group was decidedly pro-abolition as the activities of Carl Schurz and German groups in the Midwest clearly illustrate" (74).

It is not surprising, then, when Assing asserts that educated German immigrants should be more aware of the evils of slavery and of the fundamental conflict that she writes so often about:

> Der Amerikaner mag noch eher zu entschuldigen seyn, wenn er an einem Vorurtheil festhält, in dem er geboren und erzogen ist, und auch die Verlockung durch einträgliche Stellungen und Ehrenämter ist jedenfalls mächtig genug, um einen Menschen von nicht ganz festem Charakter zu Fall zu bringen. Dergleichen Versuchungen existiren jedoch nicht für den Ausländer; [...] er muß alle Begriffe von Recht, Gerechtigkeit und Menschlichkeit abschwören, unter deren Einflüssen er aufgewachsen ist, und sich künstlich eine Art von Ruchlosigkeit aneignen, welche jedes unbefangene Gefühl empören muß und einen wahren Abgrund von Gemeinheit, Rohheit und Brutalität voraussetzt.[175]

As Behmer points out, Assing is not above omitting plenty of details in order to enhance the image of the "educated" German.[176] For Behmer, the contradictory aspects of Assing's work comes from a woman positioned between two worlds, old and new. The "extreme polarity" or "crass dichotomy," which forms the basis for Assing's life in America, enables her to assert the individual superiority of both Germany and America, albeit in different areas. She suggests that,

> [Die] oftmals extreme Polarität gegenüber der alten und der neuen Heimat behielt Assing im privaten wie auch im publizistischen Schreiben bis an ihr Lebensende bei. Eine krasse Dichotomie sollte ihre Lebensgrundlage werden, nicht so sehr die Basis eines imaginierten besseren Lebens, als vielmehr die menschliche Rechtfertigung eines selbstbetimmteren Daseins (48).

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[175] *Morgenblatt* 9 (1859) 216.

[176] Behmer argues that "[d]iese Lücke in ihrer Berichterstattung ist wohl kaum auf mangelnde Information zurückzuführen, als vielmehr auf ihre Vorliebe, die Deutsch-Amerikaner in ihrer ideologischen Position gegenüber anderen ethnischen Gruppen hervorzuheben" (121).

Behmer is certainly right to place Assing at the juncture of these often conflicting worlds; however, it can be suggested that Assing's personal motive for her distaste of all that might seem "barbaric" about American culture has implications separate from its relationship to Germany or Europe. In other words, Behmer does not address the issue of other cultures that do not fit into this dichotomous world view, i.e. Native-Americans and Chinese Americans.

Diedrich also notices a contradiction in Assing's work but discusses it in terms of her Enlightenment values and the often essentializing position she has vis-à-vis other groups. Diedrich remarks:

> The definer of her discourse was unwavering belief in the Enlightenment concept of human equality and, as its companion, fierce opposition to any social or racial ascription that stigmatized difference. [...] The society she was raised in defined difference hierarchically; her response was a militant denial of innate difference. And yet her representation of African-Americans, Irish-Americans, Germans, Chinese-Americans and Native Americans, of the women's movement, and of class issues in later years shows that her adherence to egalitarian principles never really protected her against essentialist assessments of race. The competition in her between her two readings of human diversity did not cease, yet there is no sign that she was aware of the contradiction (37).

Rather than emphasizing Diedrich's "competition" between "two readings of human diversity," I see them as interconnected events. I suggest that these are not parallel strands nor simply contradictory aspects of her texts. Assing's "essentialist" arguments are not separate from her egalitarian principles. Rather, she creates a space of autonomy for educated, enlightened individuals – as with Douglass but few others, that necessitates the simultaneous exclusion of an uneducated Other.

The irony of Assing's work is that her analysis of the hurdle that slavery represented for American society is both accurate and sensitive. She is often able to see through the contradictions around her and to assess the nature of the situation. She accurately perceives that the issue of slavery would result in a violent conflict. Assing writes more and more about what she calls the central conflict: "slavery and bondage." She universalizes the desire for freedom and civil rights; thus this is a conflict which no power in the world can erase, nor avoid until every last *slave* has been freed.

> Wenn man demnach, ohne sanguinischen Hoffnungen nachzugehen, am endlichen Sieg des Nordens kaum zweifeln kann, so ist es eine andere Frage, ob dieser Sieg zu einem dauernden, wahrhaft heilbringenden Frieden führen wird. Die Anlässe, welche diese Revolution gerade jetzt zum Ausbruch gebracht haben, sind zufällige, die tiefere Ursache jedoch, welche schon bei der Gründung der Republik im Keime bestand und seitdem mit derselben gewachsen ist, bis sie ihren gegenwärtigen Umfang erreicht hat, ist der ewige, durch keine Macht der Welt auszugleichende Conflikt zwischen Sklaverei und Freiheit, der fortdauern wird, bis der letzte Sklave auf diesem Continent seine Freiheit erlangt hat. [...M]an begeistert sich für die Union, aber kaum Einer unter Tausenden steigt zu der wahren Quelle des Zwistes herab. Die Sklavereifrage ist dabei ganz in den Hintergrund gedrängt worden; man kämpft gegen die Verräther und sieht nicht ein, daß neue aus der Erde hervorwachsen werden, so lange der Fluch des Landes, der sie hervorrief, nicht ausgerottet ist.[177]

When the announcement is made that slavery has been officially abolished, Assing announces that the United States has finally entered the ranks "der civilisirten, gebildeten Nationen der Welt."[178] However, Assing also predicts that racial conflict will again one day break out in violence if the root of the

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[177] *Morgenblatt* 27 (1861) 646.

[178] *Morgenblatt* 15 (1865) 356.

problem, racial prejudice, is not eradicated.[179] Despite the victory in the Civil War, Assing understood that the freeing of the slaves was not the same as granting them equal rights under the constitution in accordance with "Bildung, Aufklärung und Civilisation." The racial question would continue to exist unless the government took on the issue of racial prejudice directly. In fact, the North, or the United States government, fell far short of what Assing expected of a morally superior position.[180] Naturally, with the benefit of hindsight, we know that much of what Assing predicted came true during the civil rights movements in twentieth century U.S. history.

Truth, Beauty, Art and Politics: Assing's Own Tableau

As already discussed, Assing spends a great deal of time trying to unravel and expose the contradictions she sees around her in American society, but never becomes aware of the problematic aspects of her own texts. In addition to her abolitionist work, Assing also professes to be a art and cultural critic. While it may at first seem unrelated, Assing's enthusiasm for artistic endeavors, in particular for painting, is worth mentioning briefly because of what her aesthetic represents. I will then draw the connection between this aesthetic and her position vis-à-vis race.

With her connection to educated and literary circles both in Germany and the U.S., it is not surprising that Assing's aesthetic is reminiscent of bourgeois

[179] *Morgenblatt* 39 (1865) 930.

[180] *Morgenblatt* 5 (1863) 116.

realism. To her, art represents truth and beauty, but it also fits in with her belief in education and her attachment to an elitist European value system. In addition, as I will show it makes strikingly visible the contradictions in Assing's own work.

Assing establishes very early on the criteria of great art. In her very first article written in the U.S., she describes a visit to the "Washington Exhibition" in New York and the purpose of art: "Die Kunst wenigstens ist eine schöne Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit, welche alle Enttäuschungen und Schiffbrüche uns nicht nehmen können."[181] While it should enlighten and uplift, a great work of art should have "nichts Gesuchtes, keine Koketterie mit dem Effekt, sondern Wahrheit, einfache Wahrheit, veredelt durch Schönheit, das höchste und einzige Ziel aller Kunst." At this moment, she is particularly inspired by the painting of George Washington crossing the Delaware and in it "der Sieg der menschlichen, durch Begeisterung gesteigerten Kraft im Kampf mit den Elementen" that has been depicted with "überwältigender Wahrheit und Naturtreue."[182]

As she becomes more aware of a different "Kampf mit den Elementen," namely the social and political one, that she sees going on around her, Assing asserts that it is also the role of art to reflect the truth of the society in which it was created.[183] She extends this role to journalists and asserts that principled

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[181] *Morgenblatt* 27 (1853) 644.

[182] *Morgenblatt* 27 (1853) 644. In her enthusiasm for this painting and the true-to-life detail in the artist's portrayal of the roaring river and the courageous Washington, Assing also mentions the presence "des treuen schwarzen Begleiters Washingtons." As Diedrich points out, Assing "did not write about the likelihood that the 'companion' was, in fact, a slave" (119).

[183] *Morgenblatt* 11 (1860) 264.

journalists should reflect the multifaceted nature of society in their work.[184] Thus, she sees it as her task to both reflect the truth of social reality and to uplift society by contributing to its improvement.

It is at this juncture that we see the connection of her artistic principles to her journalistic ones when she analyzes a painting entitled “Plantation Life” in great detail. She values it so highly, not because it ignores racial differences, but because it captures according to her the shades of difference more accurately, thereby acting as a truthful reflection of social reality. Just as Assing wants to capture Douglass’ true nature through words, this painter captures plantation life of the Black slaves. She attempts to render what she sees into words:

> Das Glanzstück [...] der Ausstellung ist ‘Plantation Life’ von Johnson, auf welchem einer der wenigen heitern Momente vorgeführt wird, welche das Sklavenleben auf den Pflanzungen bietet. Den Mittelpunkt bildet ein Mann, der den Banjo spielt, neben ihm ein Knabe, welcher andächtig und mit sichbarem Behagen lauscht, während er in der einen Hand nachlässig einen Bindfaden hält, an dessen Ende das Bruchstück eines kleinen zweiräderigen Karrens, wahrscheinlich seines einzigen Spielzeuges, befestigt ist. Weiter im Vordergrund kniet eine Frau, von einer ganzen Schaar Kinder umgeben, von denen sie eben eines nach dem Takt der Musik tanzen läßt. Ganz nach vorn auf der linken Seite und von den übrigen gesondert, steht ein schönes junges Mädchen von heller Farbe in Unterhaltung mit einem jungen Mann, welcher dem Beschauer den Rücken zuwendet, so daß man außer dem wolligen Haar nur einen kleinen Theil des Profils sieht; den

[184] In 1860, Assing writes: “Einem Correspondenten, der es sich zur Aufgabe stellt, das Leben und Treiben einer großen Stadt, und insofern sie das ganze Land wiederspiegelt, auch dieses mit möglicher Treue zu schildern, muß daran liegen, dasselbe in seiner ganzen Mannigfaltigkeit darzustellen; wenn wir uns nun aber von der Politik etwa der Literatur und dem Theater zuwenden, so finden wir, daß unter allen derartigen Erscheinungen seit langer Zeit keine ein solches Aufsehen gemacht hat, als ein Drama, welches ebenfalls die Conflikte schildert, welche die Negerfrage im Süden in allen Beziehungen des Privatlebens hervorruft.” *Morgenblatt* 11 (1860) 264. She then goes on to discuss a play called “Octaroon” by Dion Bourcicault and praises it despite lack of literary merit according to her standards. Instead she emphasizes the social importance of the play and asserts that this importance outweighs its flaws. In the context of her often biting criticism for literary or artistic attempts that do not meet her standard, this is an unusual concession.

> Gegenstand der Unterhaltung erräth man jedoch leicht aus dem verlegenen und doch so vergnügten Lächeln, mit dem sie auf das Gemüse niedersieht, das sie eben zerpflückt. Auf der andern Seite schleicht, durch die Musik und die Töne der Fröhlichkeit herbeigelockt, von einer Sklavin gefolgt, eine junge Dame, wahrscheinlich 'Old Master's' Tochter herbei, um an dem Vergnügen wenigstens im Stillen theilzunehmen. Alle Nüancen sind vertreten, von dem tiefen Schwarz des Vollblutnegers bis zu jener schönen hellbräunlichen Farbe, welche sich nur um eine Schattirung von der Farbe des Spaniers und Italieners unterscheidet, und sehr glücklich hat der Künstler die Eigenthümlichkeiten der schwarzen Race in ihren verschiedenen Abstufungung wiedergegeben, ohne dabei in jene Uebertreibungen zu verfallen, wie etwa die übermäßig platten Nasen, die wurstartigen Lippen, die zurückliegenden Stirnen oder den ganzen thierartigen Ausdruck, durch welchen oberflächliche oder vom Farbenvorurtheil angesteckte Maler oft nur eine Carricatur des schwarzen Typus geben.[185]

Assing is impressed by the artist's ability to render a "cheerful moment" on the plantation accurately without the prejudiced and prejudicial exaggeration of "racial" features. However, a closer look at Assing's "truthful" description of the painting reveals startling contradictions. Once again, Assing is privileging on the aesthetic scale those African-Americans who have a lighter skin color. The "schönes junges Mädchen" is beautiful because she is "von heller Farbe." She applauds the artist's palette of color that faithfully renders "von dem tiefen Schwarz des Vollblutnegers bis zu jener schönen hellbräunlichen Farbe" that is just one shade away from a Spaniard or an Italian. However, it is Assing herself that declares the standard of beauty, and it is the lighter end of the spectrum of skin color that earns the qualification "schön." She praises the absence of more ethnically prominent features and dismisses such features, for example "übermäßig platte Nasen," "wurstartige Lippen," "zurückliegende Stirnen" or a

[185] *Morgenblatt* 29 (1859) 694.

“thierartigen Ausdruck,” as a function of caricature. But again, it is she that supplies the qualifying adjectives.

Assing clearly has aesthetic preferences about both skin color and facial features. She tries to hide these preferences and value judgements behind assertions of universal truths about art and the reality of different skin colors among African-Americans. At the same time, Assing has also tried to imbue these racial characteristics with positive distinctions such as morality, ethics and goodness because of her relationship with Frederick Douglass and her ardent support of the abolitionist movement. However, as I mentioned earlier, the accuracy of an author’s portrayal of the Other is not the issue but the rather the power of representation and the denial in that moment of the Other to Self-represent.

In addition, because Assing asserts a claim to truth value which she can justify with her positive intentions and her position of authority, this lends her other depictions more credence, even when these are not accompanied by positive intentions. As we have seen in previous quotes, in her depictions of Native Americans Assing keeps her perspective superficial while also distinguishing her subjects “racially” or according to their different physical characteristics. In contrast to her enthusiastic representations of Frederick Douglass and others that she admires, Assing does not imbue these physical differences with any positive personality traits; in fact, she does the opposite and creates a caricature. She capitalizes on their differences by reinforcing negative

stereotypes and thereby still claims the position of the "civilized we" with an ability to know and describe "them." The following excerpt is very telling:

> Vor Kurzem hatte Newyork die Ehre, zwölf indianische Häuplinge aus Minnesota zu beherbergen, die sich, von einem Dolmetscher begleitet, auf der Durchreise nach Washington, wo sie Verhandlungen mit der Regierung haben, einige Tage hier aufhielten, ächte indianische Schönheiten, nach unsern Begriffen aber abscheuliche Kerle mit dicken Nasen, hohen Backenknochen und so niedrigen Stirnen, daß das Vorderhaar, welches sie nicht wie wir nach hinten, sondern nach vorn streichen, fast die Nasenwurzel berührt. Einige hatten das Haar wie Weiber in mehrere lange herunterhängende Zöpfe geflochten; ein anderer trug zwei steife Federn gleich Hörnern auf beiden Seiten des Kopfes. Blankets, Mocassins, Tomahawks und Calumets, kurz den ganzen Aufputz rothhäutiger Aristokratie, konnte man an ihnen in höchster Vollkommenheit kennen lernen, und selbst in Newyork, wo die Indianer doch zu den Gestalten gehören, denen man fast täglich begegnet, erregte ihr Erscheinen auf der Straße Aufsehen und Zusammenlauf[186].

In this passage, she draws attention to some very similar physical characteristics as she did in the passage about "Plantation Life." The difference is now they belong to "abscheuliche Kerle." For example, she highlights their "dicke Nasen" and "hohe Backenknochen," as well as the "niedrige Stirne" which are synonymous with stupidity. She both emasculates them with reference to "lange herunterhängende Zöpfe" and bestializes them with the "Federn gleich Hörnern." In the end, their physicality and their cultural objects – "Blankets, Mocassins, Tomahawks und Calumets" – are so completely taken apart and catalogued with ridicule that when she attempts to put them back together with the phrases "den ganzen Aufputz rothhäutiger Aristokratie" and "in höchster Vollkommenheit," there is nothing left of the respect that might be due these twelve Native American chieftains.

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[186] *Morgenblatt* 37 (1858) 887.

As the tension between the North and the South escalates toward war, and the war in fact breaks out, Assing's attention is taken even more by the racial divide between Black and White that she sees in the country. However, she still finds room to comment on cultural topics. To help raise money for the war effort, there is an art exhibition in New York in 1864, and here Assing finds occasion to provide another description of Native Americans. Again, this text can be read as a tableau of contradiction: on the one hand, Assing claims to be true to her ideals about art, which in turn reflect her Enlightenment ideals; on the other, her bias against "uncivilized" societies is given free reign. In the following, even more reminiscent of the portrait "Plantation Life" in the attention to detail, Assing betrays her own aesthetic credo. The contrast between her outrage over the immorality of slavery and her ambivalence towards the Native Americans is striking.

> Eine anziehende Abtheilung ist unstreitig der indianische Wigwam, wo neunzehn Indianer, fünfzehn Männer und vier Frauen ihre Tänze und Gesänge zum Besten geben. Diese Indianer, vom Stamme der Irequaws, leben in der Nähe von Syracus, im westlichen Theil des Staats Newyork. Sie sind mehr als halb civilisirt und erboten sich freundlich, als sie von der Ausstellung hörten, das Ihrige durch Darstellungen ihrer Gebräuche beizutragen. [...] Die Leute, welche für gewöhnlich europäische Tracht angenommen haben, erscheinen bei dieser Gelegenheit im vollen indianischen Costüm, mit Federn und Perlen aufgeputzt; nur die Beine, Arme und der Oberkörper sind, den civilisirten Begriffen von Anstand zu Liebe, mit Tricots bedeckt, die indessen die schönen, kräftigen Körperformen in vollem Maße sehen lassen. Ihre Gesichtsbildung ist nicht unangenehm, die Stirn höher als bei den ganz uncivilisirten Indianerstämmen, und der Ausdruck gutmüthig und freundlich. [...] Viele hatten außerdem schwarze Flecken und Streifen auf den Backen und über dem Mund, als wollten sie damit den mangelnden Schnurrbart ersetzen, den die Natur dem unvermischten Indianer versagt hat. [...] Ihre Tänze und Gesänge sind primitiv genug und zeigen keine Spur irgend eines

> Einflusses. [...] [D]ie Frauen tanzten in engen Kreisen um sie herum, wobei sie sich wiederholt mit den Fäusten abwechelnd an Brust und Stirne schlugen, wie ich vermuthe, die indianische Weise, ihren Herren und Gebietern die Cour zu machen, die darin vielleicht irgend einen uns nicht begreiflichen Reiz entdecken. Am ausdruckvollsten und characteristischsten war jedoch der Kriegstanz, in dem die rothen Menschen mit lautem Geschrei umhersprangen, den Oberkörper hin und her warfen, ihre Aexte und Keulen schwangen und dabei wirklich eine Art wilder Grazie entwickelten.[187]

The reader notices in this passage an ambivalence in terms of value judgement, due to the "more civilized" rank of this tribe – which is demonstrated by the fact that some wear European garb, and that they, according to Assing, recognize the desirability of the masculine beard even if they lack the ability to grow one – and to her appreciation of their higher forehead and "schöne, kräftige Körperformen." While this ambivalence makes the text more complex and thus more interesting, it does not change anything in Assing's hierarchy of values. Nor has she disassociated her disapproval from the racializing gesture. In the end, the tolerance based on the enlightened values that she attributes to her former countrymen and women and demands from her fellow White Americans vis-à-vis African-Americans is clearly limited.

It must also be noted that the political consequences of such racializing stances toward the Native Americans and the Chinese-Americans are absent from her writings. While they were certainly not enslaved, both groups faced difficulties in obtaining U.S. citizenship and were deprived of judicial protection.[188]

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[187] *Morgenblatt* 22 (1864) 520.

[188] "The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1831 that 'Indians' were a 'domestic dependent nation.' As such, they lacked citizenship rights as long as they remained within their nation. But it would not be until 1924 that Congress would pass the Indian Citizenship Act granting all American

While these are certainly not the causes that she supports, they did in fact deserve her championing, given her celebration of Blacks and penchant for equality. Instead she marginalizes or excludes them, and one cannot escape the conclusion that she fails the universal values of progress and tolerance that she uses to advance her abolitionist work.

Indians, on or off the reservation, citizenship and the possibility of suffrage. Chinese-Americans faced similar barriers to voting. <http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ur/content/voting_cal/americans_chinese.html>

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Theoretical Consequences: A Trajectory?
Pre/Colonial German Women's Writing

In the preceding chapters I have investigated the ways in which three German women authors of the nineteenth century explore notions of social progress. These authors measured progress in terms of increased access to human rights for increasing numbers of people. While Ida von Hahn-Hahn is critical of marriage as an institution antithetical to female development, and Fanny Lewald argues for educational and professional opportunities for women, whether married or not, Ottilie Assing does not address these issues; she largely ignores women's rights in her paradigm of progress. Assing becomes engaged in a struggle for civil rights, viewing women's rights as an eventual byproduct of progress in a civilized society. At the same time, each of these authors creates a paradigm of autonomy which is unwittingly exclusionary to other racial groups, such as African-American slaves and "Orientals."

The image of the slave appears centrally in each author's work, albeit for different reasons, and as different constructs. Using slavery as a metaphor to

explain other sorts of power relationships is not uncommon in nineteenth-century emancipatory movements. For example, in many feminist works it was suggested that the marital relationship between men and women was akin to the master/slave relationship because women had no legal rights in marriage. Both Ida von Hahn-Hahn and Fanny Lewald use this metaphor. Ottilie Assing, however, does not.

In the introduction, I assert that previous theoretical perspectives fall short in assessing the contribution of emancipatory women authors of the nineteenth century, such as Hahn-Hahn, Lewald, and Assing. The reason for this is that previous critics tend to see women authors in one of two ways: either as resistant to a dominant, patriarchal discourse or as complicit in such discourse. It is a major theme of this dissertation that in order to fully appreciate the contribution of nineteenth-century women's writing in Germany, one needs a more comprehensive theory that combines aspects of both approaches. The fact that Hahn-Hahn, Lewald, and Assing both strive to live up to enlightened ideals while participating simultaneously in a racializing discourse, demands that such a perpective be utilized. In order to accomplish this, I combine elements of feminist as well as precolonial theories.

In Chapter Two, the focus is on Ida von Hahn-Hahn. I examine her novel, *Gräfin Faustine*, and her collection of letters, *Orientalische Briefe*, in terms of the relatedness of female autonomy and a racialization of the "Oriental." This is different from previous analyses of these works which focused on either the

theme of female autonomy or the marginalization of the non-European, but not on both.

In contrast to Lewald and Assing, Ida von Hahn-Hahn was less politically active in the issues of her day. This is due, in part, to the fact that the conservative, aristocratic milieu in which she was raised placed little value on formal education, in contrast to its very high priority amongst the German bourgeoisie. As a consequence, Hahn-Hahn does not use the concept of progress didactically as both Lewald and Assing do. For Hahn-Hahn, progress is an inward journey toward female autonomy rather than a movement to be traced outside herself. This preference for self-development in Hahn-Hahn's prose is noticeable throughout both the novel and the collection of letters. However, it is the existence of the Oriental female slave that provides the White European female with her position of strength. This occurs in a two-part process: first, the Oriental female slave is used as a metaphor of what autonomy is not. Then, once the Oriental has been turned into a metaphor, the space of the Orient, no longer populated in the text by "real" people, is appropriated for the European's exclusive use. Hahn-Hahn longing for a mythic past to replace an uncertain future is projected onto the Orient, both figuratively in the novel and literally in her own travels there.

In Chapter Three, I examine the work of Fanny Lewald, another German women author who was widely read during her lifetime and who believed that the development of humanity should include women's rights. Unlike Hahn-Hahn, however, Fanny Lewald was a politically engaged author who wrote consciously

to change the conditions for women of the middle and working classes. The two novels, *Jenny* and *Diogena*, as well as Lewald's polical letters I have examined show that she was clearly influenced by the rational ideals of the Enlightenment. She advocated that education of mankind, and most definitely of womankind, should create rational and responsible citizens for a German nation-state.

While Lewald was also concerned with female development, in contrast to Hahn-Hahn, her focus was not on self-development for its own sake. Nor does Lewald necessarily advocate the transgression of traditional female boundaries to define her emancipatory agenda. In fact, Lewald reaffirms a woman's natural role as wife and mother, and it is within this framework that she seeks increased autonomy for women. A woman's autonomy will benefit both herself and her society. What Lewald shares with Hahn-Hahn is that, as an author, she uses the metaphor of the racial Other to explicate her own stance on female autonomy. In her case, however, it is not the mythic use of an exotic Oriental Other that drives her texts. Rather, Lewald makes use of a variety of metaphorical Others in her fiction, while relying in her polical letters almost solely on a comparison between the condition of White women in Germany and the condition of enslaved Africans in the United States. The central role of the Black slave in Lewald's arguments certainly reminds the reader of Hahn-Hahn's brutal description of Black female slaves in a marketplace in the Orient. Lewald, however, uses a sanitized version of slavery whereby she appropriates the horror of the system in order to support her political platform of rights for women in Germany, while ignoring the predicament of actual slaves in the United States.

In Chapter Four, I discuss Ottilie Assing's work for *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* in a similar light. Like Lewald, she, too, subscribes to a belief in Enlightenment values, such as rationality and democracy. At the same time, although she subscribes to these values, her writing also shows that a person must prove him or herself worthy to be considered a legitimate member of society. Unlike Lewald, however, Assing attempts to subvert the racial hierarchy of value between Black and White that she observes in the United States, her adopted country. Her personal relationship with Frederick Douglass lends urgency to the issue for her. However, without ever being cognizant of the fundamental discordance of these assertions, Assing rails against the injustice and contradictory nature of the United States government's position on race slavery, while at the same time describing an ideal society to which other, less "enlightened," ethnic groups such as Native Americans and Chinese-Americans, have no access.

As individuals, Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing have many points of convergence and divergence. Though these authors differ greatly from one another in both their style and subject matter, they all share a participation in precolonial discourse in the furtherance of an emancipatory goal. All had been largely forgotten until their recent rediscovery by feminist critics. Lewald and Hahn-Hahn were both best-selling authors in their time, and their differing standpoints were well-known and discussed by their contemporaries.[189] Lewald's satire, *Diogena*, indicates quite clearly that they were rivals not only for a man but

[189] In 1849, Karl Gutzkow calls Lewald "[e]ine Feindin der aristokratischen Literatur! Die berühmte Gegenerin unserer unübertrefflichen Ida!" Quoted in Schneider *Fanny Lewald* 140.

also in terms of class allegiance and their beliefs about “proper womanhood.” While Hahn-Hahn describes an inner compulsion to write, Lewald expresses her political engagement. Hahn-Hahn is financially independent, while Lewald and Assing must write to be self-supporting. Unlike Hahn-Hahn who bases her approach to her subject matter on myth and a longing to integrate it into her modern reality, in one of her earliest works, *Jenny*, Lewald uses a strictly rational approach to breaking down stereotypes in order to further social change.

Ottilie Assing, on the other hand, did not enjoy the fame that Lewald and Hahn-Hahn had, as she published anonymously. However, her articles appeared in a very important periodical in Germany and were read by the educated classes there. While it may seem as if Assing were the odd woman out in this trio of authors because women’s issues are not central in her writing, in fact, Assing and Hahn-Hahn are very similar in their rejection of standards of bourgeois femininity, although perhaps for different reasons. Each one flouts those restrictions and lives outside of the ideal of womanhood that Lewald supports and encourages. Except for Hahn-Hahn’s brief early marriage, both remain unmarried and sustain long-term relationships with men who never become their husbands. In addition, both Hahn-Hahn and Assing lapse into long, detailed, and racializing descriptions of the people they exclude from their emancipatory agenda whereas Lewald tends to use physical descriptions to enhance her emancipatory stance.

For Hahn-Hahn, the move from a fictional work to a travelogue does not signify any major shift in ideological stance. While one might think, actual

interaction with real people she met during her travels in the “Orient,” should have impacted on her views of “Orientals,” it apparently did not. After this trip, her definition of humanity still excludes the Oriental. Whereas for Hahn-Hahn this exclusion is used to propel female development, Lewald calls upon the Oriental in order to enumerate the characteristics that Jewish people should leave behind in order to qualify for acceptance into “enlightened” German culture. At the same time, Lewald asserts that German society should become more accepting of civil rights for both Jews and women in keeping with enlightened ideals.

Lewald and Assing were cousins: Lewald’s mother was the youngest sister of Assing’s father. Their Jewish heritage not only separated them from mainstream Germany but also made them potential targets for violence and hatred. This outsider status marks both their texts. While Lewald pleads in her early work for the emancipation of Jews, Assing is not concerned with the topic of religious tolerance. However, Maria Diedrich, Assing’s biographer, asserts that the consciousness Assing developed as an outsider in German society sensitizes her to the plight of slaves in the U.S. and ultimately leads her to advocate for the end of slavery there. The emphasis that the Lewald and Assing families placed on education and progress, led these authors to be committed to and influenced by the ideals of the Young German movement in particular and by *Vormärz* liberalism in general. A desire for social justice and a dedication to the triumph of moral good shape the texts by Assing and Lewald.

With regard to their work, however, Lewald stays engaged in the "woman question" for her whole life, while Assing remains distant from the women's movement in the United States. While many of her contacts in the abolitionist movement also supported the women's movement, men like Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass, Assing never comes to thoroughly analyze the possible connections between the two movements or to delve deeply into the problematic situation of women in pre-suffrage American society.

As has been discussed, these women authors both argue for emancipation while at the same time participate unknowingly in precolonial discourse. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that Lewald argues that the "enslavement" of white women in Germany carries more serious implications for them than the U.S. system of slavery does for its oppressed without recognizing the untenability of such an assertion. Assing's abolitionist position necessarily precludes her from believing that the status of women in Germany is worse than that of African-American slaves, as Lewald would have her readers believe. However, Assing does not disagree with the superiority of European, more specifically German, culture nor does she question the existence of an educated elite whose responsibility it is to create the standard by which everyone else is judged. What all three of these authors have in common is that they discover their call to champion emancipation because they are "outsiders." Lewald and Assing were outsiders both by gender and ethnicity; Hahn-Hahn by gender only. All three choose to challenge limitations while still being blind to their own participation in racial oppression.

In regards to the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation, there have been recent attempts to go beyond questions of "Orientalism" in German literary texts[190] and to find a space outside of the familiar dichotomies which allows for cultural interchange not mediated by the relationship of domination implicit in "othering."[191] This is indeed an appropriate quest for critics of texts of the twentieth and now twenty-first centuries which may reveal an awareness of and an attempt to resist the relationship of domination. However, when looking at nineteenth-century texts by women authors engaged in a search for autonomy and the resistance to gender and other forms of oppression, the issue of race has not yet been adequately addressed, nor has the relationship of women authors to internal and external matrices of power been adequately theorized.

As I have argued here, critical approaches to emancipatory women authors of the nineteenth century must examine the seemingly contradictory elements of freedom and exclusion in their works in order to account for their levels of meaning. While previous critics of women's literature have tended to focus on either one or the other of these strands, there has been work in other discourses that has attempted to expose the deployment of racial difference and/or stereotypes in order to accomplish objectives seemingly unrelated to racial difference, such as increased political freedom for one's own group. The

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[190] Three panels at the 2003 MLA convention entitled "Looking Beyond Orientalism in German Studies" I, II, and III attest to that. They are subtitled: #107 "The Role of Islam and the 'Orient'"; #463 "Rethinking Cultural Hybridity, Multiculturalism, and Cultural Memory"; and #680 "German-Turkish Issues."

[191] Paul Michael Lützeler, "Oil Pumps in the Third Space: Contemporary German Novels and the Middle East." MLA Conference, San Diego. December 2003.

phenomenon of racialization encountered in the works of these three women authors is, therefore, not specific to their particular agendas.

For example, in her study of the discourse of liberalism in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, Dagmar Herzog suggests that embracing the emancipation of the Jews in pre-revolutionary Germany was a political bargain struck, and not the expression of a deeply held belief in the notion of equality as historians tend to believe.[192] David Kazanjian's recent work on the interplay between "race, nation and equality" demonstrates the "mutually constitutive relationship among discourses and practices of abstract equality, racialization, and nationalism" that marked the beginnings of U.S. capitalism (132).[193]

While analyzing the intersection of gender, sexuality and race in colonial discourse, Marcia Klotz traces the rise and fall of a position of privilege for White women authors in colonial discourse, who initially had a lot to gain by arguing essential differences between White and Black, namely this position of privilege vis-à-vis the Black.[194] Klotz's work is useful in pointing to a possible area of future study concerning the authors in this dissertation. Klotz examines the discourse of Germany's colonial campaign(s), and the "imaginary space" it provided as the vehicle through which German national identity became racialized and Germans came to understand themselves as White (22).

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[192] Dagmar Herzog *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996).

[193] David Kazanjian, "Race, Nation, Equality. *Olaudah Equiano's* Interesting Narrative *and a Genealogy of U.S. Mercantilism*" *Post Nationalist American Studies*, ed. Juan Carlos Rowe (Berkeley: U of California P, 2000: 129-163).

[194] Marcia Klotz, "White Women and the Dark Continent: Gender and Sexuality in German Colonial Discourse from the Sentimental Novel to the Fascist Film" (Diss. Stanford U, 1994).

Given the similar racializing theme in the works under consideration here, it might be possible to place Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing in a context that has broader implications. When one looks beyond the work of these authors ahead in the century to Germany's unification and nationhood, and its beginnings as a colonizing power, one can ask what the trajectory might be between progressive authors at mid-century and those who brought the century to a close with colonialist tales that situated both blackness and whiteness in much more obvious and politically significant ways.

However, none of these theorists discussed above quite pinpoints the problematic aspects of female authorship in the context I have outlined. Hahn-Hahn, Lewald and Assing participate in a textual, if not actual, interaction with the Other that serves to reinforce rather than break down the power structures they hoped to dismantle with their efforts. Ultimately, their assertions of autonomy fall short of their own ideal precisely because they rely on this inherently unstable position.

It is striking that many critics have categorized nineteenth-century women authors in this way, that is, as either "feminist" or "masculinist" ("colonialist"). As I have shown, Hahn-Hahn, Lewald, and Assing are both "feminist," in that they strive for autonomy, and, at the same time, discriminatory, in that they participate in the precolonial discourse by making use of race in order to define their own subjects as White, European and, above all, worthy of equal rights. Looking at these three authors from one theoretical standpoint or the other, as opposed to some combination of the two, makes for an incomplete analysis. A purely

feminist analysis precludes seeing their racism and racializing gestures; conversely, an analysis only in terms of race, eclipses their emancipatory agenda and desire to change society for the better. It can also be suggested that this calls into question the term “precolonial” itself because women authors have not been examined in their full context or for their contributions. I contend that without the inclusion of female authorship, the breadth of what is encompassed by the term “precolonial” has not been fully explored.

The fact that so many critics have tried to overcome the binary approach of literary and discursive analysis, but ultimately fall into it in the end, proves the tenaciousness of this view. On the one hand, if the critic is feminist and endeavors to look for resistance to dominant patriarchal structures, she or he needs either to rely on the inherent femaleness of the author or to look specifically for examples of opposition because the author is female. In such a case, by the very nature of the inquiry, one needs to overlook or downplay the points at which the author’s desire intersects with a dominating power structure because that has been defined as “masculine” or “masculinist.” In such a case, these women authors are not allowed unmediated access to the “negative” results of their own production. In other words, because dominance is considered masculine, non-feminine, and negative, such critics do not integrate fully that aspect of the author’s work into their analysis of it.

In the end, we need a theoretical position that allows for the existence of both things simultaneously: an actual desire for autonomy and the oppression of Others in service of this autonomy. Ultimately, the unwillingness to articulate a

relationship outside of domination may be because of the unwillingess by critics to uphold something that theoretically resembles a universalist position.

Instead, I think it is more fruitful to examine the contradictory aspects of the works of nineteenth-century emancipationist writers, such as Ida von Hahn-Hahn, Fanny Lewald, and Ottilie Assing, in the context of precolonial desire, or otherwise stated, in the context of precolonial desire to acquire power over Others. As they attempted to reenvision relationships of power in their own societies, oppressions that directly impacted on their experience of the world and their view of everything within it, they justified their claims for more autonomy in this seemingly contradictory way. They unwittingly made use of a paradigm of oppression and exclusion in order to help define the new boundaries of a never before imagined autonomous Self. Thus, it can be said that the metaphoric use of the Other, the temporary domination of this Other reveals a desire to acquire power over the Self. In the assertion of autonomy, e.g. demanding civil rights and access to education and employment, or participating as a voice for social change, the “lack” they attempted to fill was the lack of self-determination.

However, as I have shown in the case of Ida von Hahn-Hahn, Fanny Lewald and Ottilie Assing, such a vision of autonomy is fundamentally untenable because it simultaneously necessitates the exclusion of an Other, who is not given the opportunity to claim autonomy. The contradictory nature of their positions implicates their texts in systems of domination. However, it is necessary to consider both the authentic desire for autonomy and the metaphors of domination available to them in order to fully understand these texts.

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52 “Newyork, November: Die Staats- und Kongreßwahlen – Die Sklavenfrage – Eine Amerikanerin über Deutschland – Faustkämpfe – Pedestrians – Wahrsagerinnen”: 1240-1242.

1859

5 “Newyork, December: Verwaltungsgreuel – Neue Bestrebungen für Colonisation der Neger – Die Botschaft des Präsidenten – Theater”: 115-118.

9 “Newyork, Januar: Clima – Beglückwünschte Demokraten – Orr – Douglas – Die Eisenbahn an das stille Meer”: 214-216.

10 “Newyork, Januar (Schluß): In der Wildnis”: 240.

14 “Newyork, Februar: Cuba – Öffentliche Vorträge – Mount Vernon Fund Association – Loskauf eines Sklaven – Eine verschwundene Dame”: 332-335.

17 “Newyork, März: Sickles und Key”: 407-408.

22 “Newyork, April: Frühling – Französisches Theater – Ein fashionabler Prediger –Klopfgeister – Sickles und Key”: 526-528.

25 “Newyork, Mai: Ausgang des Sickles’schen Prozesses – Gefängnis, Arbeitshaus, Irrenhaus auf Blackwell’s Island – Anniversaries”: 593-596.

28 “Newyork, Juni: Der Sklavenhandel – Amerikahaß”: 671-672.

29 “Newyork, Juni (Schluß): Der Amerikafresser – Ausstellung amerikanischer Maler – Ausstellung der deutschen Künstler – Morphys Schachspiel”: 693-695.

34 “Newyork, Juli: Witterung – Das Broadway”: 816.

35 “Newyork, Juli (Schluß): Broadway – Die Newyork Tribune – Sklavenwesen”: 837-840.

51 “Newyork, November: Blondin und de Lave – Frederick Douglass – Rowdythum”: 1223-1224.

52 “Newyork, November (Schluß): Kunstausstellungen – Muskitos”: 1245-1246.

1860

9 “Newyork, Januar: Der Süden gegen den Norden”: 216.

10 “Newyork, Januar: Der Süden gegen den Norden – Einsturz der Pemberton Mills – Der ‘Wanderer’”: 237-238.

11 “Newyork, Februar: Literarischer Krieg des Nordens gegen den Süden – Die Octoroon”: 263-264.

17 “Newyork, März: Die Straßen der Stadt im Winter – Lecturers”: 407-408.

18 “Newyork, März (Schluß): Lecturers – Malerei – The Cooper Institute – Proceß wegen Eheversprechens”: 430-431.

22 “Newyork, April: Der Mormonismus – Vorbereitungen zur Präsidentenwahl – Snuff diggers”: 522-524.

26 “Newyork, Mai: Die Candidaten zur Präsidentschaft – Anniversaries – Unterschleife von Beamten – Humboldts Briefe an Varnhagen”: 617-619.

34 “Newyork, Juli: Vorbereitung auf die Präsidentenwahl – Die japanische Gesandtschaft – Der Great Eastern”: 811-813.

48 “Newyork, Oktober: Aussichten auf die Präsidentenwahl – Epidemische Angst im Süden – Convention of Infidels”: 1147-1150.

52 “Newyork, November: Die Präsidentenwahl – Republikaner und Demokraten”: 1242-1245.

1861

6 “Newyork, Januar: Die Bewegung im Süden der Union – Kunstausstellung”: 141-144.

9 “Newyork, Januar: Die staatliche Krisis – Rarey, der Pferdebändiger”: 209-211.

17 “Newyork, März: Die Krisis – Das Theater”: 407-408.

18 “Newyork, März (Schluß): Theater – Der neue Zolltarif”: 430-431.

23 “Newyork, Mai: Ausbruch der Feindseligkeiten – Kriegerische Begeisterung”: 548-550.

25 “Newyork, Mai: Eine Mormonenpredigt – Spekulation der Spiritualisten – Justiz – Kunst”: 598-600.

27 “Newyork, Mai: Der Krieg”: 644-646.

37 “Newyork, August: Der Krieg – Douglas – Die Deutschen in Missouri – Ein schwarzer Held und Barnum”: 883-885.

48 “Newyork, Oktober: Der Bürgerkrieg – Fremont und die Regierung – Die Spitzbubengallerie”: 1147-1149.

52 “Newyork, November: Die große Telegraphenlinie – Fremont – Scott – Auswanderung von Farbigen nach Hayti – Barnum”: 1245-1247.

1862

7 “Newyork, November: Der Krieg – Das Sklavenwesen – Der Brand von Charleston – Ein wichtiges Aktenstück”: 163-166.

13 “Newyork, Februar: Die Sklaverei und die Unionsregierung – Verhältniß des weiblichen Geschlechts zur Sklaverei – Reguläre und Freiwillige – Armeelieferanten”: 310-312.

16 “Newyork, März: Umschwung der Dinge – Die südliche Ritterschaft – Hinrichtung eines Sklavenhändlers”: 382-384.

24 “Newyork, Mai: Der Kreig – Die Sklavenfrage – Farbenvorurtheil – Kunstausstellung”: 572-574.

28 “Newyork, Ende Mai: General Hunter und die Regierung – Die Schwarzen – Sommer – Hundeausstellung – Commodore Nutt – Die Homestead Bill”: 665-668.

47 “Newyork, Oktober: Die Emancipation der Sklaven”: 1126-1128.

1863

1 “Newyork, November: Unerwartete Wirkungen des Kriegs – Die Wahlen für den Congreß – Mac Clellan”: 22-24.

5 “Newyork, December: Neue Niederlage – Corruption – Religiöse Zustände”: 116-118.

9 “Newyork, Januar: Die Emancipationsproclamation – Zustände im Staate Mississippi”: 214-216.

14 “Newyork, März: Humbug – Psychologie – Die Zwergenhochzeit – Verhalten der Neger im Süden”: 332-334.

22 “Newyork, April: Die Kupferschlangen – M’Clellan”: 523-526.

50 “Newyork, November: Amerikanische Zustände – Pöbelherrschaft”: 1194-1196.

52 “Newyork, November: Die bewaffneten Farbigen – Theuerung – Luxus – Bewegungen unter den Arbeitern – Bloomerismus”: 1241-1244.

1864

6 “Newyork, Januar: Der Stiftungstag der Antisklavereigesellschaft – Unglücksfälle – Seeräuber”: 140-143.

11 “Newyork, Januar: Einfluß des Kriegs auf die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse und auf die Sklavereifrage”: 262-264.

15 “Newyork, Februar: Die Flucht der gefangenen Unionsoffiziere – Überraschende Wirkungen des Kriegs”: 354-357.

17 “Newyork, März: Ein Negerregiment – Die Ausstellung der Sanitätscommission – Die radicalen Deutschen”: 406-408.

22 “Newyork, April: Die große Ausstellung”: 520-523.

26 “Newyork, Mai: Der Krieg – Die große Ausstellung”: 621-622.

27 “Newyork, Mai (Schluß): Frauenverein gegen Kleiderluxus – Kunstausstellung”: 648.

43 “Newyork, September: Die Präsidentenwahl”: 1031-1032.

44 “Newyork, September (Schluß): Die Präsidentenwahl”: 1052-1053.

49 “Newyork, November: M’Clellans Brief”: 1169-1171.

52 “Newyork, November: Die Präsidentenwahl”: 1243-1246.

1865

5 “Newyork, December: Stimmung nach der Präsidentenwahl – Thanksgiving Day – Das Feuercomplot”: 116-119.

11 “Newyork, Januar: Weihnachten und Neujahr – Die Sklavereifrage – Everett – Ein neues deutsches Buch”: 262-264.

15 “Newyork, März: Gesetzliche Abschaffung der Sklaverei”: 356-359.

18 “Newyork, März: Die Uebergabe von Charleston – Volksfest – Corruption”: 425-428.

22 “Newyork, April: Siegesjubel und Trauer”: 520-523.

27 “Newyork, Mai: Der Proceß – Trauerfeierlichkeiten – Reconstituierung – Jefferson Davis”: 645-647.

39 “Newyork, August: Die Mörder Lincolns und Jefferson Davis – Die Emancipationsfrage – Barnum”: 929-932.

45 “Newyork, September: Politik des Präsidenten – Negerverfolgungen – Erbitterung der Südländer – Neue Enthüllungen über die Behandlung der Gefangenen in den Südstaaten”: 1072-1075.

50 “Newyork, November: ‘Der Sieg des Südens’”: 1200.

51 “Newyork, November (Schluß): Die Halben und die Ganzen – Der Spiritualismus – Ein literarisches Institut der Farbigen”: 1220-1222.

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